

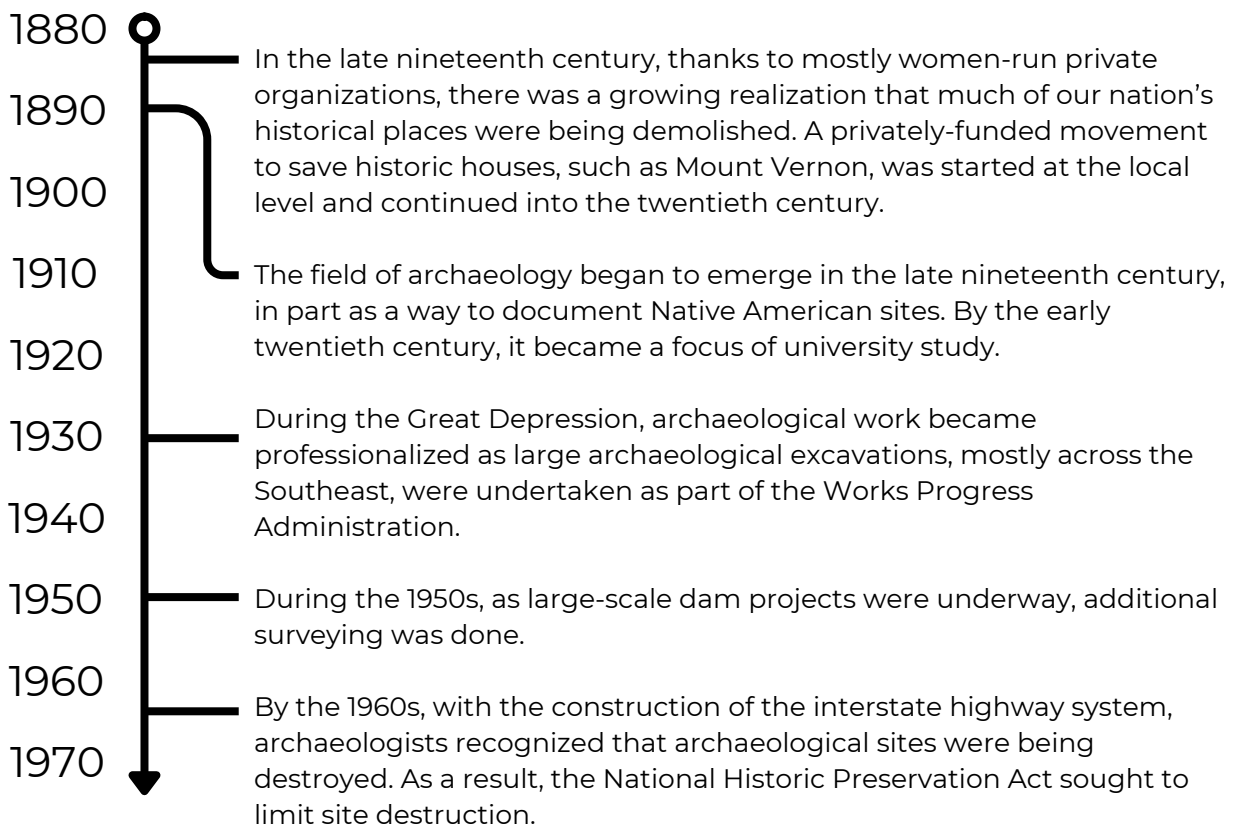


Building a Career in Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management, or **CRM**, is a professional subfield of American archaeology that focuses on the preservation of cultural and historic resources under federal, state, and local laws, policies, and guidelines. Cultural resources are the country's archaeological and historic architectural sites and buildings. CRM developed in response to the enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) which required federal review of undertakings that impact historic aboveground (architectural) or subsurface (archaeological) cultural resources.

The management of cultural resources refers to the documentation of these sites and buildings, but it can also include the excavation of significant sites. Any project requiring public funding, public land, or public permitting must be reviewed under Section 106 of the NHPA and related federal, state or local frameworks. CRM and those working in heritage management fields seek to balance the needs of development and the conservation of culturally significant sites, buildings, structures, and landscapes, such as those listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

History of CRM



The National Historic Preservation Act 1966, as amended:

- Established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and evaluation criteria for resources pertaining to American history, architecture, and archaeology
- Established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) as a separate federal agency to advise on NHPA Section 106 processes, as well as the Keeper of the National Register (Keeper)
- Established the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in each state to maintain state site files and manage historic resources
- Established the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) in each federally recognized tribe to maintain tribal site files and manage historic resources
- Mandated that any construction or action with federal money, land, or permits must
 - Identify archaeological sites and historic resources
 - Determine if those resources are significant for listing on the NRHP
 - Record sites and resources with the SHPO office
- CRM was created as a result of the NRHP mandates

By the mid-1970s many universities were unable to meet the demand of work, although some continue to practice CRM as parts of their program. By the 1980s, dozens of CRM-specific consulting firms had formed. Following this, engineering firms recognized that archaeological compliance was part of construction; many began creating archaeology and architectural history departments to meet this demand in-house.

CRM Today

- 4/5 or 80% of archaeologists in U.S. are employed in CRM
- Over 11,000 full time positions in CRM fields are anticipated between 2022-2031, with archaeologists required for more than 8,000 of them

Growing demand for CRM practitioners has led to some universities to offer CRM-specific training at the undergraduate and graduate levels. While there are many jobs in CRM, there is often a lack of people trained in regulations and survey techniques specific to CRM. Recently, consolidation of long-standing regional firms into national/multi-national CRM corporations and mergers with large architectural and engineering, energy, or construction firms has occurred.

