

Conference Agenda

Session

SYM-017A: "Historical Archaeology with Canon on the Side, Please": In Honor of Mary C. Beaudry (1950-2020) Part 1

Time: Friday, 07/Jun/2022: 8:00am - 12:00pm

Location: Franklin Hall B - Room 8

Session Chair: Lu Ann DeCunzo

Session Chair: Karen B. Metheny

Session Chair: Sara Mascia

Discussant: Lu Ann DeCunzo

Discussant: Sara Mascia

Discussant: Karen B. Metheny

Session Abstract

Mary C. Beaudry was a leading archaeologist, who worked creatively and diligently to "reinvent historical archaeology" and whose work has influenced our field on an international scale. During her career at Boston University, she also trained two generations of historical archaeologists who themselves are now transforming our practice. Embracing interpretive approaches to "ethnography in retrospect," she modeled close and critical readings of diverse material culture and landscapes. Her fieldwork spanned the east coast of North America, the Caribbean, and the British Isles. Beaudry examined a remarkable range of topics, from colonialism and identity to agriculture and rural life, urbanization, and industrialization, and from households and health to mobility, poverty, and "shadow and intimate economies." A persistent, outspoken advocate for 'activating' those voices silenced or ignored in the past and in the present, Beaudry spoke to the challenges facing archaeology and the ethics of our practice.

Presentations

8:00am - 8:15am

Mary C. Beaudry: Life, Career, and Contributions to Historical Archaeology

Sara Mascia¹, Karen B. Metheny², Lu Ann DeCunzo³

¹Historical Perspectives; ²Boston University; ³University of Delaware

Mary C. Beaudry was one of the most dominant and outspoken leaders in the field of Historical Archaeology. During her career she had an exemplary record of scholarship, mentoring, and service and her wide-ranging interests in so many different approaches to studying the past was truly impressive. At Boston University, her insatiable curiosity for research facilitated an environment for constant creativity and innovation. A glance through the abstracts in this session demonstrates the breadth of her contributions as well as the depth of her influence on her students and colleagues. Serving as the introduction to this session, this paper will set the table for a buffet of topics inspired by Mary's deep and abiding impact on our field.

8:15am - 8:30am

Mary C. Beaudry: The Missing Virginia Years, 1972 to 1980

Patricia Samford¹, Julia A. King²

¹Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab, United States of America; ²St. Mary's College of Maryland, United States of America

Biographies of Mary Beaudry's career usually begin in Virginia, where Mary was an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary. There, Mary's interest in archaeology was born when she volunteered on a project for the late Norman Barka at Maycock's Point. Mary left Williamsburg for Brown University in 1972, preparing her dissertation on colonial probate inventories. The biographical narrative continues, and then, bam!-- it's suddenly 1980 and Mary has been offered a job at Boston University. Missing from these accounts is Mary's work in Virginia from 1972 until she left for Boston and her impact on an emerging generation of archaeologists, not much younger than Mary herself. We share our experiences as Mary students during these missing years.

8:30am - 8:45am

Memories of Mary Beaudry: Creating an Interdisciplinary Historical Archaeology

Stephen A. Mrozowski

University of Massachusetts Boston, United States of America

I first met Mary Beaudry in 1977 when she was a graduate student at Brown University, and I was a staff archaeologist for the Public Archaeology Laboratory at Brown. We would later share responsibility for the Lowell Archaeological Survey – she has the Boston University of Principle Investigator, and I was the Project Archaeologist for the Division of Cultural Resources for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service. The collaboration with Mary was among the most productive intellectual relationships I would have during my career. It was dynamic, stimulating and complicated at times. There are lessons from that collaboration that continue to serve as examples of best practices today. Along with a relationship that was filled with emotion, laughter, a shared love of music, and amazing productivity, the notion of interdisciplinary collaboration that helped to shape our work in Lowell remains a model for such work today.

