

Archaeology and Museums: A Project in Two Parts

by

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A Project

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ABSTRACT
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This professional project consisted of two parts, the Albright Artifact Collection Inventory Project and a research paper, “Archaeologists in Museums: A Collaborative Model.” The first part consisted of the production of a digital inventory and final report regarding the archaeological materials housed at the Albright Institute for Archaeological Research (AIAR) in Jerusalem. This catalog and report included a number, a brief description, some photographs, and provenance information (wherever possible) for each object. While several artifacts had no ascertainable provenance, it was possible to connect many of them to four excavations led by American archaeologists connected to the AIAR. The catalog produced and the report submitted will be used by Albright administration to inform future conservation and care of the objects.

The second part of the project consisted of a research paper that investigated the current state of collaborations between museums and archaeologists, with an emphasis on exhibits, and suggested a new model for exhibit collaborations. A literary review and two case studies evaluates current collaborations between archaeologists and museums. The paper finds that most current collaborations are large-scale programs and exhibits, requiring extensive financial resources, developed after excavation is complete, which are not easily updated. This paper concludes by proposing a new model for a small-scale collaborative exhibit that could be done while excavation is ongoing, could be easily updated, would require fewer resources, leading to more up to date collaborative exhibits that can be accomplished by museums of any size.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN MUSEUMS: A COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Introduction

From early childhood I loved both museums and archaeology. I was therefore especially drawn to museums that had exhibits about archaeology. I loved the play “excavations” at various museums, but I always wanted to participate in an actual archaeological project. I would spend hours looking at every object and reading all the text in the archaeology exhibits in my local museums, and I loved learning about ancient cultures through their objects. Unfortunately, when I asked the staff at the museums about how to be part of a “real dig” or talk to “real archaeologists” they told me that the materials on display were from excavations completed long before I was born. They did not know of archaeological programming for kids or who I should talk to about a career in archaeology. I persisted in my devotion to both fields and now have professional and academic experience as both an archaeologist and a museum professional. I want to improve the experience of future children like myself and help integrate the work of archaeologists more effectively into museum exhibits.

In this project, I analyze the current collaborations between archaeologists and museum professionals through a literature review and through two case studies. Based on the successes and failures of these examples, I then propose a new model for collaborations between museums and archaeologists. I believe that this model should make collaboration accessible for any museum and nearly any archaeological excavation. Collaborative work provides the museum with an exhibit full of cutting-edge research and provides the archaeologists with an audience to hear about their work. Collaborations can be challenging, but this simple, adaptable model will make the hurdles surmountable.

Literature Review

Collaboration between archaeologists and museums is not rare. A review of the literature written about collaborations between archaeologists and museums reveals three major types of collaborations. First, archaeological artifacts are often part of or stored with museum collections and can be used in exhibits or educational programs. Second, museums and archaeological sites often co-exist on the same property. Third, archaeologists conduct public programs either at the excavation site, which they advertise through museums, or during events located at a museum.

Archaeological Artifacts in Museum Collections

Probably the most common way visitors encounter archaeology in museums is through artifacts in a museum's collection. Sometimes museums offer archaeologists space to store and research the artifacts they discovered. Sometimes the museums become the permanent owners of the objects; other times they provide a temporary space. Often museums have archaeological artifacts in their collection that are not connected with a particular excavation and were donated by private collectors. Regardless of how the artifacts arrive at the museum, they are often included in curated exhibits and programs. Sometimes museum professionals consult archaeologists when preparing these exhibits and programs; other times they simply consult notes or publications from archaeologists.

One particularly thorough collaboration goes beyond collections. The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository, an Alaskan Native organization in Kodiak, Alaska, has archaeologists on staff who lead excavations on behalf of the museum, meaning the objects are part of the museum's collection from the moment they are

excavated.¹ “A Partnership for the Past” provides information regarding a partnership between the Alutiiq Museum and the U.S. Coast Guard base in Kodiak, Alaska, in which the museum and archaeologists worked together to excavate ancient Alutiiq remains on the property of the base. The artifacts from this excavation, while remaining the legal property of the U.S. Coast Guard, are housed at the Alutiiq Museum. At the museum, the native community cares for the artifacts and the museum staff include them in exhibits.² Because the excavators work for the museum directly, the early results of each excavation are published on the museum’s webpage even before the artifacts are fully processed.³ This sort of total collaboration is ideal, but it is not a realistic option for most museums or most archaeologists.

On the other end of the spectrum, some archaeological excavations deposit their artifacts at a museum with little additional interaction. Before the construction of the Arizona Diamondbacks’ baseball stadium, the company Archaeological Consulting Services, Ltd. of Tempe, Arizona was contracted to excavate and record the archaeological features that were eventually covered by the construction.⁴ Projects like this, in which a professional archaeological firm investigates a site before construction, are considered Cultural Resource Management (CRM) excavations. These firms are paid by the contract, and the projects are on tight schedules that do not allow for extensive

¹ Amy Steffian and Steve Hunt, “A Partnership for the Past,” *CRM* 24, no. 2 (2001): 7.

² Steffian and Hunt, 8.

³ Steffian and Hunt, 8.

⁴ Karolyn J. Jackman, “Archaeology of Bank One Ballpark, Phoenix, Arizona,” *CRM* 23, no. 10 (2000): 40.

interpretation of the materials or public outreach during the project.⁵ This excavation mostly uncovered evidence of the historic settlement of Phoenix and also uncovered a small amount of prehistoric remains.⁶ The excavation was in an older area of Phoenix, and the socio-economic and ethnic composition of the neighborhood changed several times over the years, something confirmed by the material culture discovered.⁷

After the excavation and publication were complete, most of the artifacts and field notes were curated with the Phoenix Museum of History.⁸ The museum incorporated some of the artifacts into exhibits about Phoenix history. Other artifacts were assigned to the education collection, where the museum used them for archaeology-related programming.⁹ This sort of relationship is easy for both archaeologists and museums. The excavators do not have to spend precious time leading programs, and the public still gets to see their results. The museum has new artifacts to refresh old displays and programs. In this case, the museum staff were knowledgeable about the material, since the scope of both the museum and the artifacts was local history.

Other collections related collaborations are limited to a few artifacts, designated for specific exhibits. The excavation team working at Horvat Omrit, in northern Israel, has placed an emphasis on public outreach and has engaged in multiple limited exhibit relationships. This excavation project began in 1999 under the leadership of Macalester

⁵ Jackman, 42–43.

⁶ Jackman, 40.

⁷ Jackman, 41–43.

⁸ Jackman, 44.

⁹ Jackman, 44.

College in St. Paul, MN.¹⁰ This excavation has revealed a shrine which was built ca. 50 BCE, as well as temples that were used into the fourth century CE. The site was also occupied in later periods and even contains archaeological remains from several of the wars of the modern State of Israel.¹¹

Exhibit work began while the excavation was still ongoing. A major permanent exhibit at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, *Herod the Great: King's Final Journey*, includes a display about the Herodian Shrine at Omrit. Several objects from Omrit are included in this exhibit.¹² This exhibit opened in 2013, about fourteen years after excavations began. The excavation's directors worked with the museum's team to integrate Omrit into the exhibit, which highlighted several Herodian period sites.¹³ The partnership with the Israel Museum extends beyond this exhibit, with the museum housing a few of the more delicate Omrit excavation finds in their collections space.¹⁴

A few years after the opening of the exhibit at the Israel Museum, the Omrit team began a project developing a small permanent exhibit at Tel Hai Academic College, located just three miles from the site.¹⁵ The focus of this exhibit is a reconstructed Corinthian column. The conservation, reconstruction, and relocation of the column, along with the installation of the rest of the exhibit, was completed over the course of the 2015-

¹⁰ J. Andrew Overman, Michael S Kreher, and Erin E Gibbs, "Archaeology, Conservation, and Public Engagement at Omrit: A Case Study," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 6, no. 4 (2018): 331.

