



Using Historical Collections

for Civic Engagement and
Innovative Teaching and Learning



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Using Historical Collections for Civic Engagement and Innovative Teaching and Learning

Toolkit

A Selection of Project Examples



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Lenfest Center
for Cultural Partnerships



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Preface



GRANT
PROGRAM
innovate/collaborate

How can historical collections be used for civic engagement? How can innovative teaching and learning be part of such initiatives? Drexel University and the University of Delaware explored these questions through an Innovate/Collaborate (IN/CO) grant from the Colonial Academic Alliance (2020-22). We now aim to share relevant experiences and findings with other collecting institutions that may have similar goals.

For Drexel, the need for exploring this challenge was precipitated by the transfer of 130,000+ objects from the former Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent (**Atwater Kent Collection** [AKC]) to the University. The Museum closed in 2018, and Drexel is now stewarding this extraordinary collection of Philadelphia’s material culture—reflecting 350 years of history—developing a new model for public engagement and access, including a dynamic loan/exhibit program, and online access and resources.

Drexel, the University of Delaware, and William & Mary began the IN/CO project with a workshop on Using Historical Collections in spring 2020. After touring the AKC (virtually), we shared best practices related to using objects for teaching/learning and civic engagement, discussed plans for making the AKC accessible to the public, and brainstormed ideas for involving students in exploring ways to engage the public with historical collections.

Over the past two years, Drexel and the University of Delaware have implemented specific projects at our institutions related to these larger engagement goals. The following compilation highlights findings from these projects, emphasizing student involvement. Our intention is to share these examples as a resource for practitioners—whether at museums, universities with collections, or other types of collecting organizations—to take away what may be useful for them from our experiments and experiences. Using collections examples from the AKC and beyond—primarily in the Philadelphia area local to our schools—these projects go beyond simply teaching with objects; they all involve students at various levels in actively exploring and addressing the challenges and opportunities of using collections for civic engagement.



ABOVE & COVER:
Drexel staff working with
Atwater Kent Collection.



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Lenfest Center
for Cultural Partnerships

Collaborators

The Drexel University Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships, launched in 2015, advances Drexel's mission and civic engagement commitment while contributing to the success of cultural nonprofit partners. Through strategic partnerships, the Center facilitates experiential learning while promoting sustainable practices for nonprofits in the arts and culture sector. We also use and leverage the University's collective expertise through research and planning projects that engage the Drexel community across disciplines in working with partner organizations to solve important problems. Since its launch, the Center has worked with a diverse range of more than 50 organizations, focusing on programming and strategic planning to attract diverse and next-generation visitors and audiences. IN/CO grant collaborators along with Lenfest Center staff included faculty from Drexel's Westphal College of Media Arts & Design, and College of Arts and Sciences (Department of History).

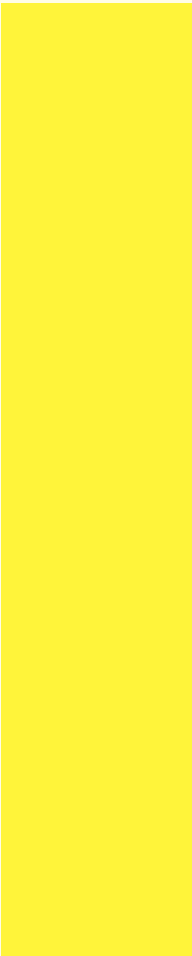
The Center for Material Culture Studies (CMCS) at the University of Delaware helps integrate and enhance the University's rich resources for the creation, study, and conservation of material culture. Its scope is broad and embraces all the things people make and all the ways those things, in turn, inhabit and act upon the physical world. To realize these goals, the Center sponsors teaching and research in material culture studies at the undergraduate, graduate, and faculty levels through grant programs, fellowships, teaching support, working groups, and conferences. Fulfilling a core mandate to foster public understanding of material culture in our own community and beyond, the Center partners with institutions both local and international. CMCS-affiliated faculty represent material culture studies from the perspectives of disciplines and departments such as: Anthropology; Art; Art Conservation; Art History; Center for Historic Architecture and Design; Black American Studies; English; Fashion and Apparel Studies; Hagley Program in Capitalism, Technology, and Culture; History; Geography; Museum Studies; History of American Civilization; Sociology; University of Delaware Library; University Museums; Winterthur Program in American Material Culture; Women and Gender Studies; and Winterthur / University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Many of our faculty are also affiliated with mid-Atlantic cultural institutions outside the University, such as the Delaware Art Museum and Winterthur Museum.



