

Elizabeth Baldwin Garland (Betsy) 1930–2020

“That Betsy is quite a gal!” By the time this comment was relayed to Betsy Garland she had been active in Michigan archaeology for nearly three decades and recognized Midwestern high praise when she heard it. Also by this time, the late 1990s, Betsy’s regional archaeology career bookmarked the entire prehistoric record from Paleo-Indian thru Upper Mississippian; all of it drew her equal interest and dedication. At the beginning, however, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were compromises of the type historically made by women in professional fields. After graduating from Wellesley College with a B.S. in geology, Betsy embarked on a tour of Europe and North Africa via plane, ship, train and camel. Upon her return to the U.S., Betsy entered graduate school, first earning an M.A. in anthropology at Radcliffe, and then a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1967. Despite the opportunities offered by the Harvard Anthropology Department, it was a difficult place for female scholars wanting to do their own original research. Women were discouraged from archaeological field work, and steered instead toward dissertations based on fieldwork done by others, or to library research topics. In this atmosphere, Betsy completed her dissertation, *The Obion Site: a Middle Mississippian Center in Western Tennessee*. Obion had been excavated by an early 20th century Harvard team, and again in 1940 as a University of Tennessee project under the direction of Douglas Osborne. Finally, in 1992, with the strong support of Dr. Robert Mainfort, archaeologist at Pinson Mounds, the Tennessee Division of Archaeology, the dissertation was published by the Cobb Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University. The Obion monograph is comprehensive, presenting the findings of early field investigations, as well as her own detailed analysis of Mississippian ceramic and non-ceramic and architectural technological data. Included in the volume are brief commentaries on varied aspects of Mississippian by James Stoltman, Stephen Williams and Robert Mainfort. A review of the monograph by Timothy R. Pauketat appears in *Southeastern Archaeology* 1999, Vol. 18 (1).



Val Canouts, Marla Buckmaster & Betsy Garland at MSU-WMU Field School crew house (1965)



Mushroom Site Field School (1981)

State universities and colleges across the Midwest during the 1960’s were developing new departments devoted to anthropology. In 1966, Western Michigan University recruited Betsy to join the faculty of a Department of Anthropology, recently split off from the Sociology Department to become its own entity. Elizabeth Baldwin was the third hire. An observer who was a student at the time remembers WMU administrators, faculty and staff speaking of the good fortune in recruiting a Harvard PhD, who, if male, would have been unavailable to a state university. The relationship was equally fortunate for Betsy, who found her WMU colleagues shared her holistic, interdisciplinary approach to anthropology. They agreed on a program of graduate study requiring that all students take courses in three core areas of anthropology as the basis for understanding the discipline. Simultaneously with beginning an academic career, Betsy organized the Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of the Michigan Archaeological Society, as a means of engaging with avocational archaeologists to locate, record and test sites. The entire west Michigan region, like much of the Mid-Continent, was archaeologically little known. The first members of the chapter were encouraged to take WMU classes in prehistory. Many did so and went further, participating in field schools, undertaking significant field research, earning degrees in anthropology and becoming lifelong friends of Betsy.

At WMU, Betsy introduced field schools focused on the west Michigan region. The first such field school, however, was located in the northern Lower Peninsula, as a joint effort co-directed by Betsy Baldwin and Dr. Charles (Chuck) Cleland of Michigan State University. Like Betsy, Chuck was a new hire in an emerging Anthropology program. He recalls that neither university department had any basic archeological equipment such as screens, shovels, bags, tape measures etc., and budgets were minimal. He and Betsy pooled their resources, \$2500 from each school, and purchased essential supplies to be shared in a joint field school. Together they also rented housing for the first student crew (the kids) and opened a bank account for field school business in the small town of Lake City, Michigan. Most of "the kids" were Midwesterners who had never met anyone like Betsy Baldwin, a female professional archaeologist and Harvard graduate. They soon found she was far from intimidating, but a person with a sense of humor who enjoyed a beer with the crew at the end of a hot day. To the surprise of some among the students, this slim intellectual Easterner also expressed her wish to marry "if the right man came along", and to have a family of her own.

Simultaneously with beginning the WMU archaeology program, the local Kalamazoo chapter of the Michigan Archaeological Society, and serving as editor of *The Michigan Archaeologist*, Betsy married Bill Garland, a WMU professor of Anthropology. Within a few years another personal goal was met as she gave birth to two children, Meghan and Alex. Wishing to spend more time with her young children, in 1976 Betsy formally requested half-time status at the university, with the understanding that she would return to full time faculty after the children were older. Her request to regain full time faculty status, repeated regularly, was eventually granted in 1986. Regardless of official standing with WMU, Betsy maintained a full time effort in archaeology, actively pursuing research grants and contracts to enhance the west Michigan regional archaeological record.