¹¹ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 330–31.

¹² Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 343.

¹³ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 343.

¹⁴ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 344.

¹⁵ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 344.

2017 seasons.¹⁶ In addition to the fully reconstructed column, the exhibit also displays several of the artifacts which the excavation team determined were at high risk for looting. The public nature of the exhibit provides additional security for these objects while offering easy access for both researchers and curious members of the public.¹⁷ The team chose Tel Hai Academic College in order to keep the artifacts and the display local to the region where the objects were found. They hope the exhibit will help the local community develop a personal connection. The site is actually visible from the exhibit at the college, and the team intends to install telescopes in the exhibit to enable an even stronger connection between the exhibit and the site itself.¹⁸ Both of Omrit's exhibit collaborations help bring this remote site to the attention of additional visitors, something the team hopes to leverage to make the site into a national park.¹⁹ The Israel Museum and Tel Hai Academic College also benefit, but they will likely not be able to rotate new objects to refresh the exhibit due to the limited extent of the collaborative agreement.

Museums on Archaeological Sites

A second common form of collaboration happens when a museum space and an excavation are on the same site. Whether the museum was developed to exhibit the excavation finds or the excavation was undertaken to further understand the origins of a historic museum site, these sites have the unique ability to tell stories that happened in the place where the visitor is standing. Even if visitors are removed from the events of the

¹⁶ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 344–46.

¹⁷ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 346.

¹⁸ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 346.

¹⁹ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 343.

story by generational or cultural differences, they develop a connection to the events because the interpretive team can tell them, “this happened right here.”

Ian Kerrigan, in “Exhibiting 9/11: Interpreting Archaeology and Memory at the World Trade Center Site,” explores the power of the place to evoke memories and encourage reflection on difficult topics. Kerrigan describes the development of the memorial museum at Ground Zero. He explains that “by and large, the Museum’s primary artifact is the site itself.” He notes that the power of the location of the museum, below ground in the footprints of the former World Trade Center towers, conveys the scale of the destruction on 9/11.²⁰ He concludes, “Harnessing the power of place, exhibitions will enable visitors to encounter and connect with the authentic site of the tragedy, honor the archaeology of the space, commemorate those who were lost in the attacks, and contribute their own memories to the creation of history.”²¹ While many historic sites are not connected to an event with the emotional intensity of 9/11, the power of place remains a significant part of the collaboration between archaeologists and museum professionals at those sites.

The Omrit excavation has been intentional about developing the site into a national park, with permanent interpretive elements. They incorporated this goal into the structure of the excavation. The team prioritized backfilling squares not relevant to the presentation of the site to create pathways and decrease the risk of visitors falling into the squares. The team also put an emphasis on swift conservation work, making it possible to

²⁰ Ian Kerrigan, “Exhibiting 9/11: Interpreting Archaeology and Memory at the World Trade Center Site,” *Exhibitionist* 30, no. 2 (2011): 22–23.

²¹ Kerrigan, 24.

open up these structures for public viewing without risking damage from members of the public.²² Part of this swift conservation work includes a conservation field school, conducted in partnership with the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA).²³ This conservation field school, in addition to a more traditional excavation field school, helps prepare the site for a transition into a national park. The IAA connection to the field school also helps create some public connections to the site even before it is turned over to the Parks Authority.²⁴ Because the team was mindful of the needs of Parks Authority interpreters from the beginning, the public will hopefully be able to learn the history of Omrit at the place itself in the near future.

Archaeology Public Outreach

A third common type of collaboration between archaeologists and museums is programming. Archaeological journals frequently publish articles about outreach to the public through programming. While some archaeologists conduct public outreach without museum involvement, many partner with museums, whether for special events at the museum, for advertising site tours, or even for more thorough collaboration with museum professionals involved in the development process.

The Omrit team's final public outreach has been digital. Starting in 2016, the conservation team started conducting 3D scans of objects discovered at the site. While these scans are not yet publicly available, the Omrit team hopes to use them for digital

²² Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, "Archaeology, Conservation, and Public Engagement at Omrit: A Case Study," 335–36.

²³ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 339–40.

²⁴ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 341, 343.

exhibits at some point in the future.²⁵ The team continues to work to develop the site into a national park and is concurrently working on developing relationships with educational and cultural stakeholders in the local community, hoping to transfer the future care of the site over to local organizations.

The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository has a healthy Community Archaeology Program, which allows local individuals, including children, to participate in the museum's summer excavation.²⁶ The program has partnered with U.S. Coast Guard for logistical purposes and with local high schools and colleges, providing academic credit to students who participate. One of the goals of the museum, and of this project, is to educate the community both about Alutiiq culture and about the importance of archaeological sites. The total collaboration of the Community Archaeology Program is one of the reasons the Alutiiq Museum received the National Award for Museum Service.²⁷

Fort Frederica, in St. Simons Island, Georgia, has a unique archaeological situation that allows their program to involve even very young children in archaeological excavation. The site, an eighteenth century British colonial settlement, was excavated in the 1950s, when methodology was a bit different from today. The early excavators reburied artifacts that did not seem particularly significant at the time.²⁸ While this reburial trench does not provide much useful data for modern archaeologists, it is an

²⁵ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, 346–47.

²⁶ Steffian and Hunt, “A Partnership for the Past.”

²⁷ Steffian and Hunt, 8.

²⁸ J. Steven Moore, “Archaeology Education at Fort Frederica,” *CRM* 24, no. 2 (2001): 9.

excellent space for introducing children to archaeological methods.²⁹ The National Park Service has partnered with local public and private schools to develop a classroom-curriculum and field trip program for this site. The program teaches the students about how to interpret archaeological artifacts, use proper excavation techniques, document artifacts, and clean and process artifacts.³⁰

Even if an excavation does not directly consult museum professionals to develop their program, archaeologists can still use museum education techniques. Theano Moussouri, a professor of Museum Studies at the University College London Institute of Archaeology, evaluates two programs, both designed for use in public schools, as case studies of informal education theories used to teach archaeological material.³¹ The first case study followed an interactive website teaching archaeology. The analysis determined that students interacted differently with the material based on their group size and the interactive tools made available to them.³² The social element of the groups seemed to encourage student engagement and learning. The second case study evaluated a mobile phone app interactive used during a museum tour that allowed students to record their own perspectives on the objects.³³ The evaluation revealed that the handheld app helped students to use teamwork and engage with one another, their teachers, and the objects in the collection more readily. As a result of these case studies, Moussouri argues that

²⁹ Moore, 9.

³⁰ Moore, 9–10.

³¹ Theano Moussouri, “From ‘Telling’ to ‘Consulting’;,” in *Public Participation in Archaeology*, ed. Suzie Thomas and Joanne Lea, NED-New edition (Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 11–22.

³² Moussouri, 17–18.

³³ Moussouri, 17–19.

archaeologists can improve their programming by incorporating the sorts of constructivist, learner-focused approaches used in museums.³⁴

Conclusions from the Literature

Based on the literature available, it is clear that collaboration between museums and archaeologists does occur. The combined expertise of archaeologists and museum professionals produces higher quality exhibits and programs than either group could manage alone, connecting communities of adult and student learners to the past buried around them.

