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Approved by the Department of Museum Studies

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ABSTRACT

Pepper-Up:
A Summer at the Dr Pepper Museum

Melissa Liesch, M.A.

Mentor: Julie Holcomb, Ph. D.

In the summer of 2022, I interned at the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute in Waco, Texas. It was a split internship where I spent the first half of my summer with the Collections Department before transferring to the Exhibits Department. I participated in the accessioning, deaccessioning, and cataloging of a donation from the Keurig Dr Pepper (KDP) – Dr Pepper Snapple Group (DPS). I documented newspapers, coupons, and ads as well as other fun objects. I also worked on two separate exhibits, mainly research and writing. This report explores the projects undertaken at the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute.

In the summer of 2022, I interned at the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute to fulfill the requirements of my master's degree at Baylor University and to gain additional experience in the field. I participated in a split internship spending the first half of my summer with the Collections Department before transferring to the Exhibits Department. I greatly appreciated the hands-on nature of the internship as well as the fact that it reinforced many of the lessons discussed in our lectures from our Museum Studies classes while showcasing that there is always more to learn.

The first part of my internship at the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute was working in the Collections Department. My role was mainly accessioning and cataloging a donation from the Keurig Dr Pepper (KDP) – Dr Pepper Snapple Group (DPS). At the time I began my internship, the project had reached the final few months of its projected 18-month timeframe. During my time working in collections, I got to work in a program called CatalogIt which I much prefer over systems like PastPerfect or even a basic spreadsheet. I worked to input primarily items such as newspapers, coupons, and ads into CatalogIt which included an insane amount of duplication. Strangely enough, it seemed like an attempt had previously been made by another individual (not museum staff) to create some sort of labeling system. The ID numbers ended up in not what you would call a logical location on the objects let alone what would be considered best practice. It also meant that I would have to create a record with the already assigned number even if I wanted to deaccession the objects as those numbers had no existing records that transferred over. My favorite item that I cataloged was a bicentennial flag for the American Revolution that flew over the 7UP headquarters in St. Louis if I am remembering the location correctly.

Although there was still more to accomplish with the KDP-DPS project, as it needed an extension passed the original deadline, I moved into the Exhibits Department for the second half of my summer internship as was previously agreed upon. I spent my time focusing on two separate projects. The first was a replacement for a traveling exhibit on the third floor with postcards that featured cityscapes that had soft drink logos and advertisements somewhere in the image. I took on the majority of the research of the towns, photographers, and any other related/interesting information about the postcards as well as writing the text panels. I was pleased that my suggestion for the design of the text panels, which was for the panels to look like the back of a postcard, was utilized. The place where the address would usually go was quick facts about the town and the text went in the normal space where messages would be written. Additionally, a fun challenge for visitors was to see if they could spot the logo in the postcards. I had the idea to use the stamp space on our text panels as a clue by using the corresponding logo from the image as our stamp. At the completion of the summer, I was fortunate enough that Joy Summar-Smith, the Associate Director of the Dr. Pepper Museum, and my supervisor, invited me to continue working as a contractor until the completion of both of my projects. This allowed me to participate in the de-installation of the old exhibit and the installation of the new postcard exhibit. The layout of the exhibit ended up with a few display cases with the actual postcards in the center, a video slideshow of images projected onto one wall and for easier viewing the postcards are blown up on canvas prints.

The second project that I was a part of was the redesign of the first-floor Bottling Room exhibit, mainly conducting research on the machinery. During the summer my focus was on figuring out how to create a sensory interactive in the room and reaching out to

representatives of different scent-based companies to gather information. I was able to arrange first a phone call from a promising lead and later an in-person meeting at the Dr Pepper Museum with their regional representative. Sadly, it did not work out with this company, but I gained many valuable skills by taking part in the process of speaking and meeting with their representative. The fall was largely spent researching machinery utilizing the museums' archives and online resources. One of my greatest accomplishments was discovering that a piece of machinery labeled from 1918 was a 1953 model. After researching these machines, I wrote text panels for each one as well as a summary of the bottling process. Additionally, I listened to several hours of an oral history recording from an interview with the daughter of one of the longest-working African Americans, Ellis Booker. I made notations of when she spoke of her father, the Lazenby's, or the Artesian Manufacturing & Bottling Company (Dr. Pepper Company) in general. I passed these notes on to another member of staff that incorporated them into some of the videos for the room. The next spring, I got to help install the new exhibit including wrapping recreations of old syrup jugs and attending the opening night.

My time at the Dr Pepper Museum has been full of learning opportunities and also self-reflection. In collections, I realized that the work was never-ending and often repetitive, making it a good idea to pace yourself. Exhibits taught me to start things earlier than I would think and to be flexible. The strongest takeaway for me was I much preferred the creativity and variety of exhibits over the repetitive nature of collections. I would like to say that I am extremely grateful for the opportunities that the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute have given me over this past summer and beyond.