![Society for Historical Archaeology logo]

4:00-5:00pm Eastern

December 3, 2021, Virtual Zoom Meeting, called to order at 16:01

1. Introductions (in chat); Attendance/Membership:
   - Thirty-three in attendance: Christine Ames, Beth Bollwerk, Christina Bolte, Taylor Brown, Danielle Cathcart, Bob Chidester, Anna Coon, Dena Doroszenko, Rachel Fernandez, Liza Gijanto, Kerry Gonzalez (Chair), Brad Jones, Brittaney London, Michael Lucas, Jade Luiz, Stacy Lundgren, Jennifer Melcher, Meghan Mumford, Christopher Nicholson, Tatiana Niculescu, J. H. Ogborne, Heather Olson, Sarah Platt, Sara Rivers-Cofield, Paola Sciappacasse, Leah Stricker, Lori Thompson, Marina Tinkcom, Marybeth Tomka, Mark Warner, Gifford Waters, Beth Waters Johnson, Michael Zimmerman

2. The committee approved the minutes from the previous year/meeting

3. Update on the activities of the Archaeological Collections Consortium: Sara River Cofield reported on the activities of the ACC. The ACC is a curation-focused group bringing together members of SHA, SAA, and ACRA collections committees to work together on collections concerns in archaeology.
   - ACC is looking to create an organization of collections managers.
     - This would benefit repositories in general to get to meet and discuss relevant issues.
     - There has not been much movement with this, but Terry Childs is taking the lead on moving forward.
   - Archy 2.0 is aimed at getting people to rethink the profession by not focusing on a backlog of perpetual collections problems, but by suggesting more alternative mitigations such as more collections-based research, not excavating or selective/sampling excavation, etc.
     - There is a long list of things to be done for Archy 2.0.
     - We agree we need more collections-based research but stalled on how to do it. Not digging is terrifying to people but focusing on basic stuff, such as alternative mitigations, or contemplating how many sites of each type we need to excavate before we have a representative sample, etc. is a good place to start.
     - The push among ACC right now is to start by reaching through academia and on the training end. Everyone has to have a field school but not everyone needs curation training. ACC wants to target through articles about education change and creative mitigation to get some publication basis behind it. They have a meeting coming up to iron out action items.
     - Sara River Cofield stated "We can figure out where the stuff is [see curation repository survey and OMG This Collection is a Gold Mine survey(https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/e6f25b43415c485eb803dd829b39247d)]. If we know where repositories are on the map, then we can figure out what is where for future study."
   - Marybeth Tomka sat in on Seminar by SAA teaching collections curation as a field school. She

noted few of the attendees were from her age group and estimated "55% were under 40 years old or had less than 5 to ten years of experience with archaeology." This prompted a conversation about "teaching old dogs new tricks" on curation and the importance of education and getting newer professionals excited about doing collections-based research and archaeological work in repositories.

- Kerry Gonzalez agreed and noted how much it would help repositories to simply have reform in the collection of brick materials. A discussion ensued among Marybeth Tomka, Kerry Gonzalez, Michael Lucas, Michael Zimmerman, Sarah Platt, Heather Olson, Anna Coon, and Sara River Cofield. Key takeaways included:
    - Field to curation needs to be integrated. This can be accomplished through up-front guidelines on collections that are accepted at repositories (Michael Lucas provided the example of NY State Museum requiring collections to be reduced before they would allow them to be sent over).
    - Education of next generation professionals needs to stress that if we have CRM, we have to reduce what is collected in the field or deaccession. Anna Coon noted that her field school had an add-on course for collections management and artifact processing. Of the 18 field school students, only three or four signed up for this add-on course. When she asked her peers about it, they mostly stated that it was not required for them to get a job, but a field school was.
    - It was noted that grad students never ask about collections, always about fieldwork. If archives and collections professionals ask if they can get archaeologists to help with identification of artifacts but often the archaeologists do not make time nor have enough experience. Encouraging field technicians to help with collections often improves their understanding of the field as a whole "Oh, that's why you want us to do it this way," etc.
    - Deaccessioning comes with its own challenges. We may not get good enough identification in the field so a lab professional should be in charge of getting rid of collections once it has been recorded by them. We need material culture training for staff and students.
    - Collections policies are helpful and should be in place to dictate deaccessioning processes and procedures. A big problem is a lack of collections policies concerning deaccessioning, which may be a possible future topic for a conference.
    - Another way to promote change in the field is not just through academia, but also through federal and other legislation. An example was, "if we are told we have to dig, we do" (Heather Olson). Additionally, prompting rewriting of regional histories will cultural collections filling in the gaps would eliminate the need for redundant collections.
    - As collections professionals, we are so busy taking care of collections that there is not a lot of good discipline-wide modeling on how to do good research with collections; we have not set the example in great quantity. We need to express why it is worthwhile. Examples for how to improve here included further conference and other workshops as well as blogs and encouraging student and field technician involvement.

4) Presentation of projects from members
- Update on curation repository survey and OMG This Collection is a Gold Mine survey. We need a better way to get this survey out there. Last entry was June 23, 2021.
    - The TikTok video fell through.
    - LinkedIn post on 11/14/21 and there have been no new entries since.
    - We can ask SHA to do another social media post
    - Everyone reach out to two people you know with collections and ask them to participate.
    - Other ideas are welcome
- OMG This Collection is a Gold Mine survey is data sourcing collections that would be good for grad-level or post-grad-level research. Example: MAC Lab (Maryland Archaeological Conservatory Laboratory) has a good collection so they fill out the survey. Once we have the data

set, we export that and it will be on the SHA CCC website with an Excel file containing additional information, such as: Is the context good? How many boxes? Etc. This provides a resource for students who are interested in collections based research without them having to call around.

