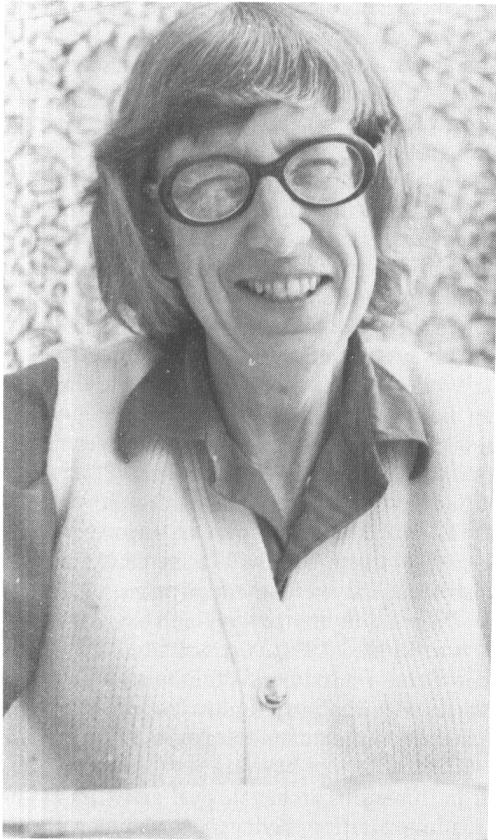


MARIAN EMILY WHITE, 1921-1975



THE DEATH OF MARIAN EMILY WHITE on October 31, 1975, deprived northeastern American archaeology of one of its most influential scholars. Her untimely death was an especially great loss to the archaeology of New York State, for no other scholar had such a profound effect on this area in recent years.

Marian E. White was born in Hartland Corners, Niagara County, New York, August 28, 1921, into the family of Ralph E. and Millie White. Her mother was a grade school teacher and her father was a farmer who also ran a greenhouse. Marian went to grade school in Hartland School District No. 6 and graduated from Gasport High School in 1938. She spent her teen years in western New York. She was active in numerous activities: she was a good baseball and basketball player, played the clarinet in the high school band, and very much enjoyed outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing, and fishing. She was a very popular and cheerful girl, which earned her the nickname "Happy." Later in life, these interests remained with Marian; she enjoyed outdoor activities, sports, and was a jazz fan.

In 1938 Marian entered Cornell University, receiving her A.B. with a major in classics and minor in anthropology in 1942. After her graduation she worked over a year as a statistical clerk in the Department of Agricultural Economics, New York State College of Agriculture at Ithaca. Since the United States was involved in World War II, Marian joined the Army Air Force and through December 1945 she was an IBM Tabulator Machine Operator, WAC-AAF, Statistical Control Division Headquarters AAF.

After her Army Air Force service she worked as science guide at the Buffalo Museum of Science from 1946 until 1952. At the same time she took graduate courses in the evening in sociology and anthropology at the University of Buffalo. In 1952 she enrolled in the Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, receiving her M.A. in anthropology in 1953 and her Ph.D. in 1956. She was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. James B. Griffin was Chairman of her Ph.D. Committee; the thesis dealt with Iroquois culture history in the Niagara Frontier area of New York State.

She began her professional career as a Research Associate in Anthropology and a Junior Anthropologist at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, where she worked from February 1956 through May 1958. In June 1959 she became Research Associate in Anthropology at the University of Buffalo. A year later she was a lecturer and was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1960. The University of Buffalo became a part of the State University of New York system in 1962; by 1968 she was Professor, Department of Anthropology, SUNY/Buffalo. Also in 1958 she was appointed an Assistant Curator of Anthropology, Buffalo Museum of Science.

Her fieldwork experience in archaeology began in 1953 at the University of Michigan Field Camp in Killarney, Ontario. In 1954 she dug in the Niagara Frontier area, New York; in 1955 at Cahokia, Illinois; and in 1956 in the Genesee Valley, New York. Afterward she conducted her own archaeological excavations and surveys every summer in New York State, especially the western part.

During her life Marian conducted a variety of archaeological projects in New York State and in the Ontario area of the Niagara Frontier. Until recent years she was the only professional archaeologist working in western New York, thus her work spanned all prehistoric and historic periods. However, her greatest interest and love was Iroquois prehistory and ethnohistory. For her work on the Iroquois, in 1975 she received the Cornplanter medal from the Cayuga County Historical Society.