If these excellent collaborations are so successful, why, then, are they not more common? Collaborative work is challenging, requiring multiple organizations with limited resources to invest the time and money to do the project well. Of the exhibits and programs noted above, all but one, the collaboration between the Bank One Ballpark excavation team and the Phoenix Museum of History, led to major exhibits or programs, requiring significant investment of personnel and resources. This one exception involved the least actual collaboration, as the excavation team simply donated their artifacts to the museum and trusted the museum staff to interpret the finds. In addition to the major investments necessary for these large projects, their scale also led to an extended development period. Often these collaborative exhibits and programs are developed only after most or all of the excavation is completed. Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs even outline their process as “moving from excavations, to conservation, public engagement,

³⁴ Moussouri, 12–15.

and exhibition.”³⁵ While this delay is necessary for large-scale projects, the public also benefits from learning about new hypotheses and cutting-edge research.

Two Current Collaboration Examples

The publications regarding collaborative efforts summarize the work into a short article. To better evaluate how to make collaboration easier for museums and archaeologists to undertake, it is necessary to understand the details of how such a collaboration works. For a closer look at the practical elements of developing collaborative exhibits, I interviewed archaeologists and museum professionals from two different collaborative projects. The first case study focuses on the collaboration between the Gault School of Archaeological Research (GSAR) and two local museums, the Bell County Museum and the Williamson Museum. The second example comes from the University of West Florida (UWF) Historic Trust, an organization that manages archaeological sites, historic homes, and museum spaces and works with other local organizations to present these materials to the public. Both of these case studies exemplify the types of cooperative work museums and archaeologists are already doing to communicate archaeological research to the public. Several of the ideas tested at these sites can be applied at other institutions, whether large or small.

Case Study Number 1: The Gault Site

The Gault site is located on a former farm near Florence, TX, on the border between Bell and Williamson Counties. The site is known for its clear stratification, the significant quantity of Clovis period (about 13 thousand years ago to about 16 thousand

³⁵ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, “Archaeology, Conservation, and Public Engagement at Omrit: A Case Study,” 352.

years ago) finds, and clear evidence of a layer of occupation older than the Clovis period.³⁶ This site was excavated, beginning in 1999, by the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory (TARL) at the University of Texas at Austin in collaboration with the Gault School of Archaeological Research (GSAR). The excavators value public outreach. Most of this outreach work is completed through programs, which involve collaborations with the Bell County Museum and Williamson Museum. In 2008, the Bell County Museum opened a permanent exhibit focusing on the Gault site, which was developed together with GSAR excavation staff.

The excavation of the Gault site. The Gault site has been known to archaeologists since 1929, when J. E. Pearce of the University of Texas at Austin sent a team to investigate the site.³⁷ Starting around the 1960s, the property owners, aware of archaeological materials on the land, allowed collectors to come and dig for a fee. In the late 1990s, after ceasing the pay to dig operation, the landowners uncovered the jawbone of a mammoth. They invited Michael Collins of Texas State University to examine the find. Collins was less enthused with the mammoth bone than about the extensive pile of Clovis tools he identified around it. He negotiated with the landowners for permission to excavate from 1999 to 2002.³⁸

³⁶ D Clark Wernecke and Thomas J. Williams, "From Maya Pyramids to Paleoindian Projectile Points: The Importance of Public Outreach in Archaeology," *Journal of Archaeology and Education* 1, no. 1 (2017): 13.

³⁷ D Clark Wernecke, "Professor J.E. Pearce at the Gault Site, Bell County, Texas," *The TARL Blog* (blog), October 4, 2017, <https://sites.utexas.edu/tarl/2017/10/04/professor-j-e-pearce-at-the-gault-site-bell-county-texas-by-d-clark-wernecke/>.

³⁸ Thomas Williams, interview with the author, Austin, November 8, 2019.

From the beginning, Collins and his team believed that “all archaeology is public archaeology.”³⁹ They therefore invited volunteers to join them in the excavation and offered tours of the site to many visitors. Over the course of these first three years of excavation, over 2,500 visitors participated in the excavation. This number does not include individuals who received more formal archaeological training by participating in the official field school.⁴⁰ In 2007 TARL was given the opportunity to purchase the land in order to continue excavation and develop the site for public availability. Excavation began again in 2007 and continued in various areas of the site until 2015.⁴¹

The excavations conducted by the GSAR between 1999 and 2015 uncovered over 2.6 million artifacts. The primary contributions of the site to the academic world have been in the Clovis and pre-Clovis cultures.⁴² Currently, of all the Clovis material excavated throughout the world, 65% of the objects were found at the Gault site.⁴³ The clear stratigraphy at the Gault site and the analysis of soil samples through optically stimulated luminescence also demonstrate conclusively that there was an occupation at the Gault site even older than the Clovis period.⁴⁴

³⁹ Clark Wernecke, email with the author, October 4, 2019.

⁴⁰ Thomas Williams, interview with the author, Austin, November 8, 2019.

⁴¹ Clark Wernecke, public tour, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

⁴² Thomas J. Williams et al., “Evidence of an Early Projectile Point Technology in North America at the Gault Site, Texas, USA,” *Science Advances* 4, no. 7 (July 2018): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aar5954>; K. Rodrigues et al., “OSL Ages of the Clovis, Late Paleoindian, and Archaic Components at Area 15 of the Gault Site, Central Texas, U.S.A.,” *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 7 (June 2016): 94–103, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2016.03.014>.

⁴³ Clark Wernecke, public tour, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

⁴⁴ Williams et al., “Evidence of an Early Projectile Point Technology in North America at the Gault Site, Texas, USA.”

Programs at the Gault site. I visited the GSAR lab on November 8, 2019 and attended a lecture by Nancy Velchoff, part of TARL's "Clovis Technology at the Gault Site" public lecture series. After the lecture I interviewed both Nancy Velchoff, the Lab Director and Paleolithic Archaeologist for the GSAR and Thomas Williams, the Assistant Executive Director, about the site and their collaborative projects with museums. The excavation has primarily partnered with the county museums for the two counties which the excavation area straddles, the Williamson Museum and the Bell County Museum. On November 9, 2019, I joined one of the tours the GSAR scheduled through the Williamson Museum. On this tour, D. Clark Wernecke, Executive Director for the GSAR, led about forty members of the public on a four-and-a-half-hour tour through the site.



Image 1: Archaeologist Clark Wernecke leads a public tour at the Gault Site. Photograph by author.

