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INTERVIEW

The "Grandes Dames" of New York City Archaeology: An Interview with Drs. Anne-Marie Cantwell, Nan Rothschild, and Diana diZerega Wall

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Interview conducted by Hana Koriech and Meredith Linn, 27th July 2013 at Columbia University in New York City

This summer we had the wonderful opportunity to sit down with three of the most celebrated New York City (NYC) archaeologists, Drs. Anne-Marie Cantwell, Nan Rothschild, and Diana diZerega Wall. Each is well-known for their exemplary teaching careers, outstanding publications, and direction of some of the city's most important excavations. The three are also long-time friends and collaborators. In a lively afternoon chat, they shared their more personal experiences in NYC archaeology over the past several decades, their reflections about how it has changed, and their ideas for the future.

Question: Our first question to start with is how you each became interested in archaeology?

Diana: Ok... and how do people answer, in alphabetical order? *[Everyone laughs]*

Anne-Marie: Well, when I was a child, I read *Gods, Graves, and Scholars*, which I loved... but it never occurred to me that that is what I would do. And then I went to graduate school in anthropology to study comparative religion. I was interested in religion in Africa. Then I took a course on American archaeology with Howard Winters, and that changed everything. His accounts of ancient cultures in the Midwest challenged everything I thought I knew about human history and the rise of civilization. I loved it and I too wanted to discover and understand those and other ancient Native American societies and make them alive today. I still do. I really wanted to record and appreciate other ways of dealing with the central problems of the human condition, ways that are now completely beyond modern experience, and can be known only through archaeology. So I became an archaeologist... [*everyone chuckles*]. And so then, here I am.

Nan: Well, I took the same course.

Diana: And you had the opposite experience?! *[Everyone laughs]*

Nan: I had gone to NYU [New York University], because they had announced a new program in urban anthropology and that's what I thought I was interested in. I was interested in cities. I took Howard's course fairly late during the period in which I was still taking classes. I remember that he gave us six projectile points, and said he wouldn't tell us anything about them except that they were from Illinois, and he told us which terrace

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they were from. It was like a detective story! It was such an exciting semester. However, I had already written a proposal to do fieldwork in NYC with a group called University of the Streets, but then they folded. And so I said, 'Ooo! I can do archaeology.' *[Laughs]* That's how I got into archaeology.

Diana: My story is somewhat similar though it varies in some of the details. I also went to NYU. I was in anthropology. I assumed that I would be in socio-cultural anthropology. When I got to NYU (and this was a decade after you guys had been there finishing your coursework), I too took a course with Howard Winters, who was still giving good lectures! (Or reading good old ones)! No... delete! *[Everyone laughs]*. I agree with Anne-Marie; the course really knocked my socks off, because it was looking at the past, and asking the kinds of questions that I never thought you could ask of archaeological data. To me that was really interesting. So, I began by working with him in the Midwest and then when it became time to write a dissertation (in fact, like Nan, I had already written a dissertation proposal), historical archaeology - urban archaeology - here was opening up, and Nan and I had the opportunity of excavating at the Stadt Huys Block site. I just changed gears completely, as Nan did. I had the proposal, but I never did anything on that. Instead, what I did was I went into urban archaeology, the study of modern cities, and sat in on history courses.

Question: It's really interesting that the three of you came to graduate school initially to study contemporary cultures, contemporary religion or socio-cultural anthropology. Had you been aware of archaeology previously? Had that been on your radar before you got to graduate school?

Diana: We are talking about the '60s and '70s, and archaeology was looked on as a man's field, and perhaps it wasn't that practical. Some of us had to make our living by whatever it was that we chose to do, and it seemed sort of pie-in-the-sky. How could you ever make this work out? But while we were beginning, things happened in archaeology that made it feasible, such as jobs in public archaeology and cultural resource management [CRM].

Nan: And archaeology was changing so much.

Anne-Marie: Yes

Nan: The late '60s was the period of processual archaeology. So that was pretty interesting, and then turned out to be not so interesting, but it was an influential perspective for a while.

Diana: The other thing for us is that historical archaeology was coming into its own as a field. We use archaeology to get at recent peoples. This is not true of Anne-Marie necessarily, though she is interested in Native Americans who are living now also.

Anne-Marie: We were all influenced by the same person, who, if you saw him, didn't seem all that magnetic at first. But as soon as he started to speak, you knew that he was brilliant. And he would sometimes walk to the window, twist his hair, and look out the window, come back, and say something that would just dazzle you! But he always used to say you can ask any theoretical question you wanted by looking at sites in the Illinois Valley. But the big thing is, what is the question? That is where you start. I think he made me think of what the questions are, not the site... not the actual artifacts. So, I was very interested in all of these questions about trade, social complexity, mortuary analysis, and so on, and went to the Illinois Valley. I believe that you can also answer any theoretical question by looking at the rich archaeological heritage of NYC, which is what I am trying to do now.

