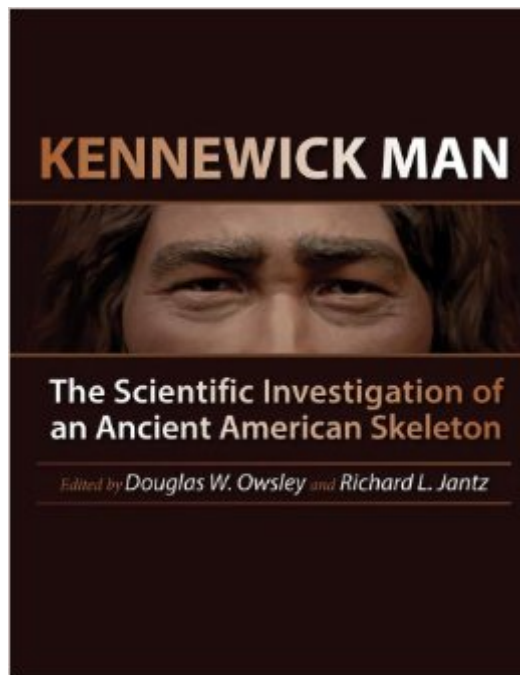


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# Kennewick Man: The Scientific Investigation Of An Ancient American Skeleton (Peopling Of The Americas Publications)



## Synopsis

Almost from the day of its accidental discovery along the banks of the Columbia River in Washington State in July 1996, the ancient skeleton of Kennewick Man has garnered significant attention from scientific and Native American communities as well as public media outlets. This volume represents a collaboration among physical and forensic anthropologists, archaeologists, geologists, and geochemists, among others, and presents the results of the scientific study of this remarkable find. Scholars address a range of topics, from basic aspects of osteological analysis to advanced research focused on Kennewick Man's origins and his relationships to other populations. Interdisciplinary studies, comprehensive data collection and preservation, and applications of technology are all critical to telling Kennewick Man's story. *Kennewick Man: The Scientific Investigation of an Ancient American Skeleton* is written for a discerning professional audience, yet the absorbing story of the remains, their discovery, their curation history, and the extensive amount of detail that skilled scientists have been able to glean from them will appeal to interested and informed general readers. These bones lay silent for nearly nine thousand years, but now, with the aid of dedicated researchers, they can speak about the life of one of the earliest human occupants of North America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When the 10,800 yr old remains of the Buhl Woman were given to the Shoshone Bannock for burial in 1991 because that tribe inhabits the area today, the reasoning was, "how much can you learn

from one skeleton?" The answer is clearly shown in the 668+ page "Kennewick Man, The Scientific Investigation of an Ancient American Skeleton". This beautiful volume tells the story of his discovery, legal issues, scientific studies, context, during that long ago time. If you are curious about life on this edge of the continent as few people arrived, this will peak your curiosity for more. What more is there to learn, what more is there to tell about prehistory? Science has only scratched the surface.

This book is totally exciting. The book is large with heavy premium quality paper and easy to read print. The story, replete with extensive scientific data, is told in an easy to understand flowing manner that is not constrained with redundant arguments. Otherwise it moves right along on a path of adventure that enters the portals of time travelling back 9,000 years to the banks of the mighty Columbia River. I would pay much more for this book than the current price. It will always be the classic study of the Kennewick Man "The Ancient One."

This is an impressive volume, definitely the most impressive of its kind that I've ever read. Not, to my certain knowledge anyway, has anything like it been published on a single specimen, a single individual. As far as I know, neither the much studied King Tut nor the famous Ötzi the Ice Man has received such thorough discussion in a single published work—collections of journal articles maybe, but a single volume, no. That said, however, I would also have to say that the book is not for the average reader on anthropology, archaeology, or paleontology. You'd certainly have to be an uber-friend of an amateur to get much out of it. I've a very broad educational background including some of these disciplines, and I had difficulty wading through some of the chapters. (I had to look up anadromous fish, for instance, which I thought might be single gender or alternating single and dual gender animals, but which turned out to be fish migrating between fresh and sea water habitats.) This is a scientific, multi-disciplinary work. As such it's full of details and professional jargon likely to either bore or overwhelm the casually interested reader—expect to keep a dictionary close at hand. If you want to look at the book and pick out specific interests or at least read the conclusions, I'd recommend a library copy if you live in an area with a large public facility or have access to a university library. Smaller library systems will probably not carry the book unless someone specifically provides for it by way of a donation. Because of its expected limited audience, it's somewhat expensive, about the price of a modest textbook (\$60+ on when last I looked, though the Kindle edition is \$40+). If your budget is like mine, definitely limited, you might prefer to

