



J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology: Julia G. Costello

Glenn J. Farris 

Accepted: 25 May 2023 / Published online: 20 July 2023
© The Author(s) under exclusive licence to Society for Historical Archaeology 2023

The Society for Historical Archaeology's (SHA) 2023 J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology was presented to Julia Garvin Costello (Fig. 1) by SHA President Julie Schablitsky at the annual meeting, held in Lisbon, Portugal. The awards banquet took place in the rococo-style former ballroom of the 17th-century Alverca Palace, now known as the Casa do Alentejo, which formed a wonderful backdrop to the ceremony.

Born in New Haven, Connecticut, just after the close of World War II, Julia Garvin Costello was the daughter of spirited parents who married in North Africa during WWII while serving in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Robert Costello was a “code-cracker and cyphers man,” and Julia's mother, Mary Eddy, was the daughter of Colonel William Eddy, who was director of OSS operations in North Africa and the Near East. Eddy was born in Sidon, Lebanon, to missionary parents and developed a knowledge of Arabic while growing up. Following the divorce of her parents, Julia's mother remarried. Her new stepfather, Robert Furman, was a notable character in his own right, being tasked with rounding up German nuclear scientists and supplies of uranium at the war's end. Thus, Julia came by her own adventurous nature quite honestly.



Fig. 1 Julia Costello at home in Mokelumne Hill, 2022. (Photo by Will Mosgrove.)

Julia was raised in Maryland and New York. For college, she went to St. Lawrence University in upstate New York, graduating with a B.A. in sociology in 1968. While still in college, Julia made a trip to Colorado, where she was introduced to skydiving. Over time she managed to get in over 200 jumps, including time as an instructor back at St. Lawrence. Following graduation, she traveled extensively in Europe and the Middle East. This included time spent in Lebanon, where her resident grandmother exposed her to the local archaeology, including an introduction to biblical archaeologist Dr. James B. Pritchard, a connection that came to have a large influence on her subsequent professional career. After a ski season

G. J. Farris (✉)
2425 Elendil Lane, Davis, CA 95616, U.S.A.
e-mail: gfarris@omsoft.com

working in Vail, Colorado, Julia returned to academia in the anthropology program at the University of Denver. She received her M.A. in 1972, with her thesis on a computer analysis of projectile points.

Following up on an earlier invitation from Dr. Pritchard of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Julia joined a variety of excavation projects in Lebanon in the early 1970s, where she was able to parlay her skills in computer-data input and artifact analysis to enhance her value to the teams she joined. Projects included the Phoenician port of Sarafand for Dr. Pritchard, Bronze Age Tell el Ghassil in the Bekah Valley for the American University of Beirut, and a Roman port in Tripoli for the Lebanese Department of Antiquities. During these projects she made deeply personal, lifelong connections with individuals who later became leaders in the archaeology of the region.

The outbreak of hostilities in Lebanon in 1974 shut down all archaeology projects, and so Julia returned to the United States. She followed up on a friend's invitation to come out to California to visit. Whereas she had hoped that things would blow over soon in the Middle East and that she could return there, the unsettled conditions dragged on. Julia decided that she needed to move on with her career. This led her to enter the doctoral program at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). Like all of the UC universities of the time, prehistoric archaeology dominated the scene. Julia entered as a student of Albert Spaulding, famous for his focus on analytical techniques in archaeology, which made Julia's background in analysis and computer applications particularly appealing.

As it happened, Julia got the opportunity to direct several projects related to the early Spanish-era history of California, both at the Presidio of Santa Barbara (Arthur et al. 1975; Costello and Walker 1987) and then at the first site of Mission La Purísima Concepción in Lompoc (Costello 1975, 1994a). Spanish settlement of Alta California utilized technologies perfected by Roman colonizers and were not so different from the sites she was used to in Lebanon (Costello 1977, 1997a, 1997b). At Mission San Antonio (Costello 1994b) she partnered with Professor Robert Hoover and coauthored an important book on the archaeology of the site (Hoover and Costello 1985). Her focus on Spanish colonial archaeology (Barker and Costello 1991; Barker, Allen et al. 1995; Costello 2014) moved her into the

realm of historical archaeology (Costello 1992b, 1993). Spaulding was not interested in working with an historical archaeologist, and so their professor–student connection was unilaterally terminated. Fortunately, Professor Michael Glassow at UCSB was willing to develop a new arrangement for Julia to pursue her degree with more of an historical perspective. At that time Dr. James Deetz was teaching at UC Berkeley and agreed to be on her dissertation committee (Costello 1990). Another valuable member of her committee was physical anthropologist Dr. Philip Walker.

