

## A Celebration of the Career of Dr. Marti Latta

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*As one of the first women who were professional archaeologists in Canada, Marti Latta has been a role model and inspiration to subsequent generations of students. Her efforts, through teaching at the University of Toronto and her work on behalf of the OAS, have left their mark on the discipline of Ontario archaeology and on hundreds of the people who have been involved in it.*

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The conference “Journey to the Land of the Huron” took place November 4-7, 2004 in Midland, Ontario. This combined conference was the 31st annual conference for the Ontario Archaeological Society (OAS) and the 71st annual conference for the Eastern States Archaeological Federation (ESAF). Sessions on Friday morning and Saturday were reserved for papers honouring the career of Dr. Marti Latta. Marti does not retire until 2006. The organizers felt, however, that this would be the most appropriate conference at which to honour Marti—in Midland, close to where much of her work has been done.

Martha Graves was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 12, 1941. Her parents were both from Independence, Kansas, but her father was working for IBM in St. Louis at that time. The family moved back to Kansas during the war and she grew up in Independence, a very small town in the southeastern part of the state. When asked how she got interested in archaeology, Marti says that her mother had always wanted to be an archaeologist but never got the opportunity. When Marti went to the University of Kansas, she started off in the wrong programme, as many students do. She was going to go into mathematics but that only lasted one year, when she found that “math wasn’t that much fun.” Then she took introductory anthropology. That first course led to an undergraduate double major in anthropology and sociology.

Marti married Alan Latta in 1961 and they spent a year in Germany, where Alan was on a Fulbright scholarship. When they returned to the United States, he entered the PhD programme at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Marti hadn’t finished her undergraduate degree

at that time but, fortunately, the University of Kansas allowed her to take courses in New Haven that she then transferred back to the University of Kansas to finish her degree. At that time Yale University was strictly male except at the graduate level. The only way that women could take undergraduate courses was through the local teachers’ college, where Yale professors would moonlight, so that’s what Marti did. She studied under prominent social anthropologists such as Leo Pospisil, who was well known for his work in New Guinea. Marti received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Kansas in 1966.

Marti worked at the computer centre at Yale for the four years they lived in New Haven. She started off as the programme librarian. At that time, the mainframe computer at Yale had 64K memory, which puts it well below a pocket calculator today! It ran with punched paper cards or a magnetic tape. The computer centre had huge decks of punched cards and it was Marti’s job to keep track of them. Whenever anyone wanted to run a programme, they had to make a copy of the deck of cards. Marti then graduated to doing a certain amount of programming. On her first computer, she actually wired the board. She compares this to comic routines of telephone operators in the 1920s. She would plug one end into the board and then the other end, and then run the programme through it. Sometimes very surprising things happened if she put the plug into the wrong hole!

In the last year that Marti and Alan were at Yale (1966-1967), Margaret Mead was hired as a visiting scholar. She and the students from Yale did not get along very well, to put it mildly! She was not amused by their attitude and they were

certainly not amused by her attitude. In January she gave a public lecture simply entitled "The Future." Marti and Alan went to the lecture and heard her say that there was a revolution coming in women's rights: "You're going to have women among you and you'd better get used to it." This was not, on the whole, well received by the young men in the audience who argued with her quite vehemently. Margaret Mead maintained that in order for women to take part, they would have to expand their horizons and learn something about the science and technology that would be part of the world in the future. She pointed out the difference in the way that boys and girls in our society learn about science. For example, she said that science fiction is the soft medium whereby scientific concepts are communicated. She asked how many men in the audience read science fiction and all the men's hands went up. She then asked how many women in the audience read science fiction. Marti put her hand up and looked around and found that she was one of about three women with their hands up. Mead said, "There's your problem. You have to get girls reading science fiction and learning scientific skills so that they are comfortable with the terms and concepts so that they can go into the sciences and take an equal role in the future." Because of that lecture, Marti has always given Margaret Mead credit for having inspired her to go on in a scientific discipline, although she never actually met her.

