

Guide to the Donald Jayne Lehmer papers, 1927-1977.

Nigel Elmore

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Collection Overview

Administrative Information

Related Materials

Additional material in the National Anthropological Archives that relates to Donald J. Lehmer can be found in the Records of the River Basin Surveys.

Processing Information

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Preferred Citation

Donald Jayne Lehmer papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The Donald J. Lehmer papers are open for research. Access to the Donald J. Lehmer papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Born in Omaha, Nebraska
Undergraduate, University of New Mexico
Excavation supervisor, La Junta de los Rios Expedition at Presidio, Texas (sponsored by Sul Rose College, Museum of New Mexico, and Works Project Administration)
B.A., University of Arizona
Research Archaeologist, Museum of New Mexico

1940 & 1941 (summers)	Director, Mesilla Valley Expedition, Las Cruces, New Mexico (sponsored by the Museum of New Mexico and the Arizona State Museum)
1941-1942	Assistant Curator for Branch Museums, Museum of New Mexico
1942-1946	Private U.S. Army
1946-1948	Graduate School, University of Chicago while also working for the Oriental Institute
1948	M.A., University of Chicago
	Dig foreman, University of Arizona Point of Pines Field School, San Carlos, Arizona
	The Jornada Branch of the Mogollon
1949	Director, Mexican (Sonora) Archaeological Expedition (Sponsored by the Chicago Natural History Museum, the University of Chicago, and the University of Arizona)
1949-1950	Graduate School, Harvard University
1950-1951	Archaeologist, Bureau of American Ethnology River Basin Surveys, Lincoln, Nebraska
1950	Dodd Site, Oahe Reservoir, South Dakota
1951	Tenkiller Reservoir, Oklahoma
1952-1953	Research Archaeologist, Laboratory of Anthropology, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
1952	Field Director, University Archaeological Field School, Harlem Co., Nebraska
	Ph.D., Harvard University
1953	Archaeologist, El Paso Natural Gas Company Pipeline Project
1953-1954	Visiting Professor of Anthropology, University of Washington, Seattle
1954	Married Evelyn Garton
	Archeological Investigations in the Oahe Dam Area, South Dakota, 1950-51
1955	City Planner, Omaha, Nebraska
1955-1960	Lecturer in Anthropology and History, Strategic Air Command Headquarters and the University of Omaha, Nebraska
1961-1975	Professor and Chairman, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Dana College, Blair Nebraska
1964 (summer)	Research Archaeologist, State Historical Society of North Dakota
1969	Visiting Professor of Anthropology, University of Minnesota
1971	Introduction to Middle Missouri Archeology
June 5, 1975	Died, Blair, Nebraska (?)

Scope and Contents

These papers reflect the professional life of Donald Jayne Lehmer (1918-1975), archaeologist and professor of anthropology. Included are correspondence, diaries, fieldnotes, project reports, applications, articles, contracts, reference materials, mimeographed hand-outs, maps, diagrams, photographs and one sound recording. The bulk of the material relates to Lehmer's early archaeological career and to his later research work while a professor at Dana College, Lincoln, Nebraska. There are very few documents in this collection which relate to the period between 1956 and 1964. The only expedition in which Lehmer participated and for which there are field notes in this collection is the 1940-1941 expedition to Mesilla Valley, New Mexico, sponsored by the Museum of New Mexico and the Arizona State Museum. References to Lehmer's other fieldwork are made in some of the correspondence in series 2, 3, and 5. The correspondence also contains numerous references to Lehmer's personal life.