William (Bill) Cremin, a recent Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University, joined the WMU faculty in 1976 with specialties in Great Lakes archaeology and paleoethnobotany. He and Betsy cooperated over the years in large scale survey projects, including the Kalamazoo River Basin survey, and alternated years directing the annual field school. In the late 70's, Betsy's field school investigations at the Elam Site on the Kalamazoo River disclosed Early Woodland and Upper Mississippian components, both proving to be significant in the context of Midwestern archaeology, especially with regard to subsistence data. The Upper Mississippian component comprised a seasonal sturgeon fishing station with large roasting pit features containing layered sturgeon bone and American lotus tubers. Faunal and floral remains and roasting pit morphology were subjects of several MA theses and conference papers, including a 1989 paper by Garland at the Iowa City Midwest Conference.

In 1981, the Michigan Departments of Transportation and State awarded Betsy Garland a Phase III mitigation



Betsy & US-31 Project student lab crew, including future Midwest archaeologists Mike Higgins, Caven Clark & Katie Parker (1982)

contract for the US-31 Highway Project in St. Joseph County, southwest Michigan. With \$538,000 allotted, up to that time US-31 was the largest archaeology project in Michigan, and ushered in a new CRM era in the state. During the first two field seasons five sites were excavated, with primary occupations spanning the Late Archaic/ Early Woodland periods. Field techniques employed machine stripping of sites to expose entire living surfaces; a strategy pioneered by the Illinois FAI-270 Project but not previously tried in Michigan. The Betsy Garland approach to archaeology on this enormous scale was interdisciplinary, with

biologists, geomorphologists and palynologists each contributing their expertise to enrich understanding of prehistoric life in the St. Joseph River Valley. A field crew of 25, plus four graduate student supervisors, were housed in cabins of a rundown resort, Camp Potawatomie, on the shore of Lake Michigan near the town of Coloma. Inadequate plumbing, leaky roofs and other common domestic complaints relayed to Dr. Garland were offset by miles of sandy beach, a swim in the lake at day's end, and sunset views from Lake Michigan bluffs.



Jan Brashler, Betsy Garland, Peg Holman, Bill Lovis, Terry Martin at Zemaitis Site (1993)

The US-31 Project data provided the basis for the Garland chapter in *Early Woodland Archaeology*, published in 1986 by the Center for American Archaeology, Kampsville. The full report of US-31 investigations was presented a few years later in *Late Archaic and Early Woodland Adaptation in the Lower St. Joseph River Valley*, edited by Elizabeth Baldwin Garland, the second volume in an MDOT archaeological report series.

Shortly after the US 31 Phase III Project concluded, Betsy received a report of mastodon remains uncovered at a sod farm in Van Buren County. The potential for a Paleo-Indian butchering site immediately led Betsy and a crew of field school students and volunteers to several weeks of excavation in muck and clay. The mastodon find was well-publicized in the local press, drawing visitors daily to observe excavations, for most of them the first and only exposure to field archaeology. By the conclusion, tusks, teeth and a partial skeleton had been recovered, but no direct evidence for early human involvement. The mastodon excavation, including archaeological field methodology, lab processing and curation, were subjects of a 1985 article in *The Michigan Archaeologist*, co-authored by Garland and Cogswell.

Retirement from WMU in 1992 did not mean the end of active field research for Betsy, who had initiated yet another major excavation, this one at Wymer West Knoll, a site located on the margins of the US-31 Project and incurring highway construction impacts. Wymer West Knoll contained a major Early Woodland component, as well as an Upper Mississippian habitation with structures and numerous pit features. Results of investigations were first reported by Betsy in a paper at the 1991 LaCrosse Midwest Conference. In the project completion report to MDOT, Betsy noted detailed ceramic evidence for a ca. 1200 A.D. site-unit intrusion at Wymer West Knoll, while also underscoring that "Wymer people were not displaced Cahokians, but perhaps a Middle Mississippian influenced population."

Betsy's work over four decades has been magnified by the many students taught and/or mentored who went on to become professionals themselves across the Midwest, and by the many avocational archaeologists she guided and encouraged. Dozens of MA and PhD theses, journal articles, conference papers and research reports written by Betsy and her students are tangible and lasting evidence of her influence in Midwest archaeology. A number of former students and colleagues contributed to a 1996 Festschrift volume in her honor, *Investigating the Archaeological Record of the Great Lakes State*. In 2002, Betsy was recognized by WMU as an Outstanding Emeritus Scholar, only the second-ever retired faculty member to receive this award. Quoting Chuck Cleland recently, "Betsy was an outstanding teacher, professional mentor and valued colleague. Her skill, knowledge and kindness leave an indelible legacy on Michigan archaeology that will shine bright into the future."

Elizabeth Baldwin Garland Selected Bibliography

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