When Marti's husband, Alan, got a job in the German Department at the University of Toronto in 1967, they moved to Toronto and Marti applied to do graduate studies in anthropology. The department assumed from her background that she would be going into social anthropology. When she arrived in Toronto in the summer of 1967, she visited the department to find out about the programme. There weren't any professors around so she was referred to John Reid and he was her introduction to the department. She was asked what branch of anthropology she wanted to go into, but that wasn't an issue that had occurred to her before, so more or less off the top of her head, she said "Archaeology." She's always wondered if she had said "Social

Anthropology" would her world have been very different!

Marti took out Canadian citizenship as soon as she could, around 1972, and Alan did likewise three or four years later. Marti had Canadian roots: her great-grandfather, John Anderson, was born near Brantford, Ontario. He was one of the youngest of a very large family that lived in a one-room log cabin, which the census at the time described as "unimproved." Marti's great-grandfather decided there was no future for him there and ran away from home to the United States. He got as far as Ohio before his money ran out, and he took a job in a dry goods store. He married the daughter of the store's owner, who gave them money to go to the newly opened Kansas territory and set up a dry goods store. So, in a sense, Marti can say that she came back home to Canada! Her mother told her that every year her great-grandfather would send to Ontario for a barrel of Macintosh apples, which he felt were the only apples worth eating.

Marti was happy to move to Canada. She felt it was much closer, culturally, to Kansas than to Connecticut. Coming from a small town in Kansas, she was used to people being polite and she found Canadians much more polite than the people in Connecticut! Although she found the exclusionary atmosphere at Yale difficult, it also occurred in Toronto and it took a while after she arrived for that to start to change. For example, the signs on the doors of the male professors' offices at Scarborough College said "Professor..." whereas the signs on the doors of the female professors' offices said "Mrs...." The female professors scratched out the "Mrs." and put "Professor" on their doors! Marti did find the atmosphere in Toronto more welcoming for women than at Yale. Everything at the University of Toronto, other than Hart House, was open to women. Hart House sent her a great pamphlet full of all of the wonderful things she could do there and written on the bottom in little letters was "Men Only!" This did change very soon after she arrived. Things changed very quickly at Yale as well. About four years after Marti left, women were allowed into the undergraduate programmes and were housed in the same dorms as

the men. The Yale alumni put up a tremendous fight against women being housed in the same dorms but, to their credit, the undergraduates stood up for their female colleagues and supported equality of education.

Marti received an MA in 1968 and a PhD in 1977 from the University of Toronto. She was the first woman to receive a PhD in archaeology from the University. In 1972 she was hired as a lecturer by Scarborough College, University of Toronto. She was appointed a visiting assistant professor in 1977 and given a tenure-track position in 1979. She then proceeded to gain tenure and the title of associate professor.

Marti was the second woman archaeologist to be hired in a tenure-track position in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, after Maxine Kleindienst, who was hired in 1973. She credits Maxine Kleindienst as a mentor. Marti feels that Maxine's support of her female colleagues and students has been an outstanding contribution to the whole profession. She feels that if it were not for Maxine, she would not be in her present position. Maxine was supportive in every way. Her door was always open if Marti needed to talk; she encouraged the development of new ideas; she was constantly coming up with new methods of teaching and carrying out research; and she strongly went to bat for hiring and tenure for her colleagues.

Marti's was among the first generation of women archaeologists in Canada to be hired to tenure-track positions, along with women such as Ruth Gruhn at the University of Alberta, Jane Kelley at the University of Calgary, Fumiko Ikawa-Smith at McGill University, Helen Devereux at Laurentian University and Urve Linnamae at the University of Saskatchewan.

Marti's association with the Ontario Archaeological Society began in 1968 when she was introduced to the society by her supervisor, Dr. Norman Emerson, the person who, in the large part, created the OAS. She gave her first talk to the OAS in the spring of 1971 on the excavations at the Robitaille site. She has given many subsequent talks, most recently in September 2004, when she told the Toronto chapter of her excavations at the Ashbridge's house, the new home of the OAS.

Marti also participated in directing the OAS's major excavation projects of 1972 at the MacLeod, Draper and Boys sites, and served as the president of the OAS in 1980 and 1981.

