

Generations of STEM:

Bertha Parker Pallan Cody

Archaeologist

Bertha is considered the first female Native American archaeologist. Of Abenaki and Seneca descent, she helped her father on his archaeological excavations. Later, she helped her uncle on excavations, discovering a pueblo site that was ultimately displayed in the Southwest Museum. She later worked at Gypsum

Cave as an expedition secretary, cleaning and cataloging artifacts. Her small size compared to the male archaeologists allowed her to explore parts of the caves others found difficult. In her free time, she found the most important artifacts of the expedition — tools belonging to some of the earliest human settlers of North America. She later published a number of archaeological and ethnological papers in the Southwest Museum's journal. All of this was achieved without a university education.

Many of her accomplishments are not well documented. Most accounts of her life refer to her in terms of her relationships to others—such as wife, daughter, or niece. In fact, her tomb references her by her husband, Mrs. Iron Eyes Cody. Yet, her work is still groundbreaking in the field of archaeology.



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