From 1958 to 1963 she excavated a number of Iroquois sites in the Niagara Frontier area. These excavations have supplied archaeological data for identifying ethnic groups such as the Erie and Neutral. In 1963 she excavated the Martin site and began her research on Grand Island. This work supplied the material for four master's degrees and one Ph.D. From 1967 she had a great interest in the Allegheny River Basin and carried out a survey of that area. The first year of archaeological work there was funded by the National Park Service. Later she had a field school in the Allegheny River Basin and continued to conduct surveys and excavations with funding from the State Highway Program. In the course of this work, the Zawatski site, the only known multicomponent stratified site in the Allegheny River Basin, was found in 1971. This site, which was her last major excavation project, yielded the oldest radiocarbon date in western New York, 4260 ± 120 B.C. (Dicar 355), and it was put on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1968 and 1969 she worked in Jefferson County, New York, tracing Iroquois village movements and what happened to that population. Her work in this respect in various areas of New York was one of her great contributions to archaeology. In 1970 and 1971 she conducted the Cayuga County Project which dealt with Cayuga prehistory, mainly settlement patterns.

Since 1963 she was involved in the State Highway Program in archaeology and was especially interested in promoting a good highway salvage program. By the 1970s she was directing a very large program, e.g., in 1972-73 the contract with the State Department of Education involved \$100,000. In 1972 she started the Genesee Valley Project with Highway funds. This project is still continuing and it is one of the most extensive survey projects undertaken in New York archaeology.

It should be emphasized that Marian was engaged in numerous archaeological activities at the same time: research, teaching and training of students, administration, saving sites, planning a good highway salvage program, promoting archaeological legislation in the State, organizing New York archaeologists, and working with Native Americans and amateur archaeologists. For many years she was an advisor to the Frederick M. Houghton Chapter of New York State Archeological Association. Also, during the last several years she strongly promoted public archaeology and was hoping to establish a special program at SUNY/Buffalo for the training of public archaeologists. These numerous activities frequently took time away from her own research, thus much of her excavated material was only in the preliminary stage of analysis. Her many professional interests involved her in archaeological work for long hours every day, seven days a week.

She was an active member of the American Anthropological Association, Society for American Archaeology, New York State Archeological Association, Eastern States Archeological Federation, and the New York Archaeological Council. For many years she was the driving force in the New York State Archeological Association. In 1971-72 she was the main organizer of the New York Archaeological Council, an organization of professional archaeologists in the State. Marian was President of the New York State Archeological Association in 1965-66, President of the Eastern States Archeological Federation in 1966-68, and President of the New York Archaeological Council in 1972-74. She was on the SAA committee on the status of women in archaeology, for she was very much interested in improving their status in our profession.

Marian had a great interest in the Seneca Nation of Indians. She established good relationships with them and for several years conducted her field school on the Allegany Reservation. She

encouraged and supported Seneca youths to study archaeology and anthropology. In 1972-73 she received a Rockefeller Foundation grant for a pilot program to relate research on the Allegany Reservation to the present day Seneca Indians through their participation in work there.

I remember Marian as a woman of great patience, perseverance, humor, decency, loyalty, and courage. Her courage in protecting archaeological sites was legendary. For example, when the construction of the new SUNY/Buffalo campus at Amherst threatened to destroy archaeological sites, she was willing to lie down in front of bulldozers to stop the work. By this action she obtained permission to conduct some excavations before the sites were destroyed. Another incident will illustrate very well how hard she fought against destruction of sites. Because she was a woman, sometimes it was much harder to keep away from excavations unethical amateur males who were raiding her sites for interesting artifacts. Once while she was excavating in central New York, one pot hunter was continuously sneaking in to rape her site. To stop the fellow from damaging the site she went to the local justice of peace for help. This visit proved to be fruitless, since he was a friend of the pot hunter. Then one morning while she was cleaning up the damage at the site after the pot hunter's visit, Marian came up with an unorthodox defense strategy. She told the crew that when they saw the pot hunter's car parked near the site, they should hide in the bushes nearby with their cameras ready. Then as the pot hunter returned to his car, Marian would appear next to him and start ripping away her clothes and scream "rape." At that moment the students were to start taking pictures of the incident. With such a defense strategy, the site was reasonably protected.

Thus when it came to archaeology, she was not afraid to fight state officials, archaeologists, and university administrators for what she believed in. Great odds never deterred her from taking up a struggle. She was worth a dozen archaeologists in fighting for her profession. Archaeologists who helped her and disagreed with her in New York State and adjacent states will miss her dearly, for such a fighter is neither easily replaceable nor is such dedication to the profession found in many persons. Frequently her actions made other archaeologists do some work.

She carried out her work and duties up to the last week before she died of cancer. Marian neither discussed her sickness nor asked for sympathy or help in her personal life. She was an independent and proud person and endured all the terrible pain in silence. However, she never gave up the will and hope to live and to overcome the illness. It is especially sad that her life ended in mid-career, for she wanted yet to accomplish so much in archaeology. She joined her beloved Iroquois in their land forever. She is survived by her sister Ethel White of Gasport, New York.

SARUNAS MILISAUSKAS

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