In 1978 an enormous cultural-resources project related to the construction of the New Melones Dam and Reservoir in the Gold Country of California came online, and Julia was hired to lead the research into the historical archaeology, working together with prehistorian Dr. Harvey Crew. This high-pressure (both in scope and limited time available) project brought her into contact with a large number of archaeologists working in California. A major plus of the project was that it introduced Julia to life in the small towns of Calaveras and Tuolumne counties, with which she fell in love and where she has made her home up to the present. Fitting right in with the California lifestyle, Julia could be seen cruising to various parts of the state in her treasured VW van, decorated with flames on the sides and nicknamed “El Fuego.” In 1977 she and her sister, Serena, drove it to Mexico and Guatemala for a year's sojourn in the halcyon days prior to the dangerous times of the narco-traffickers.

When the New Melones project came to an end, Julia entered into a partnership with Judith Marvin, an historian and county archivist with whom she had been working for several years. Their CRM company, Foothill Resources, filled a much-needed niche for the study of historical sites, especially in California. Julia also developed an eclectic interest in various ethnic sites, particularly Chinese, but also Italian, and worked on projects throughout the state: Los Angeles, the Owens Valley, Mission Santa Inés, the Channel Islands, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the Sierra Nevada (Fuller and Costello 1990a, 1990b, 1990c), and many more (Costello 1981, 1989b, 1989d, 1991a, 1991b, 1992a; Costello and Thorpe 2010; Mikkelsen et al. 2014). Julia has worked closely with historians over the years, including, of course, Judith Marvin,

but also with the firm JRP Associates and with Edna Kimbro and Charlene Duval.

Simultaneously, her renown as an historical archaeologist brought an invitation to serve on the California State Historic Resources Commission, on which she served for six years (1979–1984), serving as chairperson in 1981. This experience broadened her perspectives and led to a greater understanding and appreciation of the built environment and the wide range of historical buildings and structures found throughout California. Knox Mellon was the state historic preservation officer at the time and had made a point of selecting Julia as the first person to represent historical archaeology on the board.

Julia was also an active participant in a number of professional societies. She served on the board of the Society for Historical Archaeology from 1985 to 1993, including a term as president. She also was an associate editor for the SHA's journal, *Historical Archaeology*. Soon after doing her tour of duty at SHA, Julia was approached by the Society for California Archaeology (SCA) to run for president of that organization. She served as president from 1994 to 1995 and was on the board from 1993 to 1996. Recently, Julia received the Frederickson Award for Lifetime Achievement in California Archaeology. In addition to these organizations, Julia has been very active in the California Missions Studies Association, on whose board she also served. She was presented with the prestigious Kimbro Award in appreciation of her contributions and scholarship. Such willingness to contribute to various organizations is still alive and well, as she now serves on the Calaveras Heritage Commission and is archivist for the Mokelumne Hill History Society.

Her interest in the history of California before the Gold Rush during Spanish and Mexican rule continued beyond her early work at the Presidio of Santa Barbara, Mission La Purísima Vieja, and Mission San Antonio (Costello and Hornbeck 1989; Costello and Johnson 2015). She conducted a major excavation at Mission Santa Inés (Costello 1989b) and later collaborated with historian Edna Kimbro in preparing a National Historic Landmark document for the mission. When Edna came down with cancer that resulted in her premature death, she had been in the midst of writing a study for the Getty Conservation Institute: *The California Missions: History, Art, and*

Preservation. Julia supplied the missing chapters and carried the manuscript through to publication (Kimbro and Costello 2009), where it won the International Book Awards 2010 Grand Prize for nonfiction. She has continued a close working and personal relationship with Edna's friend and colleague, historian Charlene Duval.

