

# Geraldine Bruckner

An Appreciation by Past and Present

*Expedition* Staff

Geraldine Bruckner, aged eighty-two and *Expedition's* Associate Editor, died on 9 August 1983 after a short illness. It would be fair to say that The University Museum has lost an institution, as Geraldine had worked here continuously since 1921 and was a living repository of Museum history and lore. It was particularly appropriate that Geraldine spent her career at a university museum, for throughout her long career she taught generation after generation the fine arts of museum work and publication.

She joined the Museum staff as an Assistant in the Director's Office, was Registrar from 1929 to 1964, Editor from 1957-71, and Associate Editor from 1971 until her death. Appropriately enough, she became the first Archivist of the Museum when that position was created in 1964. Her thirty-five years as Registrar, in particular, meant that she had a vast knowledge of the Museum's collections, the history of their acquisition, the circumstances of their discovery (or collection, or excavation), and their scholarly importance. In short, over the years Geraldine had gained an extensive practical education in ethnology and archaeology, on an almost worldwide basis. Thus she was an obvious person to become the first editor of *Expedition* in 1958, when our magazine was founded to replace *The Museum Bulletin*. We all recognize that the modest but real success of *Expedition* is very largely due to her.

In 1966 Geraldine officially retired — that is, from full-time work at the Museum and from her last full-time position, that of Archivist. However, she continued as Editor on a part-time basis and remained almost as active as before. In 1971 she retired somewhat further, leaving the editorship of *Expedition* to a series of faculty (Erle Leichty 1971-3, Jim Muhly 1973-8, Bernard Wailes since 1978), but remaining as Associate Editor, teaching that

1  
Geraldine Bruckner, 1983.  
Photograph by Michael Wakely.



succession of amateurs how to publish a journal. As such, she still virtually produced the magazine, while relegating the solicitation of manuscripts and preliminary editing. Meanwhile, she continued to edit other material for the Museum, in particular the revived Museum monograph series, from 1978 on. Latterly, she spent only two mornings a week in the Museum — naturally the high point of the week for *Expedition* work — but still took quantities



2  
Geraldine in 1976, with  
Barbara Wilson, then  
Museum Archivist, and  
Christopher Wilson.

3  
Geraldine as Museum  
Registrar in the 1940s(?).



of work home with her; we all have happy memories of editorial sessions in Geraldine's small apartment in Center City, pleasant occasions for constructive work, always made convivial by hospitable entertainment. The record-breaking snowfall of February 1983 finally prompted Geraldine to make plans to leave her beloved Philadelphia in the fall of 1983 and settle in Florida with one of her sisters. Having made this decision, she characteristically made advance arrangements for manuscripts to be sent to her for editing! Now, sadly, that is not to be. Only those of us who worked closely with Geraldine can appreciate the tremendous loss to the Museum. Only we can savour the extreme good fortune stemming from our relationship with her.

Erle Leichty  
James Muhly  
Barbara Murray  
Martha Phillips  
Jennifer Quick  
Bernard Wailes