8:45am - 9:00am

My Collegial Interactions With Mary Beaudry

Suzanne Spencer-Wood

Oakland University, United States of America

Mary Beaudry was hired at Boston University in 1980, shortly after I was hired at University of Massachusetts/Boston in 1978. We became friendly colleagues, shared drives to conferences and worked together in several professional capacities, including as founding members of the women's caucus that became the SHA Gender and Minority Affairs committee. I also contributed in substantial ways to Mary's research by sharing ideas and sources. In addition, I invited Mary to co-chair the 1994 SHA symposium I organized entitled "What is Feminist Theory?" Our shared interests in household archaeology, social inequality and gender power dynamics led us both to contribute separate articles to 1) the 1984 issue on household archaeology in *Man in the Northeast*, 2) *Equity Issues for Women in Archaeology* (1994 AAA Archaeological Papers);

and separate chapters in 1) the 1988 Chacmool Conference Proceedings (1989), 2) *The Archaeology of Inequality* (1991), and 3) *Household Chores/Household Choices* (2004).

9:00am - 9:30am

15min presentation + 15min break

Conceptualizing Historic Households and Domestic Site Structure: My Early Conversations with Mary Beaudry

Marley R. Brown III

College of William and Mary, United States of America

In the spring of 1975, Mary Beaudry offered to accompany me to the annual meeting of the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology held in those days at Bear Mountain State Park on the Hudson. I had been asked to give the plenary address on my dissertation project - The Mott Farm Project: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Historical Archaeology. In helping me prepare that presentation, and in her commentary afterwards, Mary gave me extremely helpful insights into how to think about the Mott family, the structure of the site itself, and the entire subject of household archaeology. Many of these ideas would soon appear in her early publications on the historical household, historic land use patterns, and the historical archaeology of domestic sites. They constitute important early contributions to understanding a subject that engaged Mary's interest her entire career and stimulated her remarkable interpretive insight for more than forty years.

9:30am - 9:45am

A Journey Without Maps: Following the path of the archaeological genealogy of Mary Beaudry

Luke Pecoraro

Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, United States of America

The scope and nature of Mary Beaudry's contextual approach towards the archaeology of households is a significant legacy of her contribution to historical archaeology both in the United States and abroad. As a student and friend of Mary's, overtime I came to recognize that the provocative nature of her methodology was rooted in telling stories of the sometimes voiceless historical actors, and that the concepts she used were not drawn from a singular source but a combination of her practicing colleagues. Through decades of fieldwork and teaching, the people she met along the way had lasting impacts that kept her current in the field and influenced the knowledge she imparted to students. Drawing from my path and its intersections with Mary's, this presentation places the emphasis on people towards telling the story of her important archaeological life.

9:45am - 10:00am

The Dynamics of Small Things Remembered: Giving Voice to A Silenced Past

Stephen A Brighton

University of Maryland, United States of America

Mary Beaudry's impact on archaeology is immense and reaches all corners of the discipline. More than anything, it was her commitment to the individual and their ability to make meaningful choices throughout the course of everyday life. Ultimately, she created a dynamic landscape where she gave a voice to people that would have otherwise been silenced. This paper focuses on two of the more profound impacts Mary has had on how I think through archaeology and material culture. The first entails the importance of interpreting the contextual nature of symbols in action and how they give meaning to and are given meaning by individuals. The second revolves around the understanding of the complex and shifting notions of home and household. The following pages will demonstrate Mary's influence through my research detailing the experiences of rural Irish households between 1860 and 1930 in the Skibbereen area of County Cork, Ireland.

10:00am - 10:15am

Biographies and the Beaudry Legacy

Christina J. Hodge¹, Jessica S. MacLean², Carolyn L. White³

¹Stanford University; ²New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission; ³University of Nevada, Reno

Co-presenter Carolyn's White's 2009 edited volume *The Materiality of Individuality* is a capsule of Mary's influence, in which we and several others of her circle appear. That volume and this session inspire us to reflect on how Mary entangled object and individual biography with such potent interpretive effect; how deeply this worldview influences our own scholarship; and how it shapes our individual work as archaeological educators and curators. We emerged from Mary's tutelage with the conviction that everything can—and maybe should—be treated like a "small find": an individuated object with its own life history tied to the life histories of everyone who encountered it past, present, and future, including us. One of Mary's legacies is that her approach to the entangled biographies of things and people functions as an ethical stance. She motivates us to find the significance of every little thing.

