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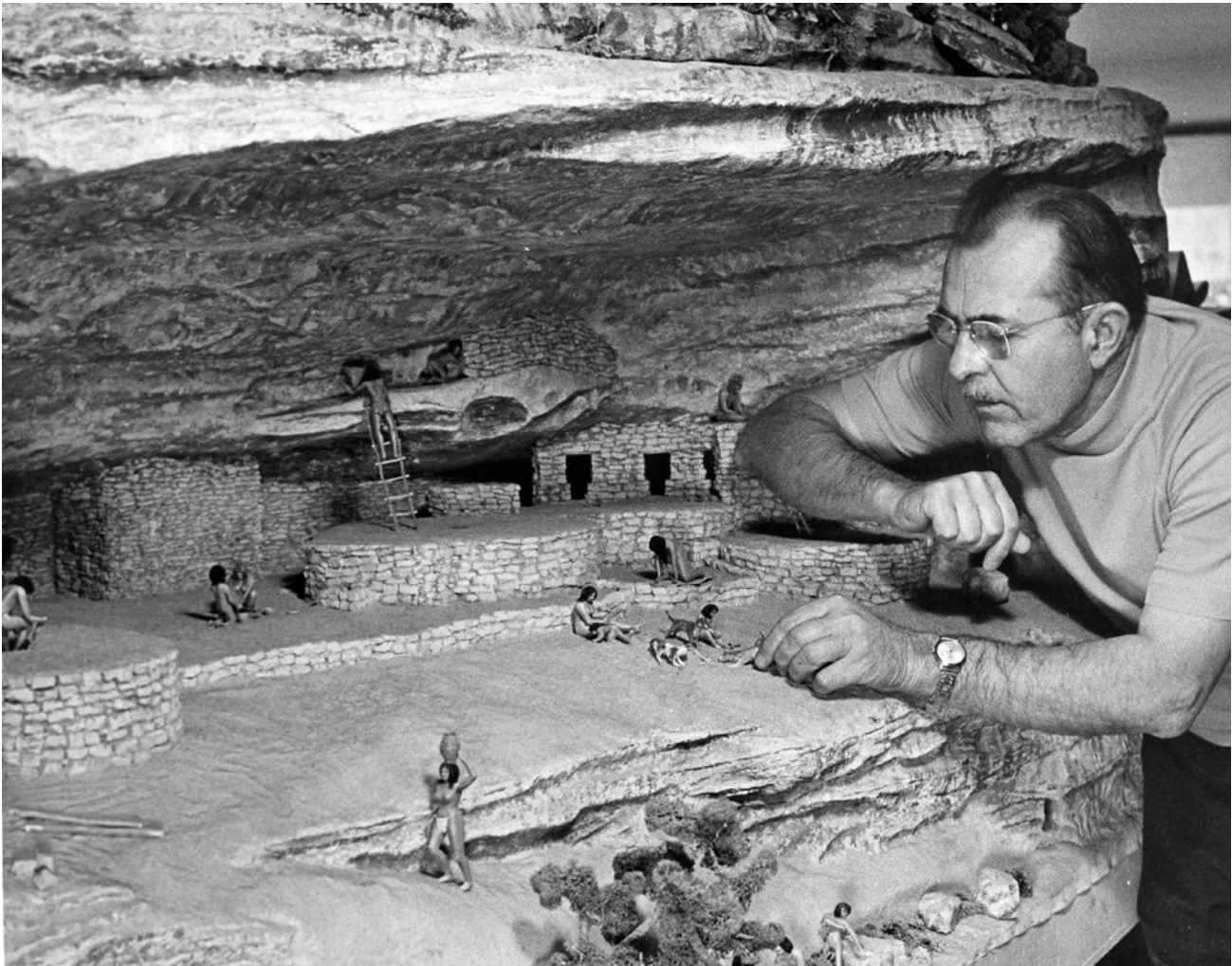
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PIONEERS

Pioneers is a new and regular section of the Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology. Compiled by Steven R. Simms, Pioneers will feature personal reflections by students and colleagues on major figures in the study of the indigenous cultures of the region. These are not obituaries or memorials, but candid recollections that convey insight into the personalities of the pioneers as well as the cultural context of anthropology during their lives. This inaugural collection of essays features Jesse D. Jennings. Future issues will remember other leading figures in the anthropology of the West.



Jesse D. Jennings hands-on with a diorama in the Utah Museum of Natural History, University of Utah, late 1960s–early 1970s.

