

Conference Agenda

Session

SYM-017B: "Historical Archaeology with Canon on the Side, Please": In Honor of Mary C. Beaudry (1950-2020) (Part 2)

Time: Friday, 07/Jan/2022: 1:00pm - 5:00pm

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

1:00pm - 1:15pm

An Intellectual Genealogy of Plymouth Colony Archaeology

David B Landon, Christa M Beranek

UMass Boston, Fiske Center for Archaeological Research

One of Dr. Mary Beaudry's long-term research interests was in the archaeology of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. This paper traces some of the history and legacies of that interest, including Mary's research on Deetz's archaeological collections in the 1980s, her encouragement of her students' research on the Plymouth Colony, and her broad influences on the generations of archaeologists and curators she trained who followed her. Her close attention to material culture, research on foodways, and experience in urban archaeology all play a role in this story. We trace these legacies to describe how they contributed to our long-term collaborative project which combines a major reanalysis of extant archaeological collections with new excavations of 17th-century sites in downtown Plymouth.

1:15pm - 1:30pm

Cooking with Mary: How Household Archaeology, Sensory Engagement, and Food Come Together

Karen B. Metheny

Boston University, United States of America

Mary Beaudry's contributions to historical archaeology were diverse and, in many ways, foundational. Over the course of her career, Mary explored the ways historical cultures conceptualized their world and themselves, from the linguistic evidence of probate inventories, to household goods and small finds as expressions of identity, to the material culture of cooking and dining. In this presentation, I will focus on the intersection of three of Mary's key interests: food archaeology, sensory engagement, and household archaeology. Together, these areas connect her (and us) intimately to material culture, to households, and to past human experience. Her concept of assemblages of practices as applied to meals and mealtimes highlights the importance of envisioning people, things, and sensory experience together.

1:30pm - 1:45pm

Digging Beantown: Mary Beaudry's Boston

Joseph M. Bagley

City of Boston Archaeology Program, United States of America

Dr. Mary Beaudry spent decades digging, working, and eating in Boston. This paper celebrates Mary's contributions to the city, from some of the first historical archaeological excavations in Boston, to her mentorship of many working archaeologists in the region, and to her love of local oysters and the Boston Red Sox. The paper concludes with a consideration of Mary's ongoing and future impacts to archaeology in Boston.

1:45pm - 2:00pm

Mary Beaudry's Legacy: A View from Historic St. Mary's City

Travis G. Parno

Historic St. Mary's City, United States of America

This paper traces Mary Beaudry's legacy in two intertwined narratives: one that follows Mary's time (1997-2005) as a commissioner of the Historic St. Mary's City Commission (HSMCC) and one that examines the current research trajectory of the Historic St. Mary's City Department of Research and Collections. Mary's tenure as a commissioner of the HSMCC came during a period of rapid expansion for the museum when historical stories were being teased from major archaeological projects that led to dynamic exhibits housed in reconstructed colonial buildings. Mary's influence was felt as much then as it is today as the museum reexamines, reworks, and rewrites the stories that we tell to encompass a more inclusive, more personal, and still rigorously researched Maryland history. Mary would demand nothing less.

2:00pm - 2:30pm

15min presentation + 15min break

A Propitious Influence: Mary Beaudry's Contributions to Historical and Contemporary Archaeology in the Caribbean**Krysta Ryzewski**

Wayne State University, United States of America

Mary Beaudry never promoted herself as an island archaeologist, but throughout the course of her accomplished career she conducted or participated on research projects on several islands, including in the Boston Harbor, the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, and Nevis and Montserrat in the Caribbean. Although her involvement in Caribbean archaeology is not well-represented by her publication record, she was a major influence in shaping the scope and outcomes of several projects in the region. In this presentation I reflect upon Beaudry's unsung contributions to Caribbean archaeology, paying special attention to her research and her legacy on Montserrat. I will discuss historical and contemporary archaeological sites documented by the Survey and Landscape Archaeology on Montserrat project, which I co-direct, and how she contributed to their investigations and interpretations.

2:30pm - 2:45pm**The shadow of Mary Beaudry in Antarctic Archeology****Andres Zarankin¹, María Jimena Cruz²**¹UFMG, Brazil; ²Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, CONICET, Argentina

The ideas and proposals of Mary Beaudry have left their mark, on Historical Archaeology and of course on the way we approach the works on the first human occupations, at the beginning of the 19th century, of the Antarctic continent. Groups of marine mammal hunters came to these new territories in search of animals to supply the growing world demand for oil and skins. Master narratives made the stories of these people invisible, until archeology, based on approaches such as Mary's, changed the focus of interest of the discipline towards subordinate groups. In this presentation we will discuss some issues studied by the project in connection with the proposals of Mary Beaudry.