Nan: I did my dissertation on a subject that Howard suggested. He said, 'oh, you can do the gender and role'... or sex and role is probably what he said! It was a project he had been thinking about for a while, so I did my dissertation using museum collections on age and sex as seen in mortuary collections east

of the Mississippi, from the Archaic on to the Mississippian. He was somebody who really believed in the use of existing collections.

Anne-Marie: I think what we got out of him - well, I shouldn't say we; I am speaking for myself - is that it's the question that's interesting... maybe even more so than the answer!

Question: Actually, that is one of our questions, who your key mentors were, and if there were any key experiences or moments that shaped you? And, I guess that was it for you *[to Anne-Marie]!*

Anne-Marie: Yes, for me.

Nan: There was also Bert Salwen.

Diana: Right, exactly.

Nan: When Diana and I got into historical archaeology, Bert was crucial. Anne-Marie was very influenced by Bert also, but Bert was very different than Howard. He was really...

Diana: A pragmatist.

Nan: A methods person and a pragmatist. He really believed in fieldwork. I mean, Howard...

Diana: Howard never went into the field much. He would sit in the lab in front of the fan... *[Everyone laughs]*

Anne-Marie: He would visit the site and always had interesting things to say about the stratigraphy!

Diana: But Bert, he was never out of the square! And God forbid you should find something; you'd lose your square.

Anne-Marie: I know, I certainly learned a lot from Bert. He began his career as an engineer. That was his training. He could understand what was going on in a site better than anyone I ever knew.

Nan: He switched to archaeology in his 40s.

Diana: He was blacklisted in engineering, because of union organizing.

Nan: But then, along came the '70s and Bert was very involved in the cultural resource management [CRM] movement. In the early '70s we were all just trying to figure out how to make use of these [heritage preservation] laws to generate archaeological data.

Diana: It's 'what are the questions?' Again...

Anne-Marie: Right, right.

Nan: Well, what are the questions, but initially it was also how do we communicate with developers? What is it that the public wants to know? What do the laws mean? How do you assemble a team? Because we had to have an architect, a historian, an archaeologist... and what were the methods? You know... shovel tests. I can't think of how many papers there were on how widely you should space shovel tests, which had nothing to do with the research question. Well, I guess it did, because it implied what the size of the site was. So, Bert sort of dragged us all into that.

Diana: I think the other thing that we should remember, particularly looking at the archaeology of New York City, is that before CRM came on the scene, most of the archaeology was done by amateurs. Not all, but most of it was. Then what happened - can one be vulgar and say perhaps that - when money became involved in archaeology, it became professionalized. We saw that in the creation of PANYC [Professional Archaeologists of New York City], an organization just for professionals, and also there was a change in the orientation of CNEHA, the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology. They used to be a combined amateur and professional group, and they changed their focus.

Nan: Before PANYC there was NYAC [New York Archaeological Council], which is a state-wide organization.

Diana: Again, for professionals only.

Nan: It was pretty ambitious and tried to get members [who were competing for the same jobs] to peer-review reports. That particular activity didn't last, but NYAC is an important organization today.

Anne-Marie: I think what Diana said is true. There was this change in the city's archaeology with the advent of CRM. Before that, archaeological careers were not made in NYC archaeology. They were made elsewhere. Many native sites were destroyed by Robert Moses and other people, by development,

and professional archaeologists went elsewhere. You couldn't make a career here; you couldn't get paid. With CRM, the amateurs who had worked on their own for years, felt very left out.

Diana: Well they were!

Anne-Marie: Yes. They were marginalized. Prior to that time, of course, they had paid for their own excavations out of their own pockets. One guy even...

Diana: Pawned his guitar...

Anne-Marie: For radiocarbon dates. It was a very different world in the archaeology of NY. I have great sympathy for these avocationals. They discovered the oldest site in the city, a 13,000-year-old site which anchors the city's archaeological history.

Diana: The thing about Ralph Solecki is that he personified all of this. When he was a kid, he was an amateur archaeologist running in front of the bulldozers out in Queens when they were doing development there. Then he went off and dug Neanderthals at Shanidar Cave. Then he retired and came back here and started writing up all of these sites that he excavated when he was fifteen. He was someone who also worked extremely well with amateurs. Some of the professionals worked less well, shall we say? He could create a very inclusive kind of an environment, and, unfortunately that has left archaeology, which is too bad. I think it is true of most places in the US.

Anne-Marie: Yes, certainly. The avocationals deserve a lot of respect, which unfortunately they tend not to get. I think archaeology is the poorer for that.