Persons for whom there are considerable correspondence or who are represented by the written material include: Ernst V. Antevs; Bryant Bannister; Robert E. Bell; William E. Bittle; Elaine Bluhm; Wesley Bradfield; John Ortis Brew; Thomas N. Campbell; John L. Champe; Earle A. Clark; Joan Clark; Donald Collier; Paul L. Cooper; John M. Corbett; Harriet S. Cosgrove; Herbert W. Dick; Henry F. Dobyns; Bertha P. Dutton; Fred R. Eggan: Gordon F. Ekholm: Florence Hawley Ellis; John C. Ewers: Paul H. Ezell: Fred C. Fagergren: Malcolm F. Farmer; Geroge E. Fay; Franklin Fenega; Harold S. Gladwin; John M. Goggin; James B. Griffin; Donald D. Hartle; George B. Hartzog, Jr.; Emil W. Haury; John J. Hoffman; Earnest A. Hooton; Roman L. Hruska; Wesley R. Hurt; Jesse D. Jennings; Elden Johnson; Frederick Johnson; Richard B. Johnston; J. Charles Kelley; Alfred V. Kidder II; Marvin F. Kivett; Clyde Klukhohn; Bert Kraus; Alex D. Krieger; Toimi E. Kyllonen; Wilfred D. Logan; Boas Long; Charles C. Madsen; Oscar L. Mallory; Paul S. Martin; John Y. McCollister; William Mulloy; Welson Murdock; Douglas Osborne; Erik K. Reed; John B. Rinaldo; Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr.; Hugo G. Rodeck; Edward B. Sayles; Anna O. Shepard; Allan H. Smith; Carlyle S. Smith; G. Hubert Smith; Albert C. Spaulding; James E. Sperry; Leslie Spier; Robert L. Stephenson; Frank H. Stewart; Stanley A. Stubbs; Floyd V. Studer; William C. Sturtevant; Paul Tolstoy; James B. Watson; Waldo R. Wedel; Denver Fred Wendorf, Jr.; H. D. Weston; Richard P. Wheeler; Theodore E. White; Arnold M. Withers; W. Raymond Wood; Richard Woodbury; A. M. Woolsey; H. Marie Wormington.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Archaeology

Names:

River Basin Surveys

Places:

North America

Container Listing

Series 1: Applications, 1949-1956

Box 1

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Included are Lehmer's applications to Harvard University and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Letters of application for jobs include correspondence with Robert E. Bell, James Otis Brew, Toimi E. Kyllonen, William Mulloy, Hugo G. Rodeck, and Floyd V. Studer. Also included is a copy of Lehmer's prospectus for his Harvard thesis.

Series 2: Incoming Letters, 1946-1974

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by correspondent

Scope and Most of the letters are from colleagues regarding technical research problems, schoolwork, expeditions, fieldwork, and job hunting. A small number of letters express advice to Lehmer regarding personal matters. There are a few official letters from staff members of the Smithsonian River Basin Surveys, but there are numerous references to the River Basin Surveys throughout.

Box 1	Ernst Antevs
Box 1	Bryant Bannister
Box 1	Robert E. Bell
Box 1	Elaine Bluhm
Box 1	J.O. Brew
Box 1	Thomas N. Campbell
Box 1	John L. Champe
Box 1	Joan Clark
Box 1	Donald Collier
Box 1	Harriet S. Cosgrove
Box 1	Herbert W. Dick
Box 1	Henry F. Dobyns
Box 1	Bertha P. Dutton
Box 1	Fred R. Eggan
Box 1	Gordon F. Ekholm
Box 1	Florence Hawley Ellis
Box 1	John C. Ewers
Box 1	Paul Howard Ezell
Box 1	Malcolm F. Farmer
Box 1	George E. Fay

Box 1	Harold S. Gladwin
Box 1	James B. Griffin
Box 1	Emil W. Haury
Box 1	Earnest A. Hooton
Box 1	Wesley R. Hurt
Box 1	Jesse D. Jennings
Box 1	J. Charles Kelley
Box 1	Alfred V. Kidder II
Box 1	Clyde Kluckhohn
Box 1	Bert Kraus
Box 1	Alex D. Krieger
Box 1	Boas Long
Box 1	Paul S. Martin
Box 1	William Mulloy
Box 1	Douglas Osborne
Box 1	Erik K. Reed
Box 1	John B. Rinaldo
Box 1	Frank H. H. Roberts Jr.
Box 1	Edward B. Sayles
Box 1	Anna O. Shepard
Box 1	Carlyle S. Smith
Box 1	G. Hubert Smith
Box 1	Albert C. Spaulding
Box 1	Leslie Spier

Box 1	Robert L. Stephenson		
Box 1	Frank H. Steward		
Box 1	Stanley A. Stubbs		
Box 1	Paul Tolstoy		
Box 1	James B. Watson		
Box 1	Denver Fred Wendorf, Jr.		
Box 1	Richard P. Wheeler		
Box 1	Theodore E. White		
Box 1	Arnold M. Withers		
Box 1	H. Marie Wormington		

Series 3: Outgoing Letters, 1946-1974

Box 2

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Many of Lehmer's letters are both professional and personal in nature. They include such topics as technical problems in research, school work, field work, and finding a job.

Numerous gaps exist in the outgoing letters after 1955. There are no outgoing letters for the following periods: 1956-1961; 1964-1965; 1967; and 1969-1971.