Tours are the most regular, continuous collaboration between the GSAR and the museums. The Bell County Museum and the Williamson Museum schedule tours of the site on alternating months. While the museums book the tours, the tours themselves are conducted by the excavation team. This allows visitors the chance to meet professional archaeologists and to learn about the site from the people who know it best.⁴⁵ The GSAR team also frequently attend lecture series, archaeology month events, and other special programs at both museums.⁴⁶ The GSAR team attends such events at other organizations as well, but the continuous relationship with the local museums leads to more frequent collaboration for special events.⁴⁷

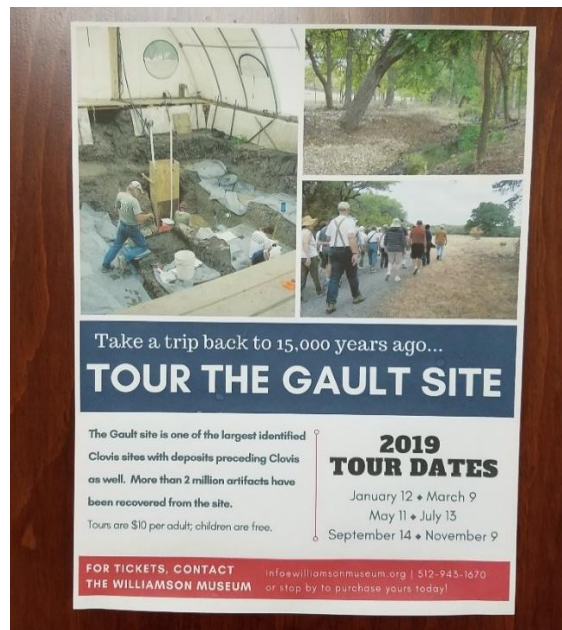


Image 2: A Gault Site tour poster hanging in the Williamson Museum. Photograph by author.

⁴⁵ Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

⁴⁶ Mikaela Young, Curator of Exhibits and Collections at the Bell County Museum, interview with the author, Belton, November 9, 2019; Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site November 9, 2019. Wernecke indicates that collaborations with the Williamson Museum are less frequent than they have been in the past.

⁴⁷ Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

The Bell County Museum exhibit. The Bell County Museum has a stronger relationship with the GSAR than the Williamson Museum does, something I partially attribute to the power of exhibit collaboration. The Bell County Museum began preliminary research for a permanent exhibit about the Gault site in 2004. After extensive collaboration with the GSAR team, an impressive permanent exhibit, *The Gault Site: A Wealth of New Archaeological Evidence*, opened in 2008.⁴⁸ This exhibit focuses on the site and its discoveries and teaches visitors about the science of archaeology.⁴⁹ I talked to current and former staff of both the Bell County Museum and the GSAR about this exhibit and its development.

At the time the exhibit was developed, Stephanie Turnham was the director of the Bell County Museum. Turnham had visited the site on a tour led by Collins years before she started thinking about an exhibit. She was impressed by the site and its significance to the story of prehistoric America.⁵⁰ In 2004, the Bell County Museum was given the opportunity to expand into a new building, a project involving a \$1.2 million capital campaign. Tim Brown, one of the county commissioners and an amateur archaeologist, was enthusiastic about the Gault project and urged all involved to devote part of the new space to a permanent exhibit on the site.⁵¹ The GSAR team agreed to consult on the project at no charge, meaning the full budget of approximately \$50,000 could be devoted to the exhibit.

⁴⁸ Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

⁴⁹ Coleman Hampton and Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

⁵⁰ Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

⁵¹ Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

Calvin Smith, former director of the Strecker Museum (now the Mayborn Museum) at Baylor University, consulted with Turnham and the Bell County Museum team at the beginning of the project. Smith was instrumental in connecting the team to KPC Exhibits, an exhibit design firm from Boston, Massachusetts with which the Bell County Museum contracted. Turnham credits Smith with helping to shape the initial overarching ideas for the exhibit even though he was not involved in the later stages of development.⁵² Representatives from KPC Exhibits visited the museum and toured the Gault site only once, at the beginning of the project. After that, most communication for the exhibit development was completed by email. Because neither Turnham nor the KPC exhibit team were experts on Clovis and Pre-Clovis materials, Turnham turned over the curation of the content almost entirely to the GSAR team. She remained the contact person between KPC and the excavators. KPC would email Turnham, who would forward the content to Wernecke, Collins, and Velchoff, who would make changes and send them back to Turnham.⁵³

Wernecke produced most of the text for the exhibit, although Velchoff and the KPC team aided in editing the text.⁵⁴ The GSAR team also ensured the accuracy of many of the visual elements of the exhibit. Velchoff's scientific drawings and excavation photographs were often used in the exhibit. The GSAR team also ensured that the mammoths in the visuals were the right species and the representations of the ancient humans did not inaccurately portray any characteristic racial or ethnic traits. The

⁵² Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

⁵³ Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019; Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

⁵⁴ Nancy Velchoff, interview with the author, Austin, November 8, 2019.

complications of working with an offsite design firm did lead to some tensions during the process, and Turnham was a skilled mediator.⁵⁵

In addition to content curation, the GSAR team helped identify objects from the Bell County Museum's collection for the exhibit. One of the major complications that archaeologists have when working with museums is the need for control of the artifacts until after publication. Not only do the research team need access to the objects for study, many also view publication of the artifacts with their appropriate archaeological context before releasing the material to the public to be an ethical obligation.⁵⁶ Because final publication takes several years and has not yet been completed for the Gault site, the GSAR was unable to contribute to the exhibit any artifacts from the site itself. To overcome this hurdle, the exhibit collaboration used objects from the Bell County Museum's collection of the same type, period, and cultures as the objects found at the Gault site. Like many museums in the United States, the Bell County Museum had several unaccessioned donations of projectile point collections without archaeological provenance.⁵⁷ Wernecke came to the museum and selected objects from these donations that were representative of the types of artifacts found at the Gault site.⁵⁸ The use of unaccessioned museum objects rather than genuine Gault site artifacts meant the exhibit team could allow the visitors to interact with these objects physically. The projectile

⁵⁵ Nancy Velchoff, interview with the author, Austin, November 8, 2019; Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019; Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

⁵⁶ Thomas Williams, interview with the author, Austin, November 8, 2019.

⁵⁷ Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

⁵⁸ Clark Wernecke, interviews with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019 and Waco, November 20, 2019.

points chosen were affixed to drawers in such a way that a visitor can touch the objects and feel how they were made and used. This level of interaction would never have been possible with artifacts from the excavation.

The museum team and KPC exhibits developed the general concepts for the interactive elements of the exhibit, and the excavation team helped make them accurate and excellent. The exhibit is targeted at fourth-grade students, with interactive elements appealing to a wide range of visitors. Turnham's major vision for the exhibit was to inspire children to explore the world around them through the tools of science. Because of this emphasis, the exhibit teaches how archaeologists do their research as well as showing the spectacular results at the Gault site. One section of the exhibit has a model of an excavation area with several test pits. This area has several lids which open to reveal artifacts and text. Another area contains the tools of an archaeologist's trade. Turnham notes that the cooperation of the archaeological team was essential even in this stage. For example, she originally set aside a tape measure using imperial units for the "archaeological tool kit" until the excavators informed her their work is done in metric units.⁵⁹ Every element of the exhibit teaches archaeological method along with Gault site results. Even the wall containing the drawers of artifacts shows the stratigraphy of the site, with each drawer situated in the appropriate stratum for the artifact it contains.

⁵⁹ Stephanie Turnham, telephone interview with the author, November 20, 2019.