Leading up to the Columbian Quincentenary (1992), David Hurst Thomas organized a three-volume study titled *Columbian Consequences* and asked Julia to coordinate the California contributions (Costello 1989c; Costello and Hornbeck 1989). She has also collaborated on a great many other publications. One classic work, coauthored with Mary Maniery, is *Rice Bowls in the Delta*, which featured a major collection of Chinese and Japanese ceramics excavated in a town site in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Maniery and Costello 1986; Costello and Maniery 1988). This work was especially important because little study had previously been done on Japanese ceramics found on California work sites. Julia has continued her interest in Chinese sites in many parts of the state (Costello 2020, 2021; Costello, Hallaran et al. 2008). Living and working in the Gold Country, it was only natural that Julia would become involved with the study of the extensive mining operations that are ubiquitous in the area. Not only did she school herself on the business of extracting valuable ores from the earth of the foothills (Fuller, Cunningham et al. 1990; Costello, Herbert et al. 2008), but she also became interested in the various ethnic groups and personalities who made their living in the mining communities (Costello, 1997a, 1997b, 1998). One of her coauthored publications, *Madame Felix's Gold*, highlighted the long mining history of a portion of the Mother Lode in Calaveras County (Fuller, Marvin et al. 1996).

Finding better ways to return the results of archaeological labors to the public has been a key interest for Julia. Early on the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation published her *Melones: A Story of a Stanislaus River Town*, based on the extensive work at the New Melones Project (Costello 1983); it has been reprinted numerous times over the years. She also developed dramatizations of historical, transcribed dialogues of real people to complement features and artifacts found on sites. These were presented at SHA and SCA conferences, where she enlisted the talents of Judy Tordoff and Adrian Praetzellis to read roles in

the script. These voices were frequently of overlooked populations: Italian farmers, urban prostitutes (Costello 2000, 2003; Meyer et al. 2005), or, in one case, testimony by Paiute people who had been forced off their land in the Owens Valley in the early 20th century.

Keeping in touch with her archaeological friends in the Middle East, especially Dr. Leila Badre and Dr. Patricia Bikai, has led to several opportunities to return to Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan to work on various projects, including a Phoenician temple in Tyre, a Bronze Age tell near Latakia, and Mamluk-period mosque in Jordan (Bikai et al. 2020). Julia was called on to organize a National Register program for Jordan (Costello 1995), funded by the U.S. Information Agency.

Other activities in her “retirement” have involved recording sites in the Gold Country, where she lives. Working on Chinese sites in Mokelumne Hill has been very rewarding, as she recently completed a successful National Register nomination of the town’s Chinatown Gardens, the only site of its kind in California. Julia also volunteered on a program using trained dogs to locate cremains left behind in homes destroyed by recent massive fires in California. It was gratifying to see the appreciation on the faces of family members when the ashes of their loved ones, that they had feared to be irretrievably lost in the destruction of their homes, were found and returned to them.

Julia has always shown a remarkable capacity for befriending others, whether it be colleagues in her chosen profession or neighbors in her town in the foothills. I feel fortunate to be one of that happy band.