buy other books. This is more a professional's book, and I suspect that even a professional will pick and choose among the chapters for specific information when he or she reads it. It's a book designed to be referred to in pursuit of data (it has incredible end-chapter bibliographies); information about what happened in the discovery and study of the skeleton and about specific aspects of the skeleton itself, information perhaps relevant to a research project being undertaken by that reader. For such an individual the purchase price may be a steal, especially if they expect to do further work in the field. It should definitely be in a research facility's or university's professional library if they specialize in any of these areas of interest. The book might also make a good addition to a class syllabus for anthropology, archaeology, paleontology, ecology, etc. It provides such a thorough discussion of each aspect of the study subject, that it becomes a good educational tool for students. Selected chapters will show what can be learned, what can't be, what the pitfalls are, the legal issues that arise, etc. To some extent it also illustrates technique, the importance of documentation, and the effects of changing technology on what can be gleaned from both specimen and site, the importance of good conservation for future research, the significance of collecting specimen and samples in situ by professionals, the importance of comparative data from research and other similar specimen, the use of statistical approaches, and what different specialties have to contribute to the overall project. Importantly it shows that even specialists within a field may not agree on interpretation or even on what they see in the physical remains and that with time and more information interpretations change. Archaeology is definitely no longer a lone explorer armed with pick and camel hair brush looking for buried treasure; it's a very expensive and elaborate collaboration of specialists trying to find answers to clear cut questions. Used with consideration of course intent and of the abilities of likely students, it would be a very useful and demonstrative tool. Permission might be obtained to reprint desired portions of the book at a nominal price to limit expense to the student; I'd check with the publisher. More interesting to both the average and the professional reader might be that part of the book which is a history of the pursuit of knowledge, in this case about the Kennewick skeleton, and more especially about the right to pursue such knowledge. It features the legal processes needed to actually access the skeleton for scientific study and ultimately directs itself to the question of whom, if anyone, has an exclusive right to the past. This is an ongoing argument, much like the battle between individual and group rights, but one that this particular specimen brought into the public spotlight and the courts possibly for the first time, at least in this country. It's certainly been followed with interest throughout the world, probably because there is often a socio-political undercurrent, with significant vested interests involved. The

need to resort to the courts established legal precedents and put the issue on the road to social integration as a concept. One has to recognize a problem exists to solve it equitably. As with most such arguments fraught with emotional content, one legal battle will not write the outcome in stone. There is passion on both sides which ensures an ongoing conflict unless some degree of detente can be reached. Always difficult when large numbers of people are involved and a consensus even on one side is difficult, let alone on both. One should however remember that this book is written with a specific point of view, that of the scientists, and does not in any way advocate for its opponents. To be perfectly fair one should probably read a book about the topic written from the perspective of the other side (in this case Native Americans) after all, to have a really good argument you do need at least two sides; ask any husband and wife!

We live along the Columbia River. I drive by the spot where Kennewick Man was found whenever I go to where I tutor. I remember when he was found. I remember one of our church members being asked to look at him. The book is all you ever wanted to know and will be the star at this Thanksgiving. Thank you to all the folks who put this book together. An important work.

Gorgeously illustrated tome. Cites the entire investigation step-by-step including what appears to be a concerted effort between BLM, Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE), and Indian tribes to cover this up. Kennewick Man does not fit the narrative of "Native Americans", as Indians, having been the first North American settlers. The scientists were given a very limited time to investigate the skeleton, and Indian tribes are in high anxiety to get their hands on it to bury it as deep and as far from scrutiny as possible. Kennewick Man is not Indian. He is either Caucasoid or Mongoloid but without further DNA diagnosis there can be no determination of his true origin. The BLM and ACoE have kept the skeleton locked away from any investigatory research since the first inspection was done. They, along with Indian tribes, have done their level best to keep the skeleton under wraps and away from the prying eyes of the archaeological anthropologists. Kennewick Man turns the entire historical record on it's head and there are those who are determined that the truth will never be revealed. The book is not as technical as some reviews have stated. If you have a good grasp of the English language, can discern the difference between skeletal appendages, and the ability to mentally catalog that information you can understand this encyclopedic effort.

This book is, in one word, FABULOUS. I had heard, years ago, about the Corps of Engineers dumping unheard of tons of rock on the shore of a river, but didn't understand the significance until

the article in SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE explained the heroic investigation and legal battles to perform those investigations achieved by the authors and their associates as published in this beautifully illustrated and organized book. I am not a scientist, merely a professional artist and long time art instructor, but have had a loifelong interest in geology and anthropology, having grown up on a ranch in Texas where we spent a lot of leisure time hunting fossils on mountain tops and Apache arrowheads in a pasture on a remote part of the ranch. It will no doubt take me many months, or even years, to read the articles and study the amazing illustrations, but it will be an exciting mystery, and I have already begun the journey .

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