Nan: It is. I think that professionalization is partly responsible and also the fact that if somebody hires a group to do work, they have to be insured.

Anne-Marie: And credentialed.

Nan: Credentialed too; so there are a lot of requirements.

Diana: It's very hard to have volunteers work on sites, particularly for the insurance reason.

Anne-Marie: But it caused a lot of bitterness, which is something I feel quite sad about because they did fabulous... well, some of them did very good work.

Diana: Just like with professionals!

Anne-Marie: They felt quite betrayed. Yet their work forms a large part of what we know about the archaeology of the pre-colonial past and is important to this day.

Diana: That's why we all have the burden on our back of the Met Chapter [The Metropolitan Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association, an organization for both professionals and avocational archaeologists] - trying to make that work again.

Question: When you think back to the first sites that you worked on, such as Stadt Huys, Hanover Square, and Sheridan Square, what was that like and were you surprised by what you found?

Diana: I think Nan and I were stunned, is that fair to say?

Nan: It was very interesting because I think there was an advantage to being a woman. We were working with backhoe operators, and with guys who weren't used to seeing women in this context. So, they gave us a lot of leeway. They didn't really quite know how to deal with us. *[Everyone laughs]*

Diana: We worked for the Turner Construction Company first. For the Stadt Huys. They were extremely sensitive to what they foresaw as possible problems. Remember *[to Nan]* we were under their master carpenter and the reason we were under him was because there had been a woman carpenter who had worked under him. I mean, gender was something they were very respectful of and leery about, I think.

Nan: It was also interesting because you couldn't say to a guy who was hammering on the fence, 'no, don't do that.' You had to go and find his superior. There was a real chain of command. It was not something we were used to, that kind of bureaucracy!

Anne-Marie: I didn't work at any of these big sites. My first site in NYC was in Staten Island. We were looking for a Paleo-Indian site. I was in graduate school working with Bert Salwen and two other students. This was

at the cusp of the transition to professional archaeology in the city. We were guided to that site by avocationals and they came every single Saturday and Sunday to watch us and say, 'maybe over here... maybe over there...'

Nan: They didn't participate?

Anne-Marie: No.

Diana: And why was that? I wonder...

Anne-Marie: I don't know, but I suspect that it was because they really wanted us to find a Paleo site. That was their goal. They loved archaeology and they thought this could be an important site and should be done by professionals with modern techniques. They wanted recognition for the past which had been ignored by professionals for so long. They were not interested in glory for themselves. They were surprised, however, that I was there, as a woman. They had never seen a woman in the field. But we didn't find anything. The site had been destroyed by looters. Nonetheless, I learned a lot from that experience, as one does. Sometimes you find nothing... and that's ok.

Diana: I think that was the other thing. I don't know if the environment is still the same in graduate school, but we used to go out so much and just work with people. You know, volunteer. I remember working with you in your field classes *[to Anne-Marie]* and you in your classes *[to Nan]*.

Nan: Right. I think it is still true, that graduate students go help each other out.

Question: You mentioned that there were some benefits to being a woman working in the 70s. Were there any kind of battles that you faced being women? Or obstacles? Has that changed?

Diana: I don't think that we were aware of them. In fact, I think that's what happened afterwards. When we began working, we were just put on a construction company's payroll. Now what happens is there are contractors and subcontractors and things like that, and most of the people who are Principal Investigator's [PIs] working here on the large projects are men. Is that fair to say? Working for URS and Milner, except for Becky [Yamin].

Nan: Except for Becky, right, and...

Anne-Marie: There's Alyssa [Loorya], Joan [Geismar], Linda [Stone], and some others who own their own businesses.

Nan: Betsy [Kearns] and Cece [Saunders]. And there are also some women PIs in other parts of the country.

Diana: For the most part, in NYC a lot of what women do though is preliminary work, documentary research - Phase I's. Although, I don't think that is true entirely. They do some Phase III stuff. [This refers to the Phases of Investigation, followed after initial Landmark Preservation Commission determines that archaeological concerns exist. Phase I includes an archaeological documentary study and field-testing, Phase II determines the significance of those resources, and Phase III is to mitigate the loss of significant archaeological resources].

Question: So how did you three meet?

Nan: We met at NYU.

Anne-Marie: Graduate school.

Nan: Diana was a generation or so behind us.

Diana: It's true, only intellectually though!

Nan: But, Diana and I went to the [Delaware] Water Gap together; that is when we became friends.

Diana: Because every weekend - we had families in the city - I would drive back and forth with Nan, who really likes to speed!

Anne-Marie: Now, you *[Diana]* and I were in the field in New Paltz [NY], for a brief time?

Diana: For a week, and I dropped out. So, I didn't get to know you then. I got to know you around the department. You were fretting over your dissertation, as I recall.