MEMORIES OF JESSE D. JENNINGS (1909–1997)

Steven R. Simms
Utah State University

Jesse D. Jennings was a major figure in a generation of archaeologists who shaped modern, scientific North

American archaeology. His career spanned over six decades, and while he is best known for his long career at the University of Utah (1948–1986) focusing on the archaeology of Utah, his experience ranged from Mesoamerica, to the American Midwest, to Polynesia. His excavations at Danger Cave and during the Glen Canyon

Project are widely known, but perhaps his most enduring accomplishment was his two-decade effort, culminating in 1973, that led to the founding of what is now the Natural History Museum of Utah. Jennings' memoir, *Accidental Archaeologist* (1994) is must reading. C. Melvin Aikens (1997, 1999) has produced outstanding syntheses of Dr. Jennings' career. The selection of essays presented here highlight memories of students and colleagues that span Jennings' career and reflect a diversity of career paths and accomplishments. My own tutelage with the Master began in 1972 as an anonymous undergraduate at the University of Utah. After a summer on the Utah 95 Highway Project, Jennings approached me and a more senior undergraduate in the hallway. Without looking at me, Dr. Jennings barked, "Sargent, put a bug in Simms ear about going to field school," and then walked off. Ned looked at me and shrugged, "I guess that was your invitation to field school." Dr. Jennings was direct, demanding, and utterly invested in archaeology and his students. I only tell all of the good stories around campfires. The realization of my good fortune to have learned stratigraphic excavation and the "Feature System" from him and his graduate students only unfolded over many years. Jennings was right. Archaeology is the endless management of "mistakes" as we learn about the past. As you will find in these essays, this larger-than-life figure spawned great tales. His last words to me were in 1994, when I submitted *Accidental Archaeologist* to him for signing at the Great Basin Anthropological Conference. "Well, Simms, I'm glad to see you finally grew up."

* * *

SOME MEMORIES OF THE DARK LORD

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Mercyhurst Archaeological Institute

As with all larger than life personalities, numerous tales—some accurate, some hyperbolic, some apocryphal—have been told (or embellished!) about the late Jesse D. Jennings. Of the many I have heard and/or directly witnessed, these are among my favorites.

During my second (and last) year as a graduate student at the University of Utah, several of us, including Jennings, attended an American Anthropological Association meeting in Seattle. Jennings had secured

a suite, within which on one evening there was to be a "Utah" get-together. This event became rather raucous, and our presumably unknown next-door neighbor called hotel security. Soon, a phone call to our room informed us that we should "tone it down" so as not to disturb our neighbors. Jennings was profoundly irritated by this intrusion into our revelry and asked me to go out into the hallway and find and personally "deal" with whomever had the "effrontery" (or bad judgment) to "turn us in." Because of the configuration of the hallway, there was only one room near our suite—in fact, right next door. I dutifully knocked on the door and a very irate older gentleman in pajamas and a bathrobe opened the door. Clearly quite irritated, he asked what I wanted and I told him that one of his "neighbors" did not appreciate his summoning the "law." The individual became even more agitated and identified himself as Marvin Harris! Somehow he must have believed this identification would be sufficient—especially with a mere graduate student. I responded that I would return to the party and inform the "host" that we must keep quiet, whereupon Dr. Harris asked sarcastically, who *was* the host? I responded "Jesse Jennings," and Harris perceptibly blanched. He then said, "Tell him I did not mean to interrupt his festivities. I will not do it again." I returned and related the tale to Jennings, who grunted his somewhat begrudging approval. The party elicited no more complaints. Case closed.

At another professional gathering, the 1970 Society for American Archaeology meeting in Mexico City, I found myself one evening in Jennings' hotel room. I was accompanied by John P. (Jack) Marwitt, who at the time was one of Jennings' favorite students. Jack was always circumspect around Jennings so when he asked us (to my intense surprise!), "I understand that some of you call me the Dark Lord. Is this true?" To my chagrin, the normally taciturn and always circumspect Jack said simply, "Yes." Jennings, visibly distressed, then said, "Does that mean some people think I am black and evil?" To my utter astonishment, Jack again said simply, "Yes." Almost apoplectic with rage, Jennings then threw us both out of his room and avoided us for the rest of the conference.

My status, or more accurately lack thereof, was not substantially enhanced but rather further degraded during the course of my dissertation research. As is well known to most readers of this journal, my thesis topic was the prehistoric basketry of the Great Basin and selected