Marti's first dig was a weekend excavation at the Warminster site with Dr. Norman Emerson. She had only been in the graduate programme at the University of Toronto for about a month when she was drafted to help with the Warminster excavation. Four busloads of undergraduate students came up to the site to excavate. Marti learned how to excavate by doing it and also learned a lot from the members of the OAS, including people like the Kenyons, Charlie Garrad, Frank Mee and Bill Donaldson.

Helen Devereux remembers first meeting Marti in the late 1960s in the basement of Sidney Smith Hall at the University of Toronto. Marti was then known as the "snail lady" as she was studying snails from the Maurice Village and other sites at the time. This was just before the birth of Marti's daughter, Ellie. Ellie is now the third Dr. Latta in the family—a medical doctor this time (Marti's husband, Alan, was a professor in the German Department at the University of Toronto until his recent retirement). And Marti has recently made the rite of passage into grandmotherhood with the birth of her granddaughter, Elizabeth Helen Anne, in December 2002 and her grandson, Richard Sydney James, in July 2006.

Marti has focused on a number of areas in Ontario archaeology during her career. She has excavated sites in Huronia, undertaking eight years of excavation at the Auger site. She is particularly interested in women's roles in Huron society, as shown in the production, exchange and use of ceramic vessels for food preparation and presentation. She has explored this interest with her students, most notably Holly Martelle, whose paper is found later in this volume (see Table 1 for a list of graduate students supervised by Marti Latta). Marti also addressed this issue in her publication entitled "The captive bride syndrome: Iroquoian behaviour or archaeological myth?" (Latta 1991).

Marti has also studied the process of acceptance and enculturation of European trade objects—brass kettles, iron tools and glass beads. And with her students—Lisa Anselmi, whose

paper is also included in this volume, and Paul Thibaudeau—she has studied the use of European metal by the Huron.

Marti's interests include historic archaeology. Earlier in her career, she excavated two log cabin sites in the Ottawa Valley, and more recently, she excavated the Guild Log Cabin in Scarborough. She also spent three seasons at the Ashbridge's house on Queen Street in Toronto on a joint project with Dena Doroszenko of the Ontario Heritage Trust. She has continued to explore this interest in historic archaeology by supervising students, including Eva MacDonald and Katie Hull.

Marti has also studied the role of women in Ontario archaeology and has published an article on this history with me and Holly Martelle. She spoke on women in Canadian archaeology at the Women in Archaeology conference in Sydney, Australia, in 1999—a fascinating trip on which I joined her. For a number of years, Marti was involved with the Museum Studies programme at the University of Toronto. And she has taught a Cultural Resource Management course which, in her opinion, has produced a number of interesting student papers. Recently she has put her energy into digitizing her extensive slide collection and taking digital photographs of significant artifacts from her collections to improve accessibility for her teaching and research.

And, of course, over the years Marti has put much energy into the training of students at her field schools (see Table 2, Reid 1993:28-29). Marti directed or co-directed 24 field schools between 1971 and 2000 and trained an astounding 510 students during that time. For many of the field schools, she was ably assisted by John Reid. These fields schools include eight years at the Auger site, two years at the Thompson Walker site (both in Huronia), a year at the Guild in Scarborough and three years at the Ashbridge's site in Toronto.

Marti believes that she began running the University of Toronto archaeological field school by default. Bruce Schroeder had decided that a field school was needed at the Scarborough campus. Marti was a teaching assistant (TA) for a class at the Scarborough campus. Bruce Drewitt and Bruce Schroeder ran a field school at the

**Table 1.** *Graduate students supervised by Dr. Marti Latta.*

<b>Completed: MA/MSc</b>	
1991	Charlton Carscallen
1992	Suzanne Needs-Howarth
1993	David Reader
1995	Lisa Anselmi
1997	Carolyn Walker
1997	Jenneth Curtis
1998	Heidi Ritscher
2001	Lisa Merritt
2001	Claire Friesenhausen
2002	Eva MacDonald
Natasha Snyder, Visiting Fulbright Scholar (1998-99)	
<b>Completed: PhD</b>	
1991	Margaret Newman
1999	Elke Weinstein (acting supervisor)
2002	Holly Martelle
2002	Paul Thibaudeau
2003	Lisa Anselmi
2004	Jenneth Curtis
2004	Katherine Hull