References

- Arthur, Don, Julia G. Costello, and Brian Fagan
1975 A Preliminary Account of Majolica Sherds from the Chapel Site: Royal Spanish Presidio, Santa Barbara. *Kiva* 41(2):207–213.
- Barker, Leo R., Rebecca Allen, and Julia G. Costello
1995 The Archaeology of Spanish and Mexican Alta California. In *The Archaeology of Spanish and Mexican Colonialism in the American Southwest*, James E. Ayres, editor, pp. 3–51. Society for Historical Archaeology, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Barker, Leo R., and Julia G. Costello (editors)
1991 *Archaeology of Alta California*. Garland Press, New York, NY.
- Bikai, Patricia Maynor, Julia G. Costello, Chrysanthos Kaselopoulos, and Micaela Sinibaldi
2020 The Beidha Documentaton Project: The Mosques. Academia <https://www.academia.edu/44005114/The_Beidha_Documentation_Project>. Accessed 5 April 2023.
- Costello, Julia G.
1975 Archaeological Survey of Mission Vieja de la Purísima. *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 11(2):41–59.
- Costello, Julia G.
1977 Lime Processing in Spanish California. *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 13(2):22–32.
- Costello, Julia G.
1981 Historical Archaeology: Identifying Italians in the Mother Lode. *Archaeology* 34(2):18–26.
- Costello, Julia G.
1983 *Melones: A Story of a Stanislaus River Town*. Department of the Interior, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region, Sacramento, CA.
- Costello, Julia G.
1989a An Archive of Artifacts: The Chew Kee Store. *Pacific Discovery* 42(2):18–27.
- Costello, Julia G.
1989b *Santa Inés Mission Excavations 1986–1988*. California Historical Archaeology, No. 1. Coyote Press, Salinas, CA.
- Costello, Julia G.
1989c Variability among the Alta California Missions: The Economics of Agricultural Production. In *Columbian Consequences, Volume I: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands West*, David Hurst Thomas, editor, pp. 435–449. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.
- Costello, Julia G.
1990 *Variability and Economic Change in the California Missions: An Historical and Archaeological Study*. Doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Barbara. University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Costello, Julia G.
1991a Not Peas in a Pod: Documenting Diversity among the California Missions. In *Text-Aided Archaeology*, Barbara J. Little, editor, pp. 67–81. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.
- Costello, Julia G.
1992a Purchasing Patterns of the California Missions in ca. 1805. *Historical Archaeology* 26(1):59–66.
- Costello, Julia G.
1992b Some Observations on the Development of Historical Archaeology in California. In *Proceedings of the Society for California Archaeology*, Vol. 5, Martin D. Rosen, editor, pp. 59–88. Society for California Archaeology, San Diego, CA.
- Costello, Julia G.
1993 The Society for Historical Archaeology 1987–1992. *Historical Archaeology* 27(1):32–34.
- Costello, Julia G.
1994a Putting Mission Vieja de la Purísima on the Map. *Proceedings of the Society for California*