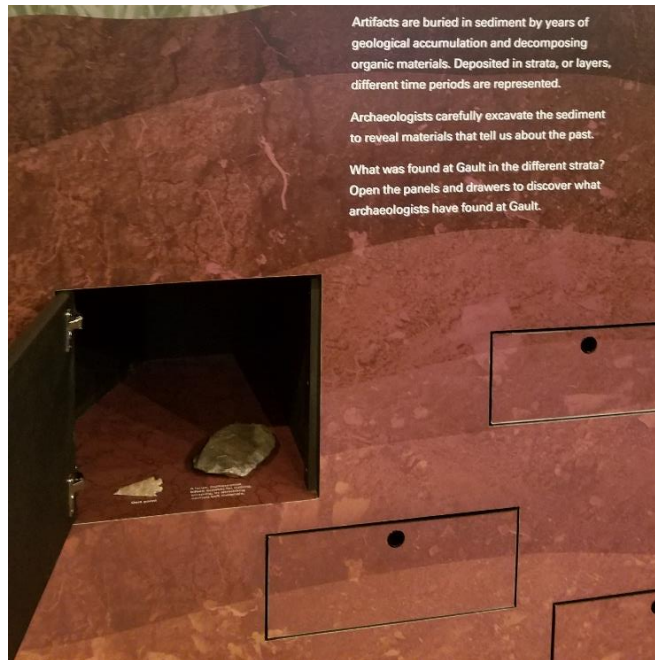


Image 3: Drawers and cubbies in the strata contain real projectile points and stone tools from the Bell County Museum exhibit collection for visitors to touch. Photograph by author.

Wernecke particularly appreciates that the museum tells the story of archaeologists as well as the story of the site. When asked how museums can benefit archaeologists, Wernecke emphasized that people need to know why archaeology is important. He believes it is essential to teach the public how archaeologists arrive at their conclusions and how those conclusions can impact current issues.⁶⁰ Wernecke notes that the public knows nothing about archaeologists except for what they see on movies like *Indiana Jones*. He believes that this lack of knowledge results in grants and programs that only offer funding for excavation and neglect funding for the years of work in the laboratory necessary to complete an archaeological project. Wernecke therefore appreciates that the exhibit teaches that archaeology requires many days in the lab for

⁶⁰ Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

every day in the field and shows the public what happens behind the scenes.⁶¹ One element of the exhibit is a video of Wernecke and the GSAR team which explains the sorts of work archaeologists do in both the field and the lab. Another interactive element of the exhibit allows visitors to use a microscope to evaluate the chip patterns on several projectile points or to look at a soil sample to find the quartz crystals used to date the strata at the Gault site.



Image 4: A replica dig area with flip cubbies also features a video about archaeologists in the lab. Photograph by author.

⁶¹ Clark Wernecke, interview with the author, Gault site, November 9, 2019.

The collaboration between the GSAR and the Bell County Museum is an excellent example of the partnerships that can develop between archaeological teams and museums. The collaborative exhibit provides visitors the opportunity to learn about a recent and significant local excavation while making accessible the story of archaeology. The exhibit concludes with a text panel urging visitors to learn more about local archaeology by connecting with the TARL and GSAR. A touchscreen next to this text allows visitors to explore the TARL webpage and learn how they can connect with archaeologists and excavations all over the state. The museum offers visitors the opportunity to connect their exhibit experience to the real thing, by scheduling a tour of the site and meeting with current archaeologists who not only know all about the Gault site but can also connect visitors to excavations around the region and around the world.

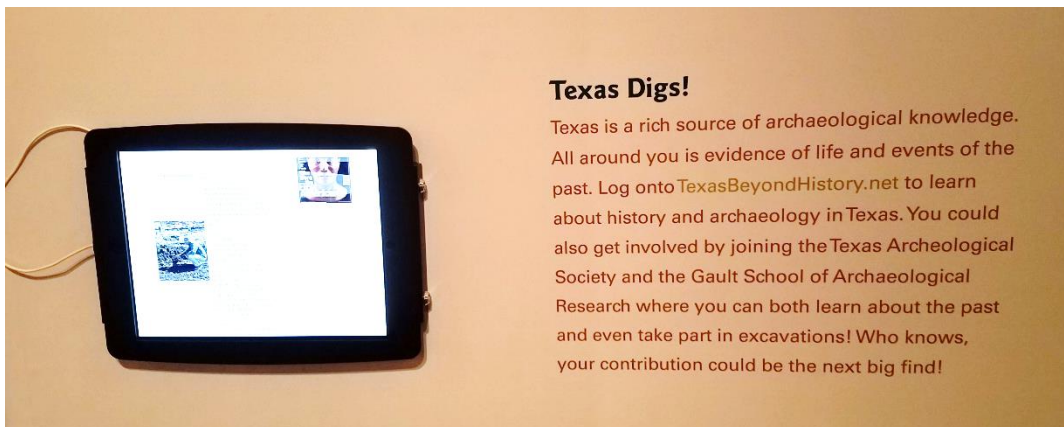


Image 5: The final panel of the Gault exhibit at the Bell County Museum invites visitors to connect with Texas archaeologists. Photograph by author.

Case Study Number Two: University of West Florida Historic Trust

The University of West Florida Historic Trust (UWF Historic Trust) is a collaborative organization that helps facilitate public access to historical resources. This

organization manages thirty historic properties owned by the State of Florida and/or the University of West Florida.⁶² These sites are all available to the public in some capacity, whether through guided docent tours, self-guided historic house tours, or more traditional museum exhibit spaces. Archaeological work has been done both at their downtown locations and at the Arcadia Mill site, the only property run by the UWF Historic Trust that is outside of Pensacola. The University of West Florida Historic Trust is too large of an organization and has too many relationships with other organizations to discuss all the relevant cooperative work they do with archaeologists and museums.

In this case study, I focus on two projects connected to Adrienne Walker, a UWF Historic Trust staff archaeologist and the site manager for the Arcadia Mill site. She leads a field school at the UWF Historic Trust Arcadia Mill site in Milton, FL and is responsible for the visitor center at that site. Additionally, she collaborates on other projects with the UWF Historic Trust. First, I observe the collaborative work at the 42-acre Arcadia Mill site, which includes both excavation areas and indoor and outdoor exhibit areas. Second, I consider the Colonial Archaeological Trail signs, which Walker developed with others through a University of West Florida Historic Trust collaboration.

The Arcadia Mill site. Historic Arcadia Mill was a small village in Santa Rosa County, Florida that was occupied from the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The economy of the village was based on an extensive mill complex, which included “a sawmill, a lumber mill with planing and lathing machines, the Arcadia Pail Factory, a shingle mill, textile mill, and an experimental silk operation,” as well as an early railroad

⁶² Adrienne Walker, email with the author, September 16, 2019.

to deliver the products of these industries.⁶³ This thriving antebellum village was home to people of many ethnicities, although many people of minority ancestry were enslaved.⁶⁴

Since 2009, Walker has directed an annual ten-week summer field school through UWF. This program trains anthropology students, from UWF and elsewhere, in archaeological field methods. This project has focused on the village that grew around the industrial complex, learning about the lives of the people who worked at and supervised the mills and other industries.⁶⁵ Full participation in the field school requires enrollment in the UWF course, but visitors to the site are invited to watch the students at work throughout the program, something the site advertises heavily.⁶⁶ Occasionally the Arcadia Mill site hosts Volunteer Lab Days, which allow the public to help sort some of the objects uncovered by the field school.⁶⁷ One of the goals of the UWF Historic Trust with regard to this site is to make the archaeological work on this site readily available to the general public.

In the interest of this goal, the Arcadia Mill site is open to the public. The Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site has a visitor center and museum as well as outdoor trails. These outdoor trails include a boardwalk that goes over the archaeological excavations, the Discovery Pavilion, nature trails, and a picnic area. The boardwalk offers the most direct access to the archaeological work, leading visitors over the excavation areas and aiding

⁶³ University of West Florida Historic Trust, "Explore Arcadia Mill," Historic Pensacola, accessed October 20, 2019, <http://www.historicpensacola.org/explore-arcadia-mill/>.

⁶⁴ University of West Florida Historic Trust.