Anne-Marie: Yes, and then you were at Illinois, I think, when I was there?

Diana: I think that was true.

Anne-Marie: There was a time in American archaeology, a very brief period, when lots of people from all over the country went to Kampsville, Illinois, which was an archaeology town.

Diana: Run by Northwestern University.

Anne-Marie: They had field schools and they were digging Koster, and it got a lot

of press. So you would meet a lot of people from all over there. I must say that I met people there that I still have contact with. Were you digging at Koster?

Diana: No, I never dug at Koster, but I worked in several labs over a couple of summers. I wasn't interested in the cornfield!

Nan: I was there, but never in the summer.

Question: So what has been your favorite site or discovery so far? Or something that stands out?

Nan: Mine is the Lovelace Tavern.

Diana: That's true. Yes, that was really exciting. Are we allowed to have the same one? I think the thing that was so exciting for us was, first of all, that there was anything of archaeological interest at the Stadt Huys Block. And then it was only at the end of the excavation, right in the last couple of weeks, that we discovered the Lovelace Tavern. So that was one of those things where we had to get more time - which we did - and it worked out ok, but...

Nan: I had a horrible experience at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Where Kevin, what's-his-name?

Diana: McGrath... I'll never forget.

Nan: Yes, McGrath followed me yelling into the street saying 'you'll never work again!', because I had said that we had found this tavern and we'd like them to modify their building! Their garage!

Diana: They weren't interested, for some reason! *[Everyone laughs]*

Nan: Landmarks, at that point, was very receptive, because...

Diana: Dorothy Miner

Nan: Because they had a lawyer who had gone to a field school in Arizona. So she was an ally.

Diana: That's true. She was instrumental in having Landmarks begin to review projects and look at archaeological sites.

Nan: And then [Mayor] Giuliani fired her.

Question: Having worked on lots of other kinds of excavations, what do you think makes urban archaeology so unique and different in relation to rural?

Diana: I wouldn't think of it that way. What I would think is, because I have always studied NY, in a city like NY you can ask so many different kinds of questions. Whereas, I think in smaller places you may be more limited in terms of the questions you might ask. You can ask about colonialism, gender, race, ethnicity, class formation, urbanization, etc., etc., etc.

Anne-Marie: I would agree with Diana. What makes NYC so interesting to me is that it has a very long archaeological record. It's a 13,000-year archaeological record. NY also has a very complex geological record. The environment has changed enormously over those 13,000 years, as has its population. So, in looking at NY you can use both the long lens - that archaeology is so good at - and see enormous change, or you can also use the close-up lens and examine particular points in time, societies, or neighborhoods. I like NY for that reason. I agree with what Diana was saying, there are all types of questions that you can answer here. One of the things that interests me is that up to about 400 years ago, these were the provinces. The major urban centers were inland in what we now see as the Midwest. The people here had very nice and prosperous lives but they looked to the Midwest for new ideas.

Diana: Sophistication...

Anne-Marie. Right! And now, of course, it's totally changed in the last few hundred years. The coast has gone from a barrier to a gateway. I think NYC is really interesting in looking at these kinds of changes. Also, so many people have come in that you have this huge demographic change. I should say somewhere, maybe here, that it is the pioneering work that Diana and Nan did here that brought me back, after all those years, to studying and writing about NYC.

Nan: NY is a city of immigrants. It's always been populated by immigrants, so you have these reiterative social and geographical changes as people rearrange themselves in

space. I am very interested in the ways cities work and how people actually live in cities, what kinds of units they live in. But I also think that one of the elements of urban archaeology is that it is historical. A lot of it is historical, so then you have this really rich documentary record as well as the archaeology.

Diana: And that's what I like. To me, it allows the people you are studying to become individual people, as well as representatives of groups.

Anne-Marie: But that is very recent.

Diana: Well, that's true, but we are talking about urban, here.

Anne-Marie: Oh, right. There is this whole thing about archaeology *of* cities and archaeology *in* cities.

You can dig a 13,000-year-old site in NYC. That's archaeology *in* the city. Or you can dig a 5,000-year-old site. That's archaeology *in* the city. What we now think of as a modern city was not then active and up and running. And so, if you are doing archaeology *of* the city, you are talking about urbanization, which is a very different and very recent event. They are both interesting and important.

Nan: And this was a point that Bert talked about.

Diana: He was the one who brought that out.

Nan: He said that you could do archaeology in the city, but those sites don't tell you anything about how the city developed. They just happen to be there, and then the city grew on top of them.

Anne-Marie: I like the idea of the city or the land that makes up the city, as a layer cake. Going all the way up. And I like the long lens. Some people prefer other lenses.

Diana: What I like is going back and forth.

Nan and Anne-Marie: Yes.