10:15am - 10:30am

Stitched in Time: Mary Beaudry's influence on the study of small finds

Diana Loren

Harvard University, United States of America

From her work on Spencer-Peirce-Little House to her groundbreaking publication *Findings*, Mary Beaudry's focus on small finds has influenced a generation of scholars. Because small finds, such as artifacts of clothing and needlework, are relatively uncommon in most archaeological sites, such artifacts tend to receive cursory attention in archaeological analysis as their presumed function is seemingly well-known: a straight pin is used for sewing. In her work, however, Beaudry rejected that common interpretation and she took a deeper look into this artifact category to illuminate nuanced and intensely personal stories that could be found in just a simple item, such as a straight pin. Through her work, Beaudry stitched together a new community of scholars interested in small finds related to clothing and sewing. In this paper, I provide just a brief overview of Mary Beaudry's impact (and wit) in the study of small finds within historical archaeology.

10:30am - 11:00am

15min presentation + 15min break

Found: Mary Beaudry's Contributions to the Archaeology of Sewing, a Boston Perspective

Jennifer Poulsen

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, United States of America

Published in 2006, Mary Beaudry's *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing* was the product of years of research and personal interest in sewing and small finds. More broadly, her work on sewing reflected a personal and persistent commitment to highlighting

the role, influence, and authority of women, both within the discipline and throughout history. We saw this commitment from her earliest published works until her 2020 Plenary talk at Boston SHA, where she reminded us of how far our discipline has come for gender equality but cautioned us to remember our obligations and commitments to continue moving the needle forward. This paper celebrates Mary Beaudry's contributions to the archaeology of sewing and an understanding of women's labor and applies her work to sewing and textile artifacts recovered from the Dorchester Industrial School site in Boston, MA.

11:00am - 11:15am

Artifacts and Personal Identity: Reflecting on MCB

Carolyn White

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA RENO, United States of America

In 2008 I co-authored an article with Mary Beaudry entitled "Artifacts and Personal Identity" published in the *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*. Mary was my teacher, mentor, and colleague, and each of these roles is contained within the work. Our collaboration was a run within a narrows—a place in which our perspectives thoroughly overlapped and intermingled through a set of geographic and temporal particularities. In this paper I reflect on the currents that brought us toward that article and propelled us afterward into wider parts of the same sea.

11:15am - 11:30am

Objects, Collections, Texts, Time: A Close Reading of a 19th-century "Pilgrim Box"

Elizabeth S. Pena

Graduate Theological Union, United States of America

In 1868, a Presbyterian minister from upstate New York traveled to the "Holy Land," where he acquired some 28 objects. These objects became a collection, and individual items became compound objects when linked to meaning-making Biblical texts. Since the pilgrim box traveled so widely – in geography, ownership, use, and perception – it encourages examination from multiple vantage points. People have imposed identities on the pilgrim box, while the objects themselves have continued to exert their own force as "vibrant matter." The pilgrim box has been a fund-raising device in support of church-sponsored missionary activity; a family heirloom donated to a museum for posterity; part of an expansive museum anthropology collection; a static museum display; and a subject for scientific analysis. With this close reading, I reflect on all I learned from Mary Beaudry about the dynamism of material culture as "things-in-motion" through shifting values, changing historical context, and different cultural settings.

11:30am - 12:00pm

15min presentation + 15min discussion

Dining with M. — How Mary C. Beaudry Brought Seeds, Bones and Sherds Back to Life

Konrad A. Antczak^{1,2}

¹Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain; ²Unidad de Estudios Arqueológicos, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Venezuela

Like no other, Mary looked beyond sherds to whole plates, cups, mugs, and jugs — and beyond these — to the vibrant assemblage of practice they were part and parcel of in everyday life. Her emphasis on mealtimes as "embodied experiences" and "total events", where people and things were enveloped by an ambiance of sounds, smells, sights and tastes, and her vast knowledge, deft analytical eye, and charismatic prose resulted not only in outstanding microhistories, but in unrivalled micro-historical archaeologies. Mary's untimely loss leaves us all with the many memorable meals we shared with her — be they oysters in a gastropub in Williamsburg, or "mutton roasted & pudding" at an elegant supper on a Newbury farm. Let us honor M.'s memory and celebrate her legacy in historical archaeology by following in her large footsteps and continuing to bring seeds, bones, and sherds carefully and creatively back to life.