2:45pm - 3:00pm**From One Mary to Another: An Archaeological Biography****Mary K Praetzelis¹, Adrian C Praetzelis²**¹Independent Scholar, United States of America; ²Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA

I met Mary B. at the 1985 Boston SHA meeting. She was the conference organizer, but nevertheless womaning the registration table when I picked up our packets just before the free reception. Mary recognized my name—which made me feel important—and proceeded to tell me what was bothering her. I thought it was a little early to have had too much to drink, but that was just Mary—she generally looked hung over or about to become so. Despite sharing a first name, childhoods being eldest among numerous siblings, and a very lapsed Catholic faith, Mary and I had little in common. Mary B. was a budding academic superstar; I was a working mom. Still, we became good friends. So many memories, Mary was a wonderful correspondent, dinner partner, and guest. I'd imagined more time—I was wrong. This paper examines a friendship using Archaeological Biography as a tool.

3:00pm - 3:15pm**Reflecting on Point of View: Telling Stories with Archaeology****Laura E Masur**

Catholic University, United States of America

Mary Beaudry pioneered the art of telling first-person narratives that enable artifacts to come alive. She taught us that although there are many mediums for archaeological writing, the primary goal of an archaeologist is to tell stories. Stories enable us to connect places and things with people, the ultimate subject of archaeology as anthropology. Even though Mary never explicitly required me to experiment with this narrative tool, I find myself following her example and continually seeing and telling stories as I research and write. In particular, stories help me to see plantations through the eyes of enslaved men, women, and children. I privilege their stories, in an effort to reshape narratives of St. Ingoes Plantation in southern Maryland, and other Jesuit sites throughout the Middle Atlantic region.

3:15pm - 3:45pm**15min presentation + 15min break****Something Distinctly Archaeological: Conducting Historical Archaeologies with (and Without) Documents****Laura McAtackney**

Aarhus University, Denmark

Mary Beaudry had a profound impact not only on everyone who had the privilege to know her but on the very foundations of how we think about and do historical archaeology. Developing and enhancing Deetzian interests in the 'small things forgotten', Beaudry provided much needed insights into how text and materials relate, how seemingly insignificant gendered objects can inform our knowledge of the layers of society that generally don't write the archival sources and how we work with assemblages. She was an immensely insightful and diligent researcher who opened up historical archaeology to beyond the male elites and did so in generous and ethical ways. This paper will explore some of Beaudry's important insights in the relationship between text and material culture. it will trace how Beaudry's writings influenced how we think and do historical archaeology (and posit some thoughts on what more we can do with her writings).

3:45pm - 4:00pm**"Subversive Poetics": Mary Beaudry's Archaeology of Language****Dan Hicks**

OXFORD UNIVERSITY, United Kingdom

Mary Beaudry practiced the kind of historical archaeology defined not merely by the presence of texts, but by the excavation of language. Departing from the cognitive archaeology of Jim Deetz, but retaining his sense for spinning a good yarn, her interest was more in using words than reconstructing ideas. From reading probate inventories as "words for things" to reading "the subversive poetics of housework", she followed Mary Douglas's call for writing "in the active voice". This paper reads Mary Beaudry's archaeology as a linguistic, literary, conversational strategy wrought with her fingers on computer keys as if they were thimbles, scissors, knitting needles. Mary's archaeology collapsed speech acts into everyday practices like needlework and sewing. As if her subversive poetics could operate at the scale of cities, of landscapes, of oceans, of academic disciplines. Embroidering the past yes, clothing it; "engendering" it even; but also taking in the piecework of mending.

4:00pm - 4:15pm

"It Is the Devil's Business": Acceptable Labor, Clandestine Labor, and Sex Work**Jade Luiz**

Independent Researcher, United States of America

Slowly, twenty-first century Americans are beginning to accept the reality that sex work is real work. As a component of this, scholars exploring historical sex work in Boston explore this reality within the context of nineteenth century concepts of labor, acceptable versus clandestine work, and how these distinctions intersected with the reality of poverty. Mary Beaudry's extensive work on identity and her desire to fully explore the humanity of the residents of the 27/29 Endicott Street brothel was instrumental in drawing out this narrative, especially through understanding the work available to women in the nineteenth century and the permissibility of clandestine jobs like prostitution among the poor. These complex themes are reflected in both the material culture related to the realities of sex work as work as well as better understanding the impoverished upbringings of several of the historical figures associated with the brothel at 27/29 Endicott Street.

4:15pm - 4:45pm**15min presentation + 15min discussion****Archaeology in a Time of Climate Change, a Challenge for the This Generation and the Next: An Essay in Honor of Mary C. Beaudry****Lauren J. Cook**

Dewberry Engineers, United States of America

During her career and life as a scholar, educator, mentor, colleague and friend, Mary Beaudry inspired us. To her, objects were not mere tools, but elements in discourse, products and conveyors of culture. She encouraged us to think as archaeologists, seeking solution of problems in their creation, rethinking premises. Theory is built on practice, and both are built on data. Recently, hear that we live in unprecedented times. Drought, storm, fire and pestilence, We, as a species, have faced all of this before. But rapidly changing climate poses an unprecedented challenge, both to our discipline and to the resources on which it is based. Disasters, and the process of recovering from them have tremendous potential to damage and destroy archaeological resources. The scale, scope, and unique requirements of disaster recovery pose problems that will benefit from all of our knowledge and skills.