Question: Do you think that you have a certain school of thought that you follow? Has your theoretical perspective of archaeology changed over time?

Nan: When I started I was very processual. My dissertation was very quantitative. The more historical archaeology I've done, the less I am interested in numbers really. I think that, as Diana said, we can see individuals, or as Anne-Marie said, we use the narrow microscopic focus on a particular neighborhood or attribute or quality. So I think we all use different kinds of theory. You sort of incorporate theory as you go along. Your questions may be similar, but *habitus* or things like that, really influence how you structure arguments.

Diana: I think that we were also trained in processual archaeology. Is that fair to say? And that we left it in certain ways along the way. I would say that I am more of an interpretive archaeologist these days. But I still like the power of numbers. To me numbers still speak. They allow you to see how representative your little micro thing is in the larger pattern. Whereas, otherwise, what does this mean? Ok, you see this in this case, but... So, again, I like to go back and forth.

Nan: But it is so hard to get sample sizes...

Anne-Marie: Yes.

Diana: That's true. But all you can do is what you can do. I mean, historians have that problem. The one person's diary: What does that tell you? One person...

Anne-Marie: I think that theoretically – I'm not even going to go into what I think theory is - but I guess if someone asked me what I did, I think at this stage in my career I would say that I am an anthropologist - that I see myself as an anthropological archaeologist. I do anthropology of dead people. I am influenced more by what social anthropologists do, and I read them, and I think historians are very good. So, I think that's my primary focus. I see myself more as an anthropologist.

Question: And would you say the same, Nan and Diana? Do you see yourselves influenced more by cultural anthropology than, say, history? Or some other field?

Diana: I would say certainly, because I was trained in anthropology. I would also agree

with Anne-Marie, cultural anthropology. We've also gained a lot from historians. And *[to Anne-Marie]* so have you.

Anne-Marie: Yes, absolutely. In the last ten years I have been greatly influenced by colonial historians, but the three of us started out in socio-cultural anthropology before we became archaeologists and that marked us in some way.

Nan: Is there a difference between an anthropological archaeologist and an archaeological anthropologist?! *[Everyone laughs]*

Anne-Marie: There could be several dissertations written about that!

Question: Can you think of some funny experiences that happened to you in the field or in the lab that stand out in your mind?

Nan: What about that man running through the Stadt Huys Block being chased!

Diana: With the police behind him! The purse-snatcher! Is this unique to urban archaeology? Maybe! But it was also the late seventies, you know!

Nan: The thing about digging in a city is you have all these people looking down at you...

Diana: And you don't know it, you're not aware you're in the fish bowl! And they know all about it!

Nan: People were saying, 'What is this? A project for women in engineering?!'

Diana: Then there was the guy who came in and relieved himself behind the construction fence. He didn't realize there were all these women there! *[Everyone laughs]*

Nan: One of my early CRM projects - it was a sewer project and Diana was part of the group - we had to go and dig test pits at Sing Sing... which is a prison.

Diana: A big, notorious prison.

Nan: You couldn't bring cameras. They counted all of our shovels...

Diana: Of course! That's pretty rational when you think about it!

Nan: It was on a firing range, and they had to get people to stop shooting as we were digging our test pits!

Diana: That was a good one!

Question: Have you seen changes in how the public view archaeology? Are they interested?

Diana: I think people have become slightly more interested. It always amazes me how so many people don't know anything about it. But I think that the African Burial Ground made more people aware of archaeology in the city. And I think the ship at the World Trade Center a couple of years ago also made people more aware. But it's amazing to me how archaeology has just slid below the radar in most cases.

Nan: Think about Seneca Village [in Central Park] when we were digging, and people would just walk by or bicycle by.

Diana: Right. However, that was also the situation. I think had we approached the press they would have been overly eager, as they were a couple of years ago. But we couldn't do that. But yes, you're right.

Question: How do you feel about the importance of reaching out to the public? You have all published and created exhibits to reach out to the wider audience than just your colleagues.

Diana: Obviously we think it's important.

Anne-Marie: Yes, and we've taught undergraduates, which really is a form of reaching out to the general public.

Nan: Basically, the funding for archaeology comes from the public. So, the public...

Diana: You have to give them something about archaeology...

Nan: Otherwise there's not going to be any funding.

Question: What do you think have been the most successful ways that you've found of reaching out?

Diana: I think writing the book *Unearthing Gotham*; that was a good way. But you can only do that so many times!

Anne-Marie: Sometimes talking to school teachers has been successful, but it's very hard sometimes in attempts at outreach,

because they can get very excited by our presentations. And then they ask 'Where can I dig? Can I volunteer?' And then there aren't such options available for them to explore that interest.

Diana: It would be interesting to find ways to deal with that. To be able to channel interest and energy in the things they want to do.