Series 4: Papers relating to research grants and contracts, 1964-1973, 1977

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by sponsoring organization

Scope and Included are diaries, correspondence, progress reports, final reports, and contracts for research work Lehmer undertook while on the staff of Dana College. Some of the projects were undertaken conjunction with other institutions. For example, Dana College cooperated with the University of Missouri on the Northern National Gas Company grant. Most of the research is concerned with cultural ecology and culture process of the Northern Plains Villagers. A notable exception was Lehmer's contract with the National Park Service to write a history of salvage archeology in the Missouri River Basin. The research for this project drew heavily from his experiences with the Smithsonian's River Basin Surveys in the early 1950s.

The 1977 material is a letter dated January 20, 1977 from Lehmer's colleague, W. Raymond Wood, asking Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to allow him to continue Lehmer's work on "Epidemics Among the Missouri Valley Indians" which was not completed at the time of his death in 1975.

See also series 7 for notes that were probably accumulated in preparation for, or as a result of some of these contracts and grants.

Box 2	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) - "Epidemics Among ne Missouri Valley Indians", 1966-1968, 1977		
Box 2	HEW - "Smallpox Epidemics Among the Missouri Valley Indians", 1966-1970		
Box 2	Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation "Cultural Ecology of the Hidatsa", 1964, 1969-1971		
Box 2	National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Youth grant "Retrieval of Lewis and Clark's Amahami Indian Village", 1972-1973		
Box 3	lational Park Service (NPS) "Middle Missouri Salvage Archeology Project," Research correspondence, 1964-1965		
Box 3	IPS An Introduction to Middle Missouri Archeology, 1964-1971 Iotes: Correspondents include: John M. Corbett; Fred C. Fagergren; George B. Hartzog, Jr.; Roman L. Hruska; Wilfred D. Logan; John Y. McCollister; Charles C. Madsen; Nelson Murdock; and Richard P. Wheeler		
Box 3	IPS An Introduction to Middle Missouri ArcheologyComments, 1966-1972 Iotes: Correspondents include: John M. Corbett; John J. Hoffman; Frederick Johnson; Richard B. Johnston; Oscar L. Mallory; Albert C. Spaulding; Waldo R. Wedel; W. Raymond Wood; and Richard Woodbury		
Box 3	IPS Garrison Reservoir Contract, 1975		
Box 3	lational Science Foundation (NSF) "Archeology, Culture Contact, and Culture Change in the Middle Missouri Valley", 1964-1967		

	Notes:	Correspondents include: Charles C. Madsen; Allan H. Smith; James E. Sperry; Robert L. Stephenson
Box 3	NSF "Mand Notes:	an-Hidatsa Ecology and Culture Change", 1967-1969 Unsupported proposal
Box 3	NSF "Cultur	al Ecology of the Hidatsa Indians", 1970-1971
Box 3		rral Gas Company "Archeological Excavations in North Dakota ton Project)", 1967-1968 Correspondents include: Earle A. Clark and W. Raymond Wood
Box 3	the Missouri V	Education "Mandan Migrations, 1780-1804," "Demography of /alley Village Tribes," "Cultural Ecology of the Hidatsa Indians," ject for North Plains Field Station", 1966-1971

Series 5: Papers relating to the Smithsonian River Basin Surveys, 1950-1952, 1964-1968

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Includes correspondence, personnel papers, official forms, and copies of mimeographed reports of field parties on the River Basin Surveys.

Lehmer held successive temporary appointments from June 1, 1950 through December 31, 1951 as an archeologist with the RBS, detailed to the Lincoln, Nebraska office. During this time he excavated the Dodd site and the Phillips Ranch site in the Oahe Reservoir, South Dakota, and the Cookson site in the Tenkiller Ferry Reservoir in Oklahoma. A report for Lehmer's field activities in the Oahe Reservoir is contained in a memo dated July 5, 1951, filed with "Correspondence Relating to Paul L. Cooper." A summary of the Tenkiller Ferry Reservoir project prepared for the "Notes and News" section of *American Antiquity*, dated June 23, 1951, is located in the official correspondence with Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr. Lehmer prepared bi-weekly narrative reports for Roberts, but only copies of the covering letters, not the actual reports, were retained. The correspondence with Roberts about Tenkiller is almost exclusively administrative in nature. The day to day correspondence Robert E. Bell of the University of Oklahoma, Norman (Lehmer's advisor on the project) and others is located in the folder marked "Tenkiller Ferry Reservoir, Oklahoma correspondence."

