

## The 1994 Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholar Award



William E. Doolittle

The Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers honors **William E. Doolittle** with the 1994 Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholar Award. It is hard to conceive of a more appropriate recipient. As part of the Sauer tradition, William Doolittle has contributed innovative research and intellect to the sub-disciplines of historical geography and cultural ecology. Also, for almost twenty years he has been conducting field research in a region of great concern to Carl Sauer, northern New Spain.

Interestingly, a curiosity of this region is not obvious in Bill's early education and research. He earned a B. A. at Texas Christian University where he studied government and geography. His Master's research at the University of Missouri was geared towards the acquisition of skills in quantitative methods and remote sensing. In fact, his earliest **[end p. 153]** publications were locational analyses of landuse patterns in the U. S. Midwest. It was at the University of Oklahoma that his efforts began to focus on the historical geography and agroecology of Sonora, earning a doctorate in 1979 under the guidance of B. L. Turner II. His dissertation research is synthesized in a University of Arizona monograph, entitled *Pre-Hispanic Occupance in the Valley of Sonora, Mexico: Archaeological Confirmation of Early Spanish Reports*, and this work stands as the best analysis of pre-Hispanic settlement and agriculture for Sonora.

Since that date Bill has authored articles on many subjects, including the agroecological characteristics of specific production technologies and systems, and the form and function of numerous prehistoric and historic agricultural features in Mexico and the American Southwest. Other articles illuminate methodological issues, such as phytolith and obsidian hydration analysis. More importantly, many of his articles are valued by anthropologists as well as geographers, and his contributions are undoubtedly felt in other fields as well. Throughout his career Bill has also made a concerted effort to make his work available to scholars in several disciplines, and he has published articles in more than twenty journals in the United

States, Mexico, and Europe. In addition he has generated dozens of book chapters, reviews, and special publications.

His book *Canal Irrigation in Prehistoric Mexico: The Sequence of Technological Change*, represents the best synthesis and analysis of the advances and spatial patterns of this technology in Mexico. By utilizing a highly-organized spatial and temporal framework, Bill has illuminated the importance of technological innovation in Mexican canal irrigation since pre-Classic times. He is currently working on a second book, *Agriculture in the Americas, 1492: Volume 3, North America*, which will be soon in press. This manuscript, which utilizes early explorers' accounts, brings together most of what is known, and much which was previously unknown, about pre-European agriculture in North America. The book promises to become a valuable reference volume for students of early North America within the disciplines of geography, anthropology, and history.

In addition to his subject and region of study, Bill shares a keen interest in fieldwork with the late Carl O. Sauer, and published and forthcoming manuscripts attest to his strong reliance on field investigation and data collection. While his two books are of a synthetic nature, Bill continues to author articles based on the analysis of empirical field data. He rarely passes the opportunity to conduct fieldwork in Sonora, Chihuahua, Arizona, New Mexico, or Texas. Bill has also perpetuated this regard for field investigation by encouraging his students to collect data "directly from the landscape."

In addition to his own research, Bill contributes to the discipline by serving on the editorial boards of the *Annals of the AAG*, and *Kiva* (Journal of Southwestern Anthropology). He has been active in the leadership of the Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers, the Cultural Ecology Specialty Group and, of course, CLAG. Nobody could deny the organizational talent and energy that Bill has brought to CLAG. In addition to serving as a member of the Board of Directors, as Vice-Chairperson, and most recently as Chairperson of CLAG, he has helped organize the successful meetings in Querétaro and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

His term as Chair of the Department of Geography at the University of Texas at Austin has been characterized by a new vitality and a promising new direction for the department. His recent efforts have also led to the increased recruitment of high-quality graduate students to the program. Also, in the last several years a growing nucleus of Latin Americanist graduate students at the University of Texas has formed under his tutelage. He has served, or is currently serving, as supervisor to seven doctoral students and twelve masters students, and the majority of these are focused on Latin American issues. He also enjoys teaching undergraduate courses on the regional geography of Latin America and agroecology, and students fill his courses each semester.

Bill's productivity and contributions will undoubtedly continue, as will his influence on the discipline. In sum, William Doolittle's work as a scholar and member of the geography community certainly earns him this distinguished award.

**Dean P. Lambert**[end p. 154]