**Table 2.** *Archaeological field schools directed by Dr. Marti Latta.*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Site</b>
1971	MacLeod
1972	MacLeod
1973	Draper (summer)
1973	Draper (fall)
1973	Scarborough campus
1976	Beeton (summer)
1976	Beeton (fall)
1979	Fort Malden – Latta/Snow
1980	Fort Malden – Latta/Snow
1981	Log Tavern
1982	Auger – Latta/Crawford
1983	Auger – Latta/Crawford
1985	Auger
1986	Auger
1987	Auger
1989	Auger
1990	Auger
1992	Auger
1993	Thomson-Walker
1995	Thomson-Walker
1996	Guild – Latta/Avdichuk
1998	Ashbridges – Latta/Doroszenko
1999	Ashbridges – Latta/Doroszenko
2000	Ashbridges – Latta/Doroszenko

MacLeod site in Oshawa and Marti was a TA for that field school. Bruce approach Marti in the lab one day and said that they needed someone to teach the field school the next year. He asked if she would be interested, and she said, "Yes, of course." She started out teaching a half course

that became a full course and then two courses. Then, thanks mostly to Maxine Kleindienst, the position became a full contractual job for a couple of years and then a tenure-track position, which Marti got. She has been at Scarborough ever since.

Marti's husband, Alan, has been very supportive of her career. In 1970, she directed her first field programme, which was six weeks at the Robitaille site in Simcoe County, and Alan stayed home with their one-and-a-half year old baby while Marti was just home on weekends. All through her career, Alan ran the house when she had to be in the field and he never discouraged her. They felt it helped that they both worked in academia for the same institution so they shared the same basic concerns. They had always had an understanding that Marti would work while Alan was getting his PhD and when he was finished she would go back to school to get her PhD, and that's what happened. Marti decided to do local archaeology so that she could return home on weekends because she had a small child at the time. It became a given that a local field school was something that Marti would do within the department because the other archaeology professors worked in other parts of the world and were not available to do local field schools.

Marti can remember her students from the field schools quite well and she can recall exactly where they dug. But she didn't have that same contact with the students at Ashbridge's because it wasn't a camping field school. She never saw them except when they were in the field digging and she didn't have a chance to sit down and get to know them as people. Marti has always felt that a camping field school is a much better learning experience.

Marti realized that, as much work as the field school was each year, it also represented free labour. In order to do a major research project in archaeology, one has to have labour. Without the field schools, she would never have been able to do the quantity of field research that she has done as there would not have been the resources to support it. On the other hand, if she had not done all of this excavating, she says she would be much further along at writing it up! Between running a field school each summer and teaching in the winter, there was not much time for writing

up the field school excavations. A ministry report could be quickly written each year but in-depth analysis of field school excavations had to be postponed until recent years, when Marti was finished teaching field schools. Marti is now working on the long process of reassessing the data from many years of excavations.

Her passion and enthusiasm for her work have inspired many students, some of whom have gone on to pursue careers in archaeology. Some gave papers in her honour at the conference and wrote papers that are included in this volume. Marti has served as a mentor and role model for many students, especially for women, and has helped her students (including this author!) find positions in archaeology. The papers in this collection have been written by Marti's colleagues and former students as a tribute to her distinguished career.

*Acknowledgements.* I thank Marti Latta for sharing her thoughts about her career, and for her support throughout the years. I also thank Helen Devereux for her input and support. These two women have been constant inspirations for me in my career. I thank Holly Martelle for her assistance with the history of women in Canadian archaeology. Sandra Black has provided invaluable editorial assistance with both this paper and the conference paper. Thanks to Eva MacDonald for co-chairing the session for Marti at the 2004 conference. Finally, thanks to Dena Doroszenko and Jennie Fiddes for their proof-reading assistance.

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À titre de l'une des premières femmes à devenir archéologue professionnelle au Canada, Marti Latta est devenue un modèle à émuler et une inspiration aux générations subséquentes d'étudiants et étudiantes. Ses efforts, par l'enseignement à l'université de Toronto et son travail au nom de la OAS, ont laissé leurs marques sur la discipline en archéologie en Ontario et sur des centaines de gens qui y ont été impliqués.

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