Lehmer's appointment with the River Basin Survey was not renewed at the end of 1951 largely because of his attempt to have Paul L. Cooper removed as Field Director of the Missouri River Basin Survey. In a letter to Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., dated June 9, 1951, Lehmer, Franklin Fenega, and Richard P. Wheeler ask for an investigation by Roberts into Cooper's effectiveness as Field Director of the Lincoln Office. The ensuing investigation is documented in the folder marked, "Correspondence Relating to Paul L. Cooper."

Between 1964 and 1967 Lehmer was under contract to the Smithsonian Institution to prepare reports for the Buffalo Pasture site and the Leavitte site in the Oahe Reservoir, South Dakota; for the Nightwalker's Butte site and Rock Village site in the Garrison Reservoir in North Dakota; and for the Fire Heart Creek site, also in North Dakota. This material is located in the folder marked, "Papers relating to S.I. Contracts."

Box 3	Personnel Papers, 1950-1952		
Box 3	Correspondence relating to Paul L. Cooper, 1951-1952 Notes: Correspondents include: James O. Brew; John L. Champe; Franklin Fenega; Donald D. Hartle; Frederick Johnson; Alex D. Krieger; Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr.; and Richard P. Wheeler		
Box 3	Official correspondence with Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., 1951-1952		
Box 3	Tenkiller Ferry Reservoir, Oklahoma Correspondence, 1951-1952 Notes: Correspondents include: Robert E. Bell; Paul L. Cooper; Alex D. Krieger; Erik K. Reed; Robert L. Stephenson; and H. D. Weston.		
Box 3	Papers related to Smithsonian Contracts, 1964-1968		
Box 3	Dittograph of weekly Field Reports from RBS staff archeologists, 1965		
Box 3	Dittograph of weekly Field Reports from RBS staff archeologists, 1966		

Box 3 Dittograph of weekly Field Reports from RBS staff archeologists, 1967

Series 6: Papers relating to the Mesilla Valley Expedition, 1927-1942

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically

Scope and Included are correspondence, typescripts of correspondence, reports, specimen catalogs, historical references, field notes, photographs, drawings, maps, diagrams, and administrative forms.

During the summers of 1940 and 1941 Lehmer was in charge of the Mesilla Valley Expedition in Dona Ana County, New Mexico. The project was sponsored jointly by the Museum of New Mexico and the University of Arizona, with assistance from the Work Projects Adminstration. The purpose of the project was to investigate the El Paso Phase and try to determine its cultural antecedants. The procedure involved a preliminary study of all published data available. The principal sources used are listed in the bibliography of the final published report, "The Jornada Branch of the Mogollon," *University of Arizona Social Science Bulletin,* No. 17 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 1948. Much of the material collected during this preliminary research are included in this series as "Reference Materials." Included here are reports by A. V. Kidder, Wesley Bradfield, and Stanley Stubbs. The fieldwork was headquartered in Las Cruces, New Mexico and included a six week archeological reconnissance survey and the excavation of a pit house village, a cave, and an El Paso Phase pueblo. The work expanded the knowledge of the El Paso Phase itself and defined a series of three antecedent phases which carried the prehistory of the area back before 900 A.D.

Box 4	Miscellaneous Notes:	reference materials, 1927-1936, undated Includes "Reconnaissance in El Paso County March 15 to March 27, 1936" by A. M. Woolsey; Précis of Preliminary Survey of the El Paso Pueblo District," by C. B. and Harriet Cosgrove
Box 4	Reference mate Probably 1927	erials A. V. Kidder's "Mimbres Expedition, Season of 1927",
Box 4	Reference mate Notes:	erials Wesley Bradfield and Stanley Stubbs, 1929-1930 Includes "Preliminary Report of Excavations Near La Luz and Alamogordo, New Mexico, 1930, Catalogue of Artifacts, 1930," by Stanley Stubbs, June 27, 1930; "Preliminary Report of Excavations Near La Luz and Alamogordo, in the Sacramento District, New Mexico," by Wesley Bradfield, 1929 and Stanley Stubbs, 1930.
Box 4	Alamogordo an	nd Bradfield sites diagrams of houses, 1930, Undated
Box 4	Works Project	Administration Administrative file, 1940-1942
Box 4	Field notes and	d photographs, 1940-1942

Series 7: Notes, 1969-1972, Undated

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Included are correspondence, comparative notes, and statistics, typed excerpts from published sources, River Basin Survey number sheets for village sites, maps, and diagrams.

