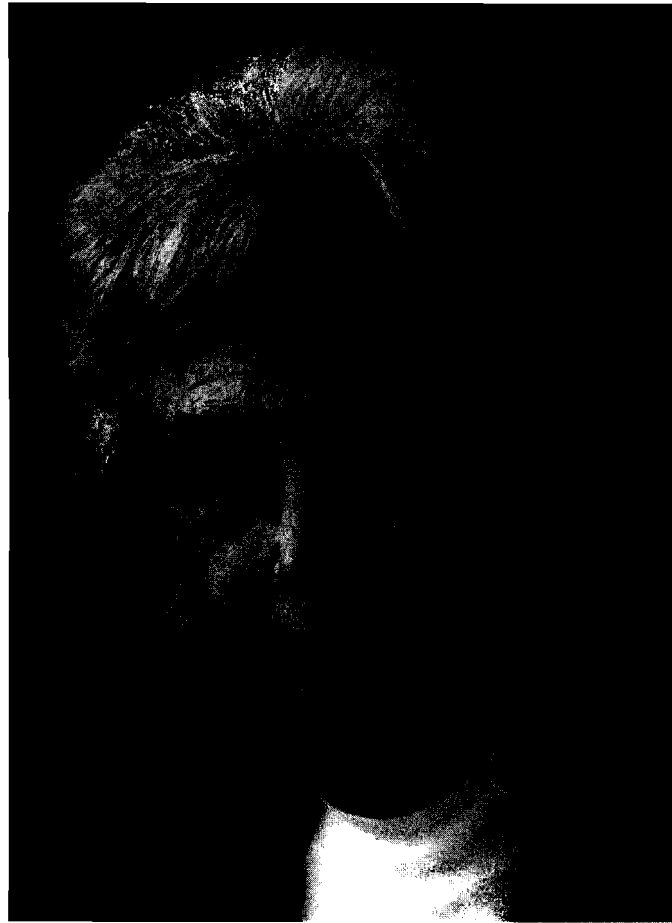


## J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology



Roberta S. Greenwood 2001

I am pleased and honored to present just a little of the justification for the presentation of the J. C. Harrington Medal to Roberta S. Greenwood. Hard work, professional contributions, and sheer longevity are the usual criteria for this award, but in this case you must also add educator and advocate. Bobby was and is a teacher. I do not use the word in the formal academic sense, but more from a personal perspective. When I first went to work for Bobby in 1974, I did not realize that my fellow workers and I had become enrolled in the University of Greenwood. We were introduced to the Ventura Mission site, given background and objectives, instructed, and deployed. While we worked there was always her presence on the site, unhurried but purposeful. She would walk among the units, features, wash racks, and laboratory, giving explanation and direction to the tasks at hand. Discussions on the site were encouraged. You felt empowered after speaking with her. She paid attention and most importantly, you knew it. Looking back on that initial experience I realize how lucky we were.

She gave us the framework to do good work and perhaps more importantly, the challenge and ability to think critically about what we were doing and the endless horizons that such thinking

could open for us. She has always remained responsive to requests for instruction whether from scouts or as guest lecturer at many universities.

Bobby learned to shovel while growing up in Massachusetts. She was already a writer-editor of her high school paper, regional editor for a horse magazine, a college editor of *Mademoiselle*, and an author of prize-winning short fiction. She learned to wear jeans while majoring in economics at Wellesley College. Completing her degree early, she enrolled at Boston University in the field of public administration, and went to work at the Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT. After moving to Los Angeles in 1948, she spent two years at the Haynes Foundation researching and writing a history of organized labor. All very formative, but still not an archaeologist.

While on leave to raise two daughters, she pursued a youthful interest in Egyptian art and history by enrolling in an evening extension course on Old World culture history at UCLA with Clem Meighan. Her term paper for this course was published in *Archaeology* magazine, and she went back to graduate school in archaeology. The rest is history. In her second year, Dr. Meighan suggested that she take temporary leave from the Ph.D. program to assume direction of the Browne Site, subsequently published in 1969 as SAA *Memoir*, No. 23, "The Browne Site: Early Milling Stone Horizon in Southern California." She then excavated a coastal village in Ventura where Cabrillo landed in 1542, and after this, she directed the work at Diablo Canyon that established a chronology for the central coast of California (*9000 Years of Prehistory at Diablo Canyon, San Luis Obispo County, California*, 1972), and designed and installed an interpretive exhibit at the PG&E Visitor Center. From there she went to important work on the Channel Islands for the National Park Service that foreshadowed many prevailing theories. She was an innovator in promoting otolith analysis, standardizing volumetric reporting of shellfish remains, identification of wear patterns on ground stone, and was using a power shaker and wash racks with pressure regulators and attached hot shower 40 years ago. She could always figure out a way to get things done even before cell phones and digital everything.