⁶⁵ University of West Florida Historic Trust, "Explore Arcadia Mill: Archaeology," Historic Pensacola, accessed October 20, 2019, <http://www.historicpensacola.org/explore-arcadia-mill/archaeology/>.

⁶⁶ Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.

⁶⁷ Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.

their understanding through interpretive signage. This boardwalk is open to visitors even during the field school, so visitors can watch the archaeology students at work on the project. Also outdoors, the Discovery Pavilion contains “working replicas of 19th century water-powered mill technology,” along with interpretive signage and interactives. This space helps aid visitors in understanding what the technology used to look like, something that can be difficult to tell from deteriorated archaeological remains.

The visitor center houses a 1,000 sq. ft. museum exhibit gallery that gives an overview of the site and its history.⁶⁸ In this space, Walker and the others at the site work to get objects from her excavation on exhibit quickly. Processing the artifacts for research takes the bulk of the time. She estimates that it takes 1.5 days in the lab per day of excavation to properly document and catalog the objects. Still, the goal from each season is to process all artifacts before the next season begins. Sometimes artifacts go on exhibit less than a year after they were excavated.⁶⁹ So far, the archaeological team and the exhibit team are mostly separate apart from Walker. The students from the field school are not required to continue working on the artifacts after the summer semester ends, so the exhibit and lab teams take over. Walker is hoping to have these teams collaborate more in the future, but this is a new effort that is still in development.⁷⁰

The Colonial Archaeological Trail in downtown Pensacola, FL. One other collaboration about which Walker spoke highly was an update to the Colonial

⁶⁸ University of West Florida Historic Trust, “Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site,” Historic Pensacola, accessed October 20, 2019, <http://www.historicpensacola.org/explore-arcadia-mill/hours-tickets/arcadia-mill-archaeological-site/>.

⁶⁹ Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.

⁷⁰ Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.

Archaeological Trail in downtown Pensacola, FL. This trail was designed through a collaboration of the UWF Historic Trust, the City of Pensacola, and the UWF Archaeology Institute.⁷¹ Walker was involved in a collaborative team updating the signage on the trail. This team was part of the Colonial Archaeological Trail Improvements project, which involved The UWF Historic Trust, UWF Archaeology Institute, Florida Public Archaeology Network, and the City of Pensacola.⁷²

Walker says the team working on the interpretive panels and signs along the trail developed the new materials cooperatively. The entire team, consisting of professionals specializing in archaeology, exhibit design, public history, and more, would gather and write the text together. She felt that the time the process took was worthwhile. The archaeologists were able to make sure the phrasing of the signage was accurate and were able to highlight elements of the site that the others would have missed. Meanwhile, the public history and museum professionals were able to make sure the text was engaging and readable for a wide range of visitors. In Walker's opinion, the collaborative writing produced better quality interpretive materials and resulted in a more holistic product than any of the team members could have created alone.⁷³ The before and after images of the signage are below. Even at a glance, it is easy to see that the visual design of the new sign is more appealing and attracts people with its bright colors. The text, too, contains more detailed information explained in a readable way.

⁷¹ University of West Florida Historic Trust, "Colonial Archaeological Trail," Historic Pensacola, accessed October 24, 2019, <http://www.historicpensacola.org/plan-your-visit/museums-properties/colonial-archaeological-trail/>.

⁷² Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.

⁷³ Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.



Image 6: The old sign provided a large amount of text and an image of a cross-section of the well. Photograph courtesy of the UWF Historic Trust.

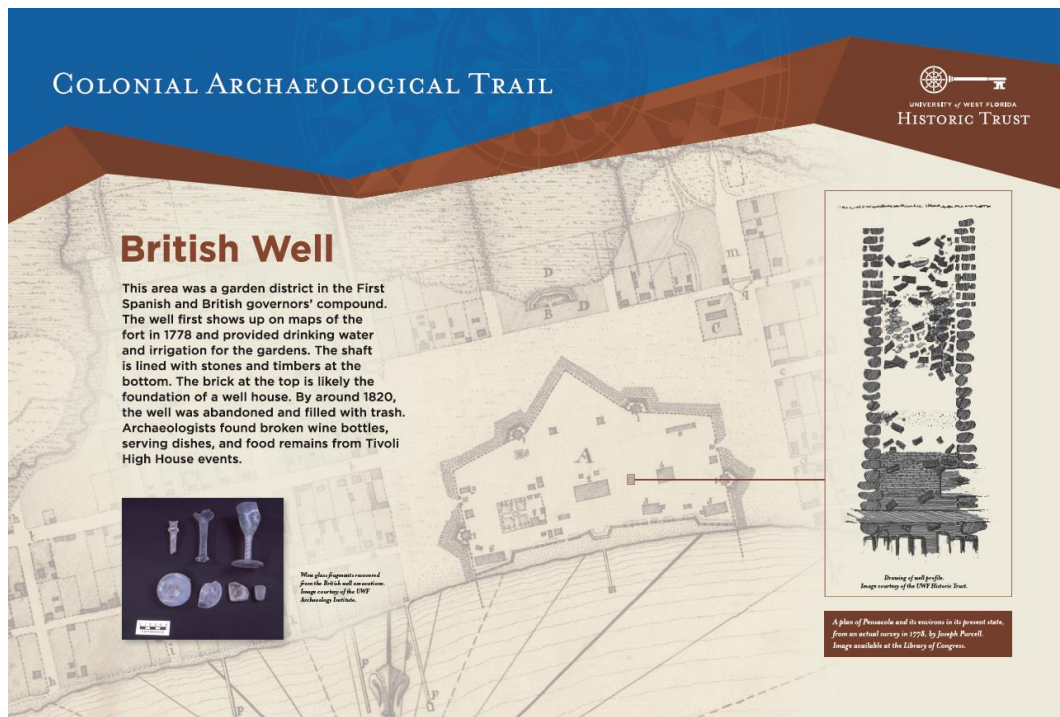


Image 7: The newer panel is more exciting and has less text. The image of the cross section of the well remains, with an arrow pointing to its location on a larger plan. Additional interest is created by the inclusion of a photo of objects from the well. Image courtesy of the UWF Historic Trust.

The UWF Historic Trust smoothly integrates the work of its archaeologists and its museum professionals. Sometimes, like at the Arcadia Mill site, this collaboration is created by placing archaeologists in charge of exhibit spaces. In other cases, like the Colonial Archaeological Trail, archaeologists and museum professionals work together in larger groups. The UWF Historic Trust is fortunate to have both archaeologists and museum professionals as part of its staff. By using the talents of all its staff together, the UWF Historic Trust is able to produce quality experiences to its visitors and connect them to cutting-edge research from active archaeologists.

Conclusion from Case Studies

The case studies from the Gault site and the UWF Historic Trust demonstrate that collaborative projects are challenging but are worthwhile. The specific collaborative projects mentioned in these case studies may not be possible to emulate precisely at other museums or archaeological sites, especially those without significant funds or the support of a major academic institution. Nevertheless, there are several elements of these programs that any collaborative group can emulate.

The collaboration between the GSAR and Bell County Museum is particularly successful because of regular, ongoing communication between the two groups. The major successes of the exhibit involved utilizing the resources and knowledge of both the museum and the excavation. The objects on exhibit came from the museum's collection, but the archaeologists identified which objects accurately portrayed the concepts and periods which were the focus of the exhibit. The exhibit connects science and history, offering the public a chance to learn about the laboratory work of archaeology and providing opportunities to connect with current scholars in the field.