Anne-Marie: Yes, because there is an interest out there. But then many are turned off when we don't offer them opportunities to participate.

Nan: I think there's a particular interest when there's a descendant community. That's the situation in which it's really most important to have outreach and to have connections between groups so that they don't feel like they have no part in what research questions you're asking or looking at the material. The [African] Burial Ground was a prime example of how *not* to do that.

Question: What about writing? You've each written with one another. What's the process been like, and how do you decide what to write about?

Diana: It's like Mount Everest, it's there! Nan and I are gearing up to write about Seneca Village. Anne-Marie and I have had this long-term project. We'll be in our graves writing! *[Everyone laughs]*

Anne-Marie: I think that computers have made all the difference in the world!

Diana: You mean because you can't take it with you!? *[laughs]*

Anne-Marie: You can each go off on your own, write, revise, and then send it off for comments to your writing partner. Without computers, I don't really know how we managed... Oh, we typed!

Nan: Yes, we typed!

Diana: What I like about it is that you feel you have a personal commitment to a person, a friend. It's not 'Oh I have to get this work done! Oh my God, I'll never get it done.' It's not like that. It's, 'I have to do A and B because I'm meeting Nan or I'm meeting Anne-Marie.' And it personalizes it.

Anne-Marie: And I can't read this murder mystery because I'm letting that person down.

Diana: Yes, that's it.

Nan: Yes. Anne-Marie and I first collaborated on a conference and then a book on the *Research Potential of Anthropological Museum Collections*. We worked with Jimmy Griffin, who was a well-known Midwestern archaeologist and a name. He was one of the three co-editors, and I think his name is why we got funding and participants. But we wrote an introduction and a conclusion.

Anne-Marie: But we did it by hand. We invited people. We typed up letters inviting submissions, and we put them in envelopes, with stamps! *[Everyone laughs]*

Nan: I remember. It was 1980 or...

Question: What about your relationships or how you communicate with contractors now?

Diana: We don't have much relationship with them.

Anne-Marie and Nan: No, we don't.

Nan: I did have some graduate students who I incorporated into small projects because I thought it was important that they learn something about CRM. This was in the '90s. There were not very many, and I stopped doing it because it just got hard to do. Maybe it was the '80s? Well, it was Chris Matthews, Kurt Jordan, Wendy Sutton... Right, it was the '80s and the '90s.

Diana: With Seneca Village, what was always true was that everybody had a different agenda. How do you align them?

Nan: With Seneca Village it took a long time.

Diana: In that case it was trying to get permission to do the excavation.

Nan: But then we worked with Central Park Conservancy and they were wonderful!

Diana: Once we had permission! From them too, you understand! And they were lovely, it's true.

Question: How else has archaeology changed? Do you think it is harder to get permission now, for example? Do you

have to do more fighting and lobbying and get more involved in politics?

Diana: I think it just depends on the situation.

Nan: I think there's more of a split. Not so much in NY, but in places like Arizona and New Mexico, they have really big cohorts of graduate students. The CRM versus academic, I think, is more of an issue there.

Diana: One of the things though that does concern me here is that I don't see a lot of people who are doing CRM in NYC giving papers at professional meetings, although maybe now there is more participation? I just think that it's important that the CRM archaeologists know what the questions are, and we know what they're finding!

Anne-Marie: Yes, I think that's true. I think that NYC archaeology is very interesting obviously, but it would be nice if it got a national or international stage so that people who are working in Arizona or Amsterdam would think: 'Oh, I'm going to go there and look at those collections,' or 'This is really something that could help me think about this problem.' I think there has to be more of that sort of outreach also within the profession.

Question: What message would you want to give to students who are aspiring to be archaeologists?

Nan: Hang in there! *[Everyone laughs]* I was remembering that about eight or ten years ago, PANYC had a conference on education for graduate students and a number of folks, including Joe Schuldenrein, felt that graduate students were not being trained properly because most of them were being trained, in NYC, for academic careers, and most of them ended up doing CRM. He thought that there should be, I don't know, courses in accounting or… We had a whole day of discussions about it. But I remember thinking, well, what's most important is that people learn to think and to write. That's true no matter what you do. Those other things I think you can learn on the job. But I do think there are masters programs in the US where people do learn those courses, and they don't learn the crucial skills or questions.

Diana: Or maybe any questions!

Anne-Marie: Yes, sadly any questions. I remember this conference that Nan mentioned, and someone looked at an archaeologist who had a big firm and said, 'you hire people. What qualities do you want?' And she said, 'I want somebody who can write! I am tired of these graduate students who are illiterate.'

Diana: Yes, it's horrible.