- ○ Heather Olson had an idea to post a 30 sec. to 1 min. video of SHA CCC members who are using collections for research answering questions (What are you looking at? Why was it excavated?). This would show others the value of what you can do with a collection.
- ○ Marybeth Tomka noted that some institutions still require fieldwork for a dissertation. She also commented that people likely do not have time to fill out the survey or they do not understand the value of what they have. Generally those who do value it sit in on our meetings or are the occasional interested student.
- ○ Michael Lucas noted that we need to have a buy-in from the universities and there must be a relationship between universities and museums/repositories.
- ○ Sarah Platt suggested collections based research is becoming more acceptable and we need to put an emphasis on graduate and undergraduate level research.
- ○ Final note: Kerry asked everyone to reach out to collections managers and ask that they complete the survey.
- Collections-based research blog by Jenn Lupu includes two completed blog posts, one about why she chose to do collections based research and the second one gave strategies on how to apply for grants. The third blog (not yet posted) will cover how to get sources of funding if you do not receive grant money. Check them out on the SHA website.

5) Summary of Conference Activity for Philadelphia
- Introduction to Collection-Based Research: Beth Bollwerk will be offering an introduction to collections-based research workshop in person. This is her third such workshop, which initially grew out of conversations presented during a previous SHA CCC committee meeting. As a PhD who has done collections-based research, she is able to offer tips and tricks as well as introduce benefits and challenges in the first half of this full-day workshop. Case studies will also be explored. The second half of the workshop will be conducted by Jolene Smith with VA DHR and cover digging into archaeological data and demonstrating tools to create usable data from legacy collections. This workshop is geared toward students, but also professionals and there has been more interest this year.
- Boxed But Not Forgotten Session Part IV: Kerry et al. is hosting and is looking for papers which talk about the processes and challenges in collections-based research, rather than "what I did on my summer vacation" papers. Did COVID help or hurt the process? Will continue to use social media to disseminate the information gathered.
- Ask a Curator/Collections Manager Table in book room: J. H. Ogborne
    - ○ Text for program "The CCC will be hosting an 'Ask a Curator' table where conference attendees can learn about the CCC and their initiatives or ask their most burning curation questions. CCC members can also offer insight into doing collections-based research for graduate and postgraduate studies or can give advice to students looking to pursue a career in collections management."
    - ○ There will be a Google poll for time slots of when people can volunteer. Reach out with requests of what you would like put out on the table (cards, info about collections, etc.).
- Presentation of the design of buttons and stickers for committee members to wear (and pass out) at the conference promoting collections-based research: Michael Zimmerman and Anna Coon

6) Ideas for Next Year's Conference
- Workshop on drafting collection policies. Discussed how this might be better as a webinar through RPA so attendees can get credit and for a wider range of attendees.

- Next year's conference is in Lisbon. Brief discussion on the best topics for an international audience (Mark Warner, Kerry Gonzalez, Paola Sciappacasse, Heather Olson, Michael Zimmerman, Tatiana Niculescu)
  - Workshop on conservation field strategies
  - SPMA would be a good organization to coordinate with
  - International engagement for western hemisphere and the challenges facing historical archaeology and collections care (with Alistar [sp])
  - Partner for workshops and panels
  - Compare notes with individuals who have come to the US for collections-based research

7) How to further encourage collections-based research and get more information out there?
- Generally, already discussed in this meeting.
- Technical brief? Another edited volume? More blogs?

8) Awards nominations: Mentioned award the MAC Lab received from SAA. We need think about getting a collections-type nomination for SHA.
- While there is not currently a collections-based award with the SHA, it was noted that it is for a reason. SHA did not want a specific award for collections-based research but wanted to include it in other awards so it is mainstreamed instead of set aside as something "other."

9) New Business
- JPPM recently received a grant to create OER content: Sara Rivers Cofield
  - Two people were hired to generate free educational content that will be available on the OER Commons open education resources. Our contribution is making videos that this committee has talked about over and over again (https://www.oercommons.org/courses/how-to-apply-paper-artifact-labels).
  - So far, there is a video of how to apply paper labels. They are aiming for videos that would be helpful in training lab personnel. There are a couple others in the works including how to pack a box (put bricks on the bottom, that kind of thing), when it is time to replace your bags (splitting, brittle, etc.), one or more covering x-ray technology, how to recharge silica gel for metal microenvironment, how to mix B72 safely, when to wet vs. dry wash and tips on washing, measuring pipe board diameters.
  - Any requests/ideas would be welcome. They must cover topics which are semi-universal and generally cover collections processing.
  - Suggestions included: rebagging artifacts; appropriate bag sizes (which was determined to be relative) but led to a consensus that a bag-related video would be helpful; calipers, scales, and other tool calibration and care; faunal care
- Kerry Gonzalez: Researcher looking for suggestions on grants for bottle research in assessing a collection from a dump site with lots of manufacture styles. Message forwarded along to Mark Warner

10) Adjournment: 17:21