- Archaeology*, Vol. 5, Martin D. Rosen, editor, pp. 67–86. Society for California Archaeology, San Diego, CA.
- Costello, Julia G.
1994b *The Ranches and Ranchos of Mission San Antonio de Padua*. California Mission Studies Association, Santa Barbara.
- Costello, Julia G.
1995 A Program to Develop a National Register of Cultural Heritage Properties for Jordan, Gaetano Palumbo, contributor. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 39:541–552.
- Costello, Julia G.
1997a Domed Ovens. In *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*, Vol. 3, Paul Oliver, editor, p. VI.8. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Costello, Julia G.
1997b Brick and Tile Making in Spanish California with Related Old and New World Examples. In *The Prehistory and History of Ceramic Kilns*, Prudence M. Rice, editor, pp. 195–217. American Ceramic Society, Westerville, OH.
- Costello, Julia G.
1998 Bread Fresh from the Oven: Memories of Italian Bread Baking in the California Mother Lode. *Historical Archaeology* 32(1):66–73.
- Costello, Julia G.
2000 Red Light Voices: An Archaeological Drama of Late Nineteenth-Century Prostitution. In *The Archaeologies of Sexuality*, Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, editors, pp. 160–175. Routledge Press, New York, NY.
- Costello, Julia G.
2003 Life behind the Red Lights: Prostitution in Los Angeles, 1880–1910. In *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation*, Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman, editors, pp. 177–196. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.
- Costello, Julia G.
2014 A Typology of Mission Pottery: Drawings and Descriptions of Low-Fire Earthenwares from Mission San Antonio de Padua, California. In *Ceramic Production in Early Hispanic California: Craft, Economy and Trade on the Frontier of New Spain*, Russell K. Skowronek, M. James Blackman, and Ronald L. Bishop, editors, pp. 69–92. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Costello, Julia G.
2020 Chinatown's Taoist Temple, Mokelumne Hill, California. *SHA Newsletter* 53(1):34–39.
- Costello, Julia G.
2021 Small Chinese Jars. *Asian American Comparative Collection Newsletter* 38(1):5–6.
- Costello, Julia G. (editor)
1989d *Historical and Archaeological Research at the Calaveras Big Tree Cottage Area*. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.
- Costello, Julia G. (editor)
1991b *The Documentary Evidence for the Spanish Missions of Alta California*. Garland Press, New York, NY.
- Costello, Julia G., Kevin Hallaran, Keith Warren, and Margie Akin
2008 The Luck of Third Street: Archaeology of Chinatown, San Bernardino, California. *Historical Archaeology* 42(3):136–151.
- Costello, Julia G., Rand Herbert, and Mark Selverston
2008 Mining Sites: Historic Context and Archaeological Research Design. Report to Cultural and Community Studies Office, Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, from HARD Mining Sites Team, Sacramento.
- Costello, Julia G., and David Hornbeck
1989 Alta California: An Overview. In *Columbian Consequences, Volume I: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands West*, David Hurst Thomas, editor, pp. 303–331. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.
- Costello, Julia G., and John R. Johnson
2015 Cultural Earthquake: The Arrival of the Europeans. In *Coastal California: A Land of Diversity*, Lynn H. Gamble, editor, pp. 97–103. School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe, NM.
- Costello, Julia G., and Mary L. Manieri
1988 *Rice Bowls in the Delta: A Catalogue of Artifacts Recovered from the 1915 Asian Community of Walnut Grove, California*. University of California, Institute of Archaeology, Occasional Paper No. 16. Los Angeles.
- Costello, Julia G., and Linda Thorpe
2010 San Miguel Island, Channel Islands National Park, California: Study of Selected Historic-Period Archaeological Resources on San Miguel Island. Manuscript, Channel Islands National Park, Ventura, CA.
- Costello, Julia G., and Philip L. Walker
1987 Burials from the Santa Barbara Presidio Chapel. *Historical Archaeology* 21(1):3–17.
- Fuller, Willard P., and Julia G. Costello
1990a Madam Felix-Hodson District Gold Mines and Mills. Historic American Engineering Record, No. CA-76, Western Regional Office, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, San Francisco, CA.
- Fuller, Willard P., and Julia G. Costello
1990b Mountain King Gold Mine and Mill. Historic American Engineering Record, No. CA-77, Western Regional Office, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, San Francisco, CA.
- Fuller, Willard P., and Julia G. Costello
1990c Royal Consolidated Gold Mine and Mills, Royal Mill. Historic American Engineering Record, No. CA-81, Western Regional Office, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, San Francisco, CA.

- Fuller, Willard P., Judith Cunningham, and Julia G. Costello
1990 Carson Hill and Its Gold Quartz Mills. *Las Calaveras* 29:25–35. San Andreas, CA.
- Fuller, Willard P., Judith Marvin, and Julia G. Costello
1996 *Madam Felix's Gold: The Story of the Madam Felix Mining District, Calaveras County, California*. Calaveras County Historical Society, San Andreas, CA, and Foothill Resources, Ltd., Mokelumne Hill, CA.
- Hoover, Robert L., and Julia G. Costello
1985 *Excavations at Mission San Antonio 1976–1978*. University of California, Institute of Archaeology, Monograph 26. Los Angeles.
- Kimbrow, Edna E., and Julia G. Costello
2009 *California Missions: History, Art, and Preservation*, Tevvy Ball, contributor. Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, CA.
- Maniery, Mary, and Julia G. Costello
1986 Celedons and Sake Bottles: Asian History Underground. *Pacific Historian* 30(4):36–46.
- Meyer, Michael D., Erica S. Gibson, and Julia G. Costello
2005 City of Angels, City of Sin: Archaeology in the Los Angeles Red-Light District ca. 1900. *Historical Archaeology* 39(1):107–125.
- Mikkelsen, Patricia, Paula Juelke Carr, Shelly Tiley, Julia Costello, Nathan Stevens, and John R. Johnson
2014 *The Long Road Traveled: Archaeology, Native Americans, and Europeans in Cuyama Valley*. Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., Davis, CA.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and applicable law.