The UWF Historic Trust successfully invites the public to watch archaeology in action by creating a safe way for visitors to watch the excavation team like a living exhibit. Because an archaeologist is responsible for the exhibits in the visitor center at the Arcadia Mill site, the public has access to her up-to-date research and sometimes gets to see artifacts before a full publication has been completed. The Colonial Archaeological Trail takes this one step further and integrates the work of archaeologists with the work of other professionals to make a more public-friendly product.

A New Collaborative Model: Excavation and Museum as a Team

While the examples in the literature and the case studies are inspiring, smaller museums or excavations may still be too intimidated to attempt collaborative work because most of the literature describes large-scale projects. Large-scale exhibits are daunting for the budgets and staff of small museums. Collaborative work is time-consuming, and neither archaeologists nor exhibit teams have much spare time. Still, archaeologists have a responsibility to communicate their results to the public and museums have a responsibility to provide the public with up-to-date research on the world around them. The remainder of this essay therefore proposes a model, incorporating elements of the collaborations studied in the literature and case studies, that requires a minimal amount of work for both archaeologists and museum staff while still producing a high-quality exhibit about recent excavation work.

This model is simple and modular. A collaborative group could add any number of variations or additional elements to this model. The goal, regardless of implementation, is to create long-standing relationships between archaeologists and museum professionals and to use those relationships to communicate archaeological

research to the public. After describing the basic model, I will propose several possible variations designed to meet common needs and challenges that arise with archaeological collaborations.

The Model

I propose a model that is predicated upon long-term collaboration between the excavation team and the museum. The primary concept of the partnership involves a small exhibit that updates on a regular schedule. At the most basic level, this model proposes the museum set aside one case and some space for text panels. This will be a semi-permanent exhibit in the sense that the overview text panels will remain the same, while the artifacts and smaller labels in the case will update on a slow but regular basis.

The permanent introductory panels provide information about the site and its significance, as well as information about how to visit the site, contact the excavators, or become involved in the project depending on the nature of the site. The contents of the case will update regularly, approximately once every other year. This case will gradually tell the story of the site and the archaeological team working to learn more about it. The content for both the long-term signage and the contents of the case should be co-developed by members of the archaeological team and members of the museum exhibits team. Like the partnership that created the signs for the Colonial Archaeological Trail in Pensacola, this collaboration, even for a few labels and diagrams, will ensure that the information is both extremely accurate and accessible for the average museum visitor.

Working together, the exhibit team and excavation team will decide how to tell the story of the excavation through incremental updates over the years. One year the case might contain some artifacts characteristic of the site. These could be artifacts from the

excavation, on short-term loan to the museum, or, like at the Bell County Museum, they could be similar artifacts from the museum's collection or elsewhere. Another year, the collaborative team might decide to tell the story of archaeological methods in the field, showing tape measures, shovels, or microscopes instead of ancient materials. Still other years, the case might teach the scientific method and explain how archaeologists test hypotheses when excavating a site. During such a year, an exhibit might primarily contain photographs, diagrams, or copies of archaeological paperwork. While some archaeologists are uncomfortable presenting their information to the public until they feel confident of its accuracy, it is important to teach the public that hypotheses are useful whether they are proven true or false. By presenting visitors with preliminary hypotheses, museums and archaeologists will be able to better teach them about the methods used to uncover human pasts.

The long-term nature of the exhibit will provide regular visitors with a deeper story than one-time visitors. Regular visitors will be able to see the excavation develop over time and will be able to watch as the hypotheses that began the excavation lead to new questions and new hypotheses. The single case will also tell a cohesive part of the story on its own, providing even a one-time visitor with a behind the scenes glimpse of the current world of archaeological research.

The greatest advantage of this model to the museum community is that visitors learn about cutting-edge scholarship and the archaeological sites connected to their community. They hear new ideas and hypotheses and learn about the types of questions archaeologists are asking. Regular visitors to the museum can see the excavation grow and develop over the course of several years. This relationship, in turn, benefits the

excavation by creating local interest in the site and inspiring future archaeologists or donors. This small-scale collaboration solves two of the largest limitations of the collaborative projects described in both the literature and the case studies. The small scale does not impose too strongly on the time or budgets of either the archaeologists or the museum. Furthermore, the short-term nature of each case will allow the collaborative to incorporate fresh discoveries, rather than either waiting for the excavation to finish or risking an exhibit that goes out of date as the excavation continues.

This partnership provides several opportunities for adaptation and outreach for additional opportunities. The creative possibilities are endless, depending on the time and money the partner institutions are willing to invest in the project. Some potential opportunities and modifications for larger or smaller institutions are suggested below.

Advantages and Opportunities

A simple, single case collaborative exhibit provides several options for museums and excavations that can provide additional benefits depending on the needs or desires of the collaborative partners.

Opportunities for sharing, displaying, and caring for artifacts. The fact that the case is small and the exhibit is temporary helps address the archaeologists' need for access to and control of the artifacts. Most seasons of excavation will reveal some artifacts that are common in excavations in the region. Many archaeologists feel no ethical breach by sharing these with the public even before full publication. For example, at the Arcadia Mill site, Walker feels confident occasionally putting artifacts on exhibit

less than a year after excavation.⁷⁴ For Walker, it is important to be sure the objects have been properly cataloged before exhibition. A small exhibit allows archaeologists to select a few artifacts to ensure they are processed on this level quickly to be ready for exhibition.

The short term of the exhibit means the objects will be back in the lab quickly for additional study. Because the exhibit is temporary, legal ownership of the objects need not be transferred to the museum before display, even if the contents of the entire site will eventually be housed at the museum. These objects can be placed on temporary loan to the museum, something for which every museum should have an established system.

Displaying the artifacts from the site itself, when possible, provides an element of authenticity to the exhibit. Museum educators are skilled at object-based learning and can use the artifacts to help visitors learn how to glean information from the artifacts, asking the same questions as archaeologists.⁷⁵ In some situations, exhibition can also aid archaeologists' efforts to protect the objects. The Omrit excavation chose objects for exhibition at Tel Hai Academic College because they would be well protected on exhibit.⁷⁶

Opportunities for programs and publications. While the focus of this model is on the development of exhibits, the presence of a collaborative exhibit provides opportunities for collaborative programming. Both regular programming, like school

⁷⁴ Adrienne Walker, telephone interview with the author, October 11, 2019.

⁷⁵ John Shuh, "Teaching Yourself to Teach with Objects," *Journal of Museum Education* 7, no. 4 (1982): 8–15.

⁷⁶ Overman, Kreher, and Gibbs, "Archaeology, Conservation, and Public Engagement at Omrit: A Case Study," 346.

tours, and special programming, like opening events, could become an integral part of the collaborative efforts.

Regular programming, available to school groups or private individuals, could be an excellent resource for all members of the partnership. This could be programming at the museum, at the site, or both. Like with the development of the text, archaeologists and museum educators can work together to produce a product of a quality higher than either group could produce on their own. Archaeologists bring the content specialization to the table, and museum educators bring years of experience in informal education. These programs could be as simple as a gallery activity cart near the case or as complex as a field school at the site with museum educators helping to train amateur archaeologists. The tours at the Gault site provide one example of regular collaborative programming.