Diana: My advice to students also is that you only live once. If you really want to be an archaeologist, give it a try! You can always become an accountant! That's not true of course, but you can always settle for less, so at least try. You'll never get there if you don't try.

Question: What are some of the battles you think you've won, or perhaps lost, or maybe ongoing battles throughout your career?

Nan: Well, the only battles that I see right now are battles with the university, because its priority is the bottom line and not intellectual training. I don't feel we've won that!

Anne-Marie: I would agree.

Diana: It's so political.

Anne-Marie: It's all political. But that comes back, of course, to the questions you asked earlier about how you make it clear to people that archaeology is important, and it's in the interest of the nation as a whole.

Question: If you could say one thing to developers or politicians that have ignored or overlooked archaeology, what would it be? Or maybe things you've already said?

Diana: Until we're blue in the face! *[Everyone laughs]*

Anne-Marie: Well, it's difficult because these are harsh economic times.

Diana: All I can think of is clichés, but the thing about clichés is they're true. That's why they're clichés! The one I was thinking

about was: 'In order to understand who we are today, we have to...

All together: ...know where we came from!'

Diana: We also have to know about those little strands of history of different peoples that tend to get knocked out of the quote unquote larger narrative, as people would say today. I think that's something that's really important. I'm not sure developers would share that!

Anne-Marie: I think in terms of politicians, or maybe others - at this moment I'm looking through the long lens, which is not always my lens of choice - if you can point out to them how archaeology can contribute to pressing issues. I think archaeology can, in fact, say something about environmental issues, and these are certainly pressing issues.

Nan: I also think that if you can use examples of projects that have drawn a lot of public attention, that you can point to those and say: 'Look, I'm not saying that this site will end up like that, but if you allow us to excavate here, we don't know, we might find something so exciting that it will make you all look terrific!' As well as learning something!

Diana: And slow your project down... *[chuckles]*

Anne-Marie: And it may get your picture in the paper...

Diana: As a villain! *[Everyone laughs]*

Question: I suppose now there's heritage tourism and ideas about how to reap the benefits economically from archaeology. What do you think of that tactic as a way to save archaeology?

Diana: I think that's harder in NY, which is a city that doesn't look to its past in terms of its identity. It could fly more in Boston and Philadelphia, not to mention London. I don't think people come here for history.

Anne-Marie: No they don't. They look at the Statue of Liberty but that's about it.

Diana: That's true; they do come to Ellis Island. And that, I think, is something they feel they can relate to very immediately.

Anne-Marie: And there are those Native American burial markers at Ellis Island.

Diana: Can people relate to that?

Anne-Marie: Probably not, unfortunately.

Nan: Ken Jackson, who teaches history here [at Columbia University in NYC] and has this incredibly popular course, which I once sat in on - it involves an all-night bike tour actually - said that when NY started being interested in its past, it was evidence of its economic decline.

Diana: Well, that's what happened if you think of Annapolis [Maryland]! All these quote unquote historical cities! Why are they historical cities? No development after 1760! Sorry! No capital investment... So that's why we've always felt a little funny about NY, because it is harder in lots of ways to get people's attention, just on that level, and for that reason. Which I don't understand in one sense, because it has such a deep European history. We're talking about the early 17th century...before Boston, and not to mention Philadelphia! They're both more recently settled by Europeans. But, of course, we had those funny people here - the Dutch!

Anne-Marie: So many historic houses in NY are really in the outer boroughs. I think there is this focus for many people on Manhattan. I'm not sure how many people go to Staten Island.

Nan: Or, the Wyckoff House [in Brooklyn].

Anne-Marie: There is that sort of Manhattan focus. Of course archaeology is done in the outer boroughs all the time, but again that doesn't seem to attract a lot of attention. It's not seen as glamorous.

Question: There are few places to display the finds, right?

Anne-Marie: Well, that's it.

Diana: To put it mildly!

Anne-Marie: I think New York Unearthed was great! But that's now gone... *[referring to a small gem of a museum at 17 State Street run by the South Street Seaport Museum but now closed]*.

Diana: The thing that I see as the big difference between looking at NY and London is that here we have an indigenous people who were here to begin with, and then the Europeans and Africans came in around the same decade and it was a whole new ball game. Whereas when we're talking about London, it seems to me people come in and invade – don't get me wrong - but some of them stay there, and there's an enormous continuity through time.

Question: Here for descendant communities, it seems that archaeology can be quite a sensitive topic, and there are more political tensions?

Anne-Marie: We have a sharp break in the 17th century, and there's even a sharp break in terms of archaeology.

Diana: There are even different people who do one archaeology as opposed to the other.

Anne-Marie: When professional archaeology came to NY it was really historical archaeology. Before that, it was all Native American archaeology.

Diana: That's not entirely true.

Anne-Marie: No, I guess that's not true.

