

## Charlotte Day Gower Chapman (1902-1982): Archaeologist, Ethnologist, or Physical Anthropologist?

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### PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGIST?

Charlotte Day Gower was the first woman to earn a PhD in anthropology at the University of Chicago, and she figures prominently but silently in Cole and Deuel's *Rediscovering Illinois*. She was trained as a four field anthropologist, and she published across the subfields. The most thorough account of her life is Lepowsky's book chapter (2000), which is informed by George Stocking's 1977 interview with Gower and Lepowsky work at University of Wisconsin, where Gower was the first—and forgotten—female member of the department.

Gower was born in Kankakee, Illinois, in 1902. Her father was a lawyer, and later a judge, and her family has long been involved in Midwestern politics.

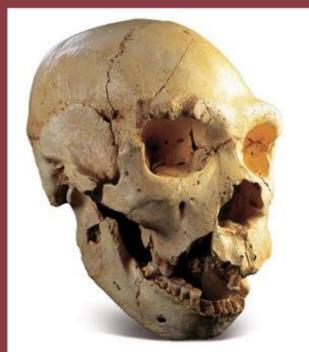
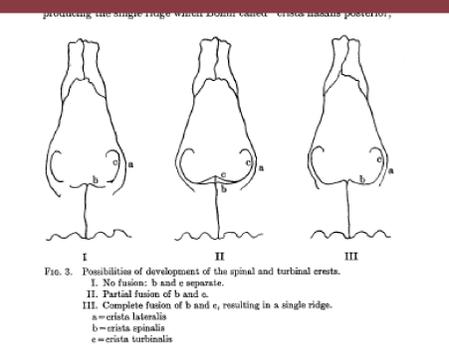
She attended Smith College as a pre-med student, graduating with at BA in Psychology in 1922. At Smith she studied with Harris Hawthorne Wilder, 1864-1928. Wilder trained his students in the Broca methods of craniometry and anthropometry. He mentored several other women who became physical anthropologists, among them Marian Knight Steckel and Inez Whipple (Powell et al. 2006). Like his other students she spend a summer at the American School of Prehistoric Research, She attended Smith College as a pre-med student, graduating with at BA in Psychology in 1922. At Smith she studied with Harris Hawthorne Wilder, 1864-1928. Wilder trained his students in the Broca methods of craniometry and anthropometry. He mentored several other women who became physical anthropologists, among them excavating and visiting sites and museums in Europe. Gower published her honors thesis on variations of the piriform aperture in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology (1923). It has been cited many times as the definitive description of the margins of the bony nose (Sullivan and Hellman 1925; Williams 1956; Franciscus 1999; McCollum 2000). Her article has enjoyed a renaissance in popularity in human paleontology in the past two decades. This article alone would be sufficient to earn her recognition as a physical anthropologist.

In his compendium on women in American archaeology, *Cultural Negotiations*, David Browman celebrates her field work with Cole in Illinois in 1926-27, although she might better be remembered as a Caribbeanist on the strength of her published masters thesis. Browman suggests that her M.A. thesis was predominantly a work of archaeology, and Lepowsky points out that she visited collections "at Philadelphia, the Heye Museum, and the Smithsonian (2000:129)". This seems to me an exaggeration. Gower cites Fewkes' descriptions of *duhos* and ceramics and lithics, without engaging in any analysis of her own. The monograph is primarily a work of old-fashioned culture history, citing Clark Wissler as a model and stressing ethnographic comparisons, not material culture. The central claim is for cultural contact between the Gulf Coast, northern South America, and the Antilles. Her work is cited occasionally as diffusionist ideas have regained popularity recently (Keegan et al. 2013:25). Surprisingly, Irving Rouse credits Gower with having stimulated his mentor, Cornelius Osgood, to consider ancient contact between Florida and the Caribbean. Osgood and Gower were contemporaries at Chicago (Seigel 1996).

(Lempowsky 2000; Leader 2016). She had several pedagogical publications while at Wisconsin (1935a, b, c; 1937). She was let go at Wisconsin shortly after Linton left. Sexism in academia clearly limited her career as an archaeologist. However, she was very much a *new woman*, conducting simultaneous affairs with Redfield and Linton, and sharing rooms with Bellow, two other students and anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser. Perhaps this was too unconventional to be tolerated in Madison. She was let go at Wisconsin shortly after Linton left. Sexism in academia clearly limited her career as an archaeologist. However, she was very much a *new woman*, conducting simultaneous affairs with Redfield and Linton, and sharing rooms with Bellow, two other students and anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser. Perhaps this was too unconventional to be tolerated in Madison.

After Wisconsin she took a job at Lingnam University in Canton, China. A Presbyterian institution for women. The college was evacuated to Hongkong, where she became dean of women. Gower served as a pharmacist and put her pre-med training to good use in organizing a hospital on the campus. In 1943 the faculty were interned in a POW camp for four months. On her return to the US, she was swept up in World War II, joining the Marines and participating the the organization of the Women's Marine Corps in Washington. She served in the Marine Reserves until 196, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Her marine record notes her fluency in French, Italian, and Chinese. She married a Merchant Marine, Saville Chapman, in 1947, and both spent the balance of their lives in government service, joining the O.S.S. in 1944 and the C.I.A. in 1947.

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### ARCHAEOLOGIST?

Gower attend the University of Chicago from 1924 to 1926, writing an M.A. thesis on the culture history of the Antilles that was published as a Memoir of the American Anthropological Association (1926, 1927). David Browman has made much of her training as an archaeologist under Fay-Cooper Cole, pointing out that she spent two summers excavating with him in Fulton and Will Counties. She presented a paper at the Central Section of the Anthropological American Anthropological Association meetings in 1926 that reported on the 254 newly discovered mounds, but it was never published.

### SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST?

She shifted her focus from Fay-Cooper Cole to Edward Sapir for her dissertation project in 1927-1928. She began her work with Sicilian immigrants in Chicago, learning Sicilian dialect and collecting folktales from 22 informants over a 10 month period. She then won a Social Science Research Council grant to do follow-up work in Milocca, Sicily and was still in the field when she completed her degree in 1928. Her dissertation on Sicilian peasants was lost for many years, depriving her of the place she deserved in ethnology. Lempowsky (2000) has stressed its innovative features, arguing that it would have been as influential as Robert Redfield's contemporary dissertation project on Tepoztlán in Mexico, had it been published in a timely fashion. Migliore and colleagues (2009) point out that it was the first ethnographic study of an Italian peasant village, and that her project is much valued today as a document of traditional ways of life. A manuscript was rediscovered at Chicago and published in 1971.

Gower taught briefly at Smith and at the University of Texas before entering graduate school. With her PhD. In hand, she taught four-field anthropology at University of Wisconsin from 1930 to 1938, returning to Chicago for several short stints. At Wisconsin she was a colleague of At Wisconsin she was a colleague of Ralph Linton, and she taught physical anthropology, primitive religion, theories of culture, human prehistory, and a number of topics in social anthropology. Sol Tax and Saul Bellow were among her undergraduate students