She never made it back to school. As her work was increasingly recognized, the state selected her to try to find a long-lost outpost of Ventura Mission, located anywhere along a stretch of proposed new highway. And she did (*The Chapel of Santa Gertrudis*, 1968, Pacific Coast Archaeological Society 4[4]:1-59). This was her first published contribution in historical archaeology, although it should be said that the associated Native American remains were given the same attention as historical materials had been given in her prehistoric excavations. During the 1970s between field surveys and research studies, she undertook two summers of work at the first location of Ventura Mission (*3500 Years on One City Block*, 1975 and *The Changing Faces of Main Street*, 1976, both published by the Ventura Redevelopment Agency). This was also her first encounter with a Chinese collection, experience enhanced by studies in El Paso, Napa, San Diego, Phoenix, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, and remote areas of China itself. Other important fieldwork, historical research, and laboratory analyses were carried on at the Warm Springs Dam, New Melones Lake project, Prado Basin, and the Eastside Reservoir, each a broad federal undertaking with a commitment over several years. She has always emphasized the multi-disciplinary aspect of archaeology, and was applying NAA and XRF assays to ceramics from adobe sites, 20 years ago.

I think what differentiates Bobby from many others is that she applies her boundless curiosity and persistence in research without bias. She extracts the maximum information from an antique Chinese porcelain, the Mexican pottery from the first Ortega chili factory, or the divided plate from a 20th century fast-food lunchroom. The methods and resources vary but the attention and objectives remain the same. She demonstrated her feeling of obligations to the public at Santa Gertrudis as far back as 1966, with interviewing and being interviewed for the media. At Ventura Mission, she brought City officials and students to the site often and made regular presentations to the City Council. The Sunday site tours were even advertised in Los Angeles papers. Through her efforts, the site was preserved, an historical park developed instead of the projected high-rise, and a muffler shop on the property turned into an on-site museum. That project also demonstrated that intact and significant resources *can* survive directly under the pavement or successive buildings

right on Main Street, a crusade she has led ever since. This work stimulated a whole generation of historical archaeologists throughout California. From the missions of southern California to the gold fields of the 49ers, she assembled teams and taught the lessons needed to conduct and think through the tasks and challenges of historical archaeology. She continued to expand our knowledge of not only what historical archaeology was but what it could do. And she has done it all: National Register nominations, HABS and HAER documents, broad thematic overviews, studies of some 34 adobe structures at last count, and not least, convincing public agencies at all levels to do what the laws require. She has never shrunk from controversy, and always enjoys being in the field. She is a very hands-on leader at the site, in the laboratory, and with that big red editorial pen.

Her work on Chinese-American sites was a fundamental thrust to add to the strictly historical, and interpret the unwritten. The excavation at Los Angeles Chinatown was another example of community outreach, involvement, and continuing public benefit. Members of the Chinese Historical Society were invited to the site and taught to assist in the laboratory; in turn, the Society was reinvigorated, she assisted them in obtaining landmark status for the old cemetery, reacquiring the property and rehabilitating and rededicating the 1887 shrine. She persuaded the client to donate the entire collection from Los Angeles Chinatown to the Society which now maintains permanent and traveling displays of the artifacts. Her book presenting both the historical research and archaeological interpretations received the Lloyd Cotsen award for a distinguished publication (*Down by the Station*, UCLA Institute of Archaeology, 1993) and has become a standard reference. I think the majority of us can appreciate the effort and work that went into convincing those contractors and officials that this was a necessary and legitimate science.

She has also served the profession as an elected or appointed officer in the SCA, ASCA, SAA, SOPA, and the *North American Archaeologist*. Bobby's support for The Society for Historical Archaeology on the Board of Directors, the Editorial Advisory Committee, and as representative to SOPA and general gadfly, is well known. Her enthusiasm and her inability to say no, enhance her contributions to the profession. Roberta Greenwood's career is based on hard work, dedication, self-sacrifice, and an enthusiasm for archaeology. With an unusually broad background, a world traveler—Renaissance woman—she can still out dig, out survey, and out think a lot of us, but her ultimate legacy will be her influence on past and current generations of historical archaeologists. Because of this, and in consequence of her contributions to the study of historical archaeology, she has earned the 2001 J. C. Harrington award for outstanding contributions to the field.

JOHN M. FOSTER