Academia and CRM

Although CRM employs the majority of archaeologists working in the U.S., there has long been a divide between academia and CRM, tied to several explanations:

- Academic archaeologists often assumed that CRM work was subpar because of its time sensitive nature, particularly in the early days of CRM
- Academia often disdained CRM because it was for profit
- Academic positions in archaeology require a PhD while CRM Principal Investigator jobs require a master's degree

Consequently, two separate archaeological employment tracts emerged. Academic programs are better equipped to teach the traditional academic archaeological tract, in part because academic archaeologists lack formal CRM training—some academic programs excepted. However, with the increasing scarcity of academic jobs, more academic programs are incorporating CRM tracts into their programs for all degree levels.

Organizations with CRM Employment Opportunities

- Private consulting
- Federal agency
- State agency
- Tribal government
- Local Government
- Foundations
- Museums
- Engineering and construction firms
- Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- U.S. Military branches
- Law firms and advocacy organizations
- Energy industry corporations

Role Specific Skills

Project Management
 Archaeological Field and Laboratory Methods
 Collections Management
 Geographic Information System (GIS)
 Mapping
 Wilderness or Outdoor Skills
 Professional Writing
 Editing
 Archival and Historic Research
 Photography
 Client Service Skills
 Ability to Research outside one region/period

CRM Roles by Education Level

BA or BS with field school

Potential Roles: Field Tech, Crew Chief, Lab Technician

Responsibilities: Site reconnaissance, field survey, site examination, data recovery, field notes, excavation, mapping, artifact identification, artifact washing, labeling, site file search, archaeological monitoring, due diligence reporting

MA or MS*

Potential Roles: Crew Chief, Field Director, Principal Investigator, Team Lead

Responsibilities: Manage all phases of research, project design and fieldwork; detailed field recordation, lab analysis; data analysis; permit applications and report writing; understanding of state and federal regulations; archival research; project and budget management; crew and team management; client relations and business development; professional and public outreach; tribal and stakeholder consultation

PhD*

Potential Roles: Field Director, Principal Investigator

Responsibilities: Manage all phases of research, project design, and fieldwork; detailed field notes, lab analysis; data analysis; report writing; understanding of state and federal regulations; archival research; project management; client relations

**The Secretary of Interior (SOI) Qualifications for work in CRM require a master's degree for writing reports.*



ANTHROPOLOGY
CAREER READINESS
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Suggested Courses for CRM

- Archaeology Field School
- Archaeology Methods
- Historic Preservation/CRM Regulations and Laws
- Specific Methods Courses (e.g. pottery, lithics, mortuary, geoscience)
- Introductory Photography
- Introductory and Advanced GIS
- Geophysics, Remote Sensing, Drone Operation
- Regional History (for Historical Archaeology)

Other CRM Roles

GIS Specialist
Survey and Mapping Specialist
Lab Analyst
Architectural Historian
Editing and Production
Historic Research
Curation and Museum Work
Human Skeletal and Forensic Analysts
Geophysical and Remote Sensing Specialists
Drone Operator
CRM Monitor

Applying for CRM Jobs

- Ask professors for local resources
- Look at job listings on:
 - [Shovelbums](#)
 - [Historic Preservation Professionals \(Facebook\)](#)
 - [Archaeology Field Techs \(Facebook\)](#)
 - LinkedIn
 - ACRA
 - Specific CRM firm websites
 - Specific national and regional archaeology organizations job boards
 - UsaJobs.gov
- Draft a 1–2-page resume listing skills and work experience



References

1. Register of Professional Archaeologists. <https://rpanet.wildapricot.org>
2. American Cultural Resource Association. <https://acra-crm.org>
3. USAJobs. <https://www.usajobs.gov/>
4. State-specific job boards
5. Regional and state archaeology organizations
6. Shovelbums (field tech jobs). <https://www.shovelbums.org>
7. Archaeology Field Tech Facebook Group. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/228829237227042>
8. Twin Cairns. <https://twincairns.com>
9. Historic Preservation Professionals Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071080595744>
10. Society for American Archaeology. <https://www.saa.org>
11. Society for Historic Archaeology. <https://sha.org>
12. American Anthropology Association. <https://americananthro.org>
13. Society of Black Archaeologists. <https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com>
14. Disabled Archaeologists Network. <https://disabledarchnetwork.weebly.com>
15. PreservationDirectory.com. <https://www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationBlogs/ArticleListings.aspx?catid=3>
16. American Association of State and Local History. <https://jobs.aaslh.org>
17. ArchPod.net podcasts. <https://www.archaeologypodcastnetwork.com/archaeology>
18. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (UK). <https://www.archaeologists.net/jis/jobs>
19. British Columbia Association of Professional Archaeologists. <https://www.bcapa.ca/careers/jobs/>
20. National Park Service Career Guide in Archaeology (not job listings – See USAJobs.gov) <https://www.nps.gov/archeology/public/career.htm>
21. Cornell Institute of Archaeology & Material Studies. (academic and post doc positions mostly in Classics) <https://archaeology.cornell.edu/job-listings>
22. Art & Archaeology Conservation (job board). <https://www.conservationjobboard.com/tag/archaeology-jobs>
23. Archaeology Fieldwork.com. <https://archaeologyfieldwork.com/>
24. Archaeological Institute of America. <https://www.archaeological.org/programs/professionals/careers/>



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