Diana: Revolution. Colonial.

Anne-Marie: You are absolutely right. But I think that many people in the United States are not necessarily happy with the idea that they're living in a place that had a long and complex history before European incursions. Some prefer the idea of settlers coming to wilderness and that's when history began, because that's how settler nations often see their past.

Diana: I think the other thing though is when we were digging in the Stadt Huys site, Ralph Solecki came down and visited the site. We love Ralph Solecki, as you can tell! And what he said was 'Why do I care about this? I'm Polish.' I think that when people here, modern-day 21st century Euro-Americans, think of their history, they think of Ellis Island and this is where their people came through. They don't even look back to that earlier European past as being them, as something they can identify with. So, people really think of their past as beginning in the 19th century.

Nan: Unless they came on the Mayflower.

Diana: That's true!

Question: What about in the park? Do you think that people who lived near Central Park identified with Seneca Village excavations, not because they thought of themselves as a descendant group but because it was in their neck of the woods, their neighborhood?

Diana: I think that they did and that was part of the reason people who lived nearby were interested.

Anne-Marie: That was also true with the excavations at Sheridan Square; there was a great interest among the people who lived in the community...

Diana: In the West Village, which has a real community identity. That was an all-volunteer dig in '82. It was unlike everything that we've been talking about. It wasn't a CRM thing. In fact what was happening was they were developing that whole space; they were putting in a garden, a city garden. But it was wonderful because what we discovered - we got so excited... *[to Anne-Marie]* you say it! We found the plough zones from farms that had been there in the 18th century, and also lines of post molds from fences, presumably dividing farms...

Anne-Marie: And one side supported the [American] Revolution and the other side did not!

Nan: *[Jokingly]* Could you tell who supported which side from the post molds?

Anne-Marie: No, not from the post molds. There were no flags! We figured it out from the maps! I think that this was a community project and people were very interested in the fact that there was archaeology in their backyard, and they wanted to dig it.

Diana: And they came! They came and worked. It was the way we'd like archaeology to be. The site was relatively simple stratigraphically, so it wasn't that we had all these

people [to train in complex excavation methods]... It was good.

Question: It sounds like the public are interested but there's just not that much opportunity?

Anne-Marie: That's the problem.

Nan: When the Ronson ship was discovered, there were...

Diana: 75,000 people went and looked at it. It was enormous.

Nan: They put a bridge over the site, and kept it open for an extra week or something, so people could walk across and look. I think people like artifacts... especially big artifacts.

Diana: And even better, it was an artifact *in situ*. Whereas an artifact in my hand is not the same.

Question: Actually there are studies about how handling artifacts help in the healing process of patients.

Nan: Can they be replicas? *[laughs]*

Diana: Handling artifacts... it's about getting people out of themselves and thinking about something else.

Anne-Marie: So you don't need national health insurance?!

Diana: There you go, it's cheaper. So much for Obamacare! Let them eat artifacts! *[Everyone laughs]*

Anne-Marie: MRIs, forget it! Give them a potsherd! That'll do it. *[Everyone laughs]*

Diana: It's transcendent. And that's the tragedy of museum exhibits, is that you can't touch the stuff. And that's what it's about; it's tactile.

Question: What about other changes in archaeology?

Anne-Marie: I think one of the big changes in archaeology was the advent of the computer.

Diana: It's true, in terms of data... now looking at quantitative data without a computer, forget it.

Anne-Marie: In terms of writing. Even in terms of teaching.

Nan: I kept my dissertation in the refrigerator because that was the area that if a fire started would be protected. That was Bob Bettinger's idea!

Anne-Marie: And I learnt that from you.

Diana: Not me, I had a computer!

Question: The day-to-day work you do in the field? Has that changed?

Diana: In terms of the kinds of samples that people take when they're in the field, I think that's new.

Nan: People record their data on the computer on a daily basis and that gives you feedback about where to go next or what that deposit is like. We haven't done that so much, but some people do.

Diana: Actually if we think about Seneca Village, the ground penetrating radar was helpful in some ways but not really in others - in the sense of 'what is this?' But what it did was it gave legitimacy to the site that we were digging and where we were going to put our excavation. I don't know if we would have been able to make it fly with the Conservancy if we didn't have something like that.

Nan: But it was also that we were demonstrating that we had tried everything that we could short of digging. Soil borings and documentary stuff, radar, and so on. So, the only thing left was digging.

Diana: So, can we think of anything else? What I found most interesting, was listening to them *[Nan and Anne-Marie]*, because we never talk that much about this.

Question: That's a question; do you have a question for each other?

Diana: I like your question, but I'm not sure I have an answer!

Anne-Marie: *[to Nan]* Do you know a good computer geek?

Diana: These are the questions, right?!

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