Special events provide more opportunities for quality collaboration. A grand opening event for each updated exhibit case over the years would be appropriate, as are celebrations of archaeology month (October), or presentations as part of a larger lecture series. Such events could include a lecture from the excavation team detailing the updates from the past season and the goals for the upcoming season. This sort of activity could be geared toward any level of audience. One event could be a day for children and families to learn about archaeology, while another might provide an opportunity for the excavators to present a formal public evaluation of their progress. Archaeologists sometimes struggle to publish their results in a timely manner, and an exhibition catalogue could be an opportunity for the excavation team to present preliminary findings and professional articles to the public. Such lectures and special events could be held any

time the archaeological team makes a new discovery in the lab or preserves a new artifact.

Opportunities for fundraising, grants, and advertising. Where there are opportunities for special events, there are opportunities for fundraising. Any event highlighting the excavation can be adapted to become a fundraising opportunity for both the museum and the excavation. When donors are able to see the work excavators in their community are doing, they can develop a connection to both the community and the project. The GSAR has developed an excellent relationship with the town of Florence and even has a seat at the town's Chamber of Commerce.⁷⁷ Special events provide opportunities to create such relationships.

Local recognition of both the excavation and museum as quality organizations not only interests private donors, but also makes both the museum and the excavation more eligible for grants. Organizations providing grants want to see museums developing something that will inform their community of high-quality research. Similarly, many grants require a clear public education element to projects, something excavators in more remote locations struggle to fulfill. Partnership with and regular presentation in museums shows the granting organization that the public will hear about the project's research.⁷⁸

Finally, both the museum and excavation can advertise for one another. The high-quality collaborative product can increase attendance, which can in turn raise money

⁷⁷ Wernecke and Williams, "From Maya Pyramids to Paleoindian Projectile Points: The Importance of Public Outreach in Archaeology," 18.

⁷⁸ For example, grants from the National Science Foundation require a "Broader Impacts" section. "Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide" (The National Science Foundation, 2019), II-12, https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg19_1/nsf19_1.pdf.

through admission and program fees. For excavations who recruit volunteers to do the work of excavation and artifact processing, the museum can be a prime location for finding volunteers who can be developed into reliable amateur archaeologists.

Opportunities for smaller partners. While the basic one case collaborative model is designed to be accessible for small institutions, adding more partners can ease the burden even more. Two or three museums could partner with one local excavation team and share the responsibilities for committing time and money to the project. This modification could be ideal for very small museums with extremely limited staff or budgets that would not allow regular updates to even one case. In this modification, each museum in the network could take a turn working with the archaeological team to develop that year's updated exhibit. That exhibit could either be developed purely with photographs and several copies could be exhibited at each museum in the network simultaneously, or the museums could trade around the newer and older exhibits in a rotation so that each has a case from the past few years. Several models for traveling exhibit collaborations exist, and many of them could be adapted to partner with an archaeological excavation.⁷⁹

Opportunities for challenging excavation sites. Some archaeological sites cannot be opened to visitors or donate their objects to museums for permanent exhibits. They may be on private land or have artifacts of a nature that makes looting a serious danger. The landowner may legally have the right to retain any artifacts recovered and may not

⁷⁹ See, for example, Paul Pearson, "Greater Than Its Parts: Exhibition Collaborations for Small Museums," *Exhibitionist* 31, no. 1 (2012): 8–13; Alexander Goldowski and Betsy Loring, "Collaborative Structures: Many Ways, Common Paths," *Exhibitionist* 31, no. 1 (2012): 14–15.

be willing to give up anything to a museum. These excavations are more limited than most in opportunities to share their results with the public. A small, regularly updating museum collaboration may be the best opportunity for projects like this.

For excavations that cannot allow visitors to come to the site, the excavation can instead go to the public. The descriptive panels about the excavation need not reveal the location or other sensitive information about the site. If the excavation can bring artifacts to the museum, several opportunities for public interaction become available. The museum's exhibit space offers a safe, public location to display artifacts on a temporary basis. Depending on the needs of the excavation, it might also be possible to involve volunteers in the processing of artifacts without bringing volunteers to the site. Museums often have classrooms and other spaces and the tools needed for basic sorting, cleaning, and labeling of artifacts. As partners, the excavators and museum education and collections teams could work together to ensure the safety of the objects while communicating laboratory skills to visitors.

For excavations in which the property owner retains the artifacts, recognition in a museum exhibit might persuade the owner to loan the objects to the museum. If giving the name of the owner does not risk the safety of the site, the museum can recognize the landowner with a nice plaque for the duration of the exhibit or mention the landowner on the label for each object loaned from the site. This sort of recognition is likely to ingratiate the property owner toward the excavation and museum and does not reduce his or her ability to retain these objects in a private collection after the short exhibit period.

Summary of the New Collaborative Model

Though every model has challenges that will arise, I believe this collaborative model will be significantly rewarding to both archaeological excavations and museums. This sort of collaboration will benefit the public most of all, communicating with them the history of their local community and the methods of archaeological research in a timely manner.

Conclusion

Collaboration with museums is essential for communicating the important work of archaeologists to the world. In turn, museums need significant input from archaeologists to provide their visitors with accurate, up-to-date research regarding ancient societies. The literature reveals that archaeologists and museums are already collaborating in three primary ways. First, archaeological materials are often part of museum collections and therefore appear in museum exhibits and programs. Second, there are often museums or exhibit spaces on the same property as archaeological excavations. Third, archaeologists often reach out to the public through events at museums or by offering public programs in collaboration with museums.

The case study of the collaboration between the Gault School of Archaeological Research and the Bell County Museum and Williamson Museum reveals more of the details of the day-to-day elements of collaboration. The intense collaboration of exhibit development has created a long-lasting relationship between the Bell County Museum and the GSAR which involves regular tours, special events, and more. The exhibit created by this collaboration provides the people of Bell County with access to new information about the prehistory of their community. While learning this history, visitors

also learn about the science behind archaeology and are given the opportunity to connect with real archaeologists.

The case study of the University of West Florida Historic Trust shows that an active excavation can be a type of exhibit even if visitors are not involved in the excavation. The Arcadia Mill site demonstrates that when excavators prioritize exhibition, a few select artifacts can be put on display quickly. The Colonial Archaeological Trail reveals the advantages of collaboration on a detailed level. While writing in a team can be difficult, combining the talents of archaeologists and museum professionals produced excellent signs that communicated accurate information in a way that was enjoyable to the visitors.

While the examples in the literature and case studies involve large-scale collaborative projects, the strategies used in these examples can be modified for smaller-scale exhibits that are of an equally high quality. The key to quality collaboration is regular communication. A small, regularly updating collaborative exhibit can develop strong relationships between archaeologists and museums without the cost, both financial and to staff, required for a large exhibit. The consistent presence of information about the site will help museum staff and regular visitors become familiar with the site. Regular updates to the case will help museum staff and excavation staff truly grow to understand one another and the needs of their respective fields. These updates will allow the collaborators to tell fresh stories as the excavation of the site continues, informing visitors of new information about local archaeology along with the stories and techniques of archaeologists. This simple collaboration can be supplemented or adapted for almost any museum or excavation situation.

Archaeologists reveal the secrets of the past and the stories they reveal need to be shared with the world. Museums provide the public with a window into the scholarly world and are perfectly poised to share these archaeological stories. Visitors want a chance to engage with these stories. By allowing them to follow an excavation while it is in progress and have access to current archaeologists, museums and archaeologists can work together to increase public interest and support for archaeology and raise up a new generation of archaeologists. When the public knows that real archaeology is even cooler than Indiana Jones, amateur “collectors” can become true archaeological enthusiasts and great allies of the archaeological community.

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