These appear to be notes compiled by Lehmer during his term at Dana College, although many are undated. At this time he was involved in outside research grants and contracts similar in nature to these notes (see series 4).

Box 4	Lewis and Clark references to Heart River Village Abandonment, undated
Ben	Lottio and olantifolorologic ribart and go / banaoninont, and doa

Box 4 Mandan-Hidatsa Ecology -- notes and statistics, 1969-1972, Undated Notes: Headings include:

Heart River 1 Villages Terminal Middle Missouri Middle Missouri Floodplain Area Heart River District Agricultural Potential Valley widths, Square Butte Creek to Smith Farm Population Estimates Heart River Phase Household Size Map of Arikara migrations 1794-1862 Post-Contact Coalescent Occupations Total Houses per village (graph) Knife River Knife River Population 1798 and 1804 Sanger-Stanton Valley Population Middle Missouri Period Cannonball Region-Population Estimates Southern Extended Middle Missouri Sites Archeological sites in the Upper Knife - Heart District (map) Will and Hyde-corn (yield per acre)

Box 4 Requests for copies of Lehmer's "Buffalo and Beans - Cultural Ecology of the Plains Village Tribes" read at May 1969 meeting of Society of American Archeology, circa 1969

Box 4Miscellaneous, Undated
Notes:Includes maps, chronological charts, comments on aerial
photographs, diagrams of house types

Series 8: Papers relating to The Handbook of North American Indians, 1967-1974

Box 4

Contents:

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Included are correspondence, mimeographed instructions to contributors, and a map.

Lehmer was a member of the Planning Committee the for the Plains volume (IX) of the *Handbook*. The papers reflect the administrative duties of that position. The correspondence is mostly between Lehmer and William C. Sturtevant, the general editor and between Lehmer and William E. Bittle, the Plains volume editor. No manuscripts or typescripts of Lehmer's articles for the *Handbook* are included.

Series 9: Papers relating to scientific meetings, 1959, 1962, 1967-1970

Arrangement: Scope and Contents:	Arranged chronologically Included are correspondence, articles, and mimeographed handouts. Lehmer was actively involved in the Plains Archaeological Conferences; they are mentioned often throughout his correspondence. But only the 1959 and 1962 Plains Archaeological Conferences are actually documented in this collection. In 1959 he was asked by Robert L. Stephenson to chair a session on Plains-Southwest relationships. This is documented through correspondence with colleagues he contacted for assistance in organizing the session. The 1962 Conference is documented by mimeographed hand-outs for conference participants
	Lehmer gave a paper entitled, "Climate and Culture History in the Middle Missouri Valley" at the October 1968 Univeristy of Kansas Symposium on Pleistoscene and Recent Environments of the Coastal Plains. The typescript and abstract of the paper are included here along with preparatory correspondence and correspondence relating to publishing a volume of proceedings of the Symposium.
Box 4	Plains Archaeological Conference, 1959, 1962 Notes: "Pre-Ceramic Complexes in Northwestern Arkansas outline and distribution chart by W. Raymond Wood," 1962. "Logan Creek Complex," by Marvin F. Kivett, 1969 "Pre-Ceramic Cultures of the Plains and its peripheries." inventory basic data from Plains Arcaeological Conference,
Box 4	1962. University of Kansas Symposium on Pleistocene and Recent Environments of the Central Plains, 1967-1970

Series 10: Teaching Materials, 1968-1970

Arranged chronologically.
Included are correspondence, a vita, a syllabus, hand-outs, and a tape-recorded lecture.
The tape recording is a lecture on Symboling given by Lehmer, circa 1970. Although it is uncertain, the lecture was probably taped at Dana College. Lehmer discusses Leslie A. White's concept of "symbolate" and reads a lengthy excerpt from Arthur C. Clarke's "2001" and discusses it as a basic concept of symboling. An excerpt from the song, "I Should Have Known Better" by the Beatles appears at the beginning of side two, before continuing the lecture. It apparently has no bearing on the lecture.
The remainder of the teaching material was used for Lehmer's Visting Professorship at the University of Minnesota in 1969. Correspondence with Elden Johnson preceding the appointment is also included.
University of Minnesota - correspondence and syllabus, 1968-1969
Sound recording of Lehmer's lecture on "Symboling", circa 1970 Notes: side 1 - Leslie A. White's concept of "symbolate" side 2 - "I Should Have Known Better," by the Beatles Arthur C. Clarke's "2001" as a basic concept of symboling