



**Leslie C. Shaw**

"from John Goff's article [Remembering Archaeologist Shaw](#) first published in the SALEM GAZETTE (Salem, MA)"

As October, Massachusetts Archaeology Month, approaches, it is appropriate that we reflect upon the life and contributions of Leslie C. Shaw, who was active here in Salem. Leslie passed away in Portland, Maine, on August 29th at the age of 57 following some surgical complications. Although her life was cut short and ended far too soon, she made remarkable contributions and was a wonderful inspiration.

I first encountered Dr. Shaw's name in connection with a superb Salem archaeological survey that she helped produce in the 1980s. The year was about 2003, and I had worked to organize Salem Preservation, Inc. to restore and to reopen Pioneer Village. Pioneer Village encompasses about 3 of the 32 acres that make up Salem's Forest River Park--yet both the village and park have revealed dozens of stone chips, and a few Native American arrowheads, or projectile points, and stone scrapers, etc. over the years. The archaeology indicates the land there was once a very important and occupied part of pre-1620 Native Naumkeag. Salem's Mayor Salvo commissioned the 1980s Salem archaeological survey after he discovered an Indian arrowhead near one of the holes at the Olde Salem Greens municipal golf course not far from the origination point of Salem's Forest River. As I read and reviewed Shaw's 1980 report, I was pleased to read that Shaw and others were aware of the archaeological significance of the Forest River corridor and Forest River Park, situated near the mouth of that river. Shaw and others recommended that when Pioneer Village next be improved, that interpretation broaden to include the Native history equally---and that ultimately a Native Village should be built perhaps behind the Puritan English Village---so that Salem, like Plimoth Plantation, could offer up a more balanced multicultural view of its full history. Based upon these recommendations we worked with the Massachusetts Ponkapoag Tribal Council in 2007 to reconstruct an early Native fish weir upon the Pioneer Village shore. We learned that the pond in its earliest days had been a tidal cove that extended inland from Salem Harbor. It seems woven timber & brush fish weirs across or near the mouth of this cove seasonally helped Natives routinely fish here for NAMAS (fish) when the place was called NAUMKEAG.

After meeting Shaw through her Salem archaeology report, I was fortunate to meet her in person when she was helping to conduct an archaeological survey at Fort Lee overlooking the Salem Willows. She was by trade and training a professional archaeologist, and her work took

her to many ancient places.

Born in 1955 in Washington, DC, Leslie Shaw was the daughter of John and Ann Shaw, property owners in the Salem Willows neighborhood of Salem, Massachusetts. She grew up in Maryland, and developed lifelong interests in archaeology and anthropology while an undergraduate student at the University of Maine at Orono.

Bowdoin College historians reported: "Leslie earned an M.A. in anthropology at the University of Wyoming in 1980 and a Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1991. Over the course of her career she developed expertise in each of the areas of the world in which she worked, from the forests and coastlines of Maine to the high plains of Wyoming, from the isolation of Easter Island in the Pacific to the urban landscapes of Boston and Salem and to the jungles and savannas of the Maya Lowlands of Central America. A highly-regarded researcher and colleague, she published numerous articles in scholarly journals on each of these geographic areas, was the author of nearly 50 technical reports, and delivered dozens of professional papers at national and international conferences. "Maine historians noted Leslie Shaw "met her husband, John Cross, in the doctoral program in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. ...She is survived by her husband; two beloved daughters, Lauren T. Cross and Audrey L. Cross; her parents, John and Ann Shaw of Salem, MA [and additional family].

"Bowdoin sources added: "She began her teaching career at the Harvard University Summer School, and held positions at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and the University of Southern Maine. [Leslie Shaw] was a fellow at ...Radcliffe College in 1993-94, and also was an archaeologist with the National Park Service. Since 1998 she had been a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Bowdoin College, where she was an especially effective teacher and valued mentor." Source:

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