Introduction

Using Historical Collections for Civic Engagement and Innovative Teaching and Learning

Introductory materials developed by Jasmine Mathis and Caleb Craig, Drexel University Museum Leadership program.



Learning in academic settings has evolved, along with our desires to be more inclusive in spaces that have inherently perpetuated harmful modes of whiteness for generations. Historical objects, the art of storytelling, uplifting community voices, and incorporating accessible technologies can all be used to help reveal evidence of how different groups fit into the American story. It is important that we continue to identify and amplify examples of innovative teaching and learning that promotes civic engagement in museums and academic spaces for all.

This Toolkit highlights ways we can support individual and classroom learning to encourage social impact and community involvement.

Terms and Definitions

Civic Engagement

“Actively taking part in and progressing the lives of those in one’s community through various actions, knowledge and skills with the goal of increasing a community’s quality of life and social cohesion.” (*Youth.gov, 2021*)

A morally civic individual understands and recognizes that a community has diverse interests, stakeholders, and systemic inequities that are indoctrinated into the fabric of our society. Their goal is to make life a better place for all.

Key Related Concepts

*Social and cultural factors that **affect public understanding of civic engagement** in diverse communities.*

Why are these topics so important? They are concepts that encompass who we are and how we navigate the human experience. It is important to note that these concepts are not separate from each other, but intersectional (and sometimes interchangeable).

Race: How does race affect power and privilege in America? How does race change what it means to be an American? How does racism reveal itself systemically in our society?

Gender: How does gender affect power and privilege in America? How does gender change what it means to be an American? How does gender bias reveal itself systemically in our society?

Class: How does class affect power and privilege in America? How does class change what it means to be an American? How is class a central force in social difference, inequality, and conflict?

Citizenship/Americanization: What does it mean to be an American citizen? How do you achieve American citizenship? Who has the power to define what it means to be an American citizen?

Taboo: What makes a concept taboo? Who perceives a concept as taboo? (e.g., etiquette: how individuals are supposed to behave in different settings)

Religion: How does religion affect power and privilege in America? How does religion change what it means to be an American? How does religious discrimination reveal itself systemically in our society?

Kinship: How do kinship, and family structures and values affect an individual? How do kinship, and family structures and values influence communities? How do communities uplift each other?

Heritage: How does knowledge of one’s own heritage affect an individual? How does knowledge of one’s own heritage influence communities? How can heritage uplift a community? How can the loss of heritage knowledge harm an individual or community?

Health and Medicine: How does access to healthcare and affordable medicine benefit an individual? What happens to an individual when that is taken away? How do food accessibility and affordability affect communities?

(List curated by Jasmine Mathis and Caleb Craig)

Civic Engagement

(Continued)

Purpose

Civic engagement can reveal systemic inequalities or inequities within our political, economic, and geographic ecosystems.

Through innovative teaching and learning, it is our intention to encourage:

- Critical thinking and questioning
- Engagement and participation in critical conversations
- Uplifting and respecting marginalized voices
- Policy awareness
- Voting
- Gathering/protesting, petitioning, boycotting, etc.

Innovative Teaching and Learning

Innovative teaching and learning can take any number of forms, and in this Toolkit we share and discuss some contemporary methods and practices we are putting forth as best practices, worthy of adoption or adaptation.

But foremost, we assert that innovative teaching and learning must be education that is accessible and inclusive for all.

A note on the importance of visibility

In “[Flies in the Buttermilk: Museums, Diversity, and the Will to Change](#)” (*Museum News*, July/August 2000), Lonnie G. Bunch III quoted from *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (American Alliance of Museums, 1992):

“If museums are to be welcoming places for people of different racial, ethnic, social, economic, and educational backgrounds, and if they are to use their collections to present a variety of perspectives, they must recruit, hire or select, and foster the professional growth of trustees, staff, and volunteers who reflect diverse audiences and multiple perspectives.”

Innovative Teaching and Learning

(Continued)

We are viewing civic engagement from both an institutional and individual perspective. The best practices we have identified prompt collecting institutions to be more civically engaged themselves—to be reflected through their exhibits and programming, which by extension encourages civic engagement in their audiences.

The examples also suggest how innovative teaching and learning is part of this, as a means to cultivate civic engagement as an important value or set of behaviors in individual visitors or students. In this way civic engagement is both an important goal for institutions, as well as an educational objective or outcome for the audiences and learners they serve. The intention is for both institutions and individuals to be civically engaged. Institutions that value civic engagement will in turn foster civic engagement in their visitors/students, through innovative teaching and learning.

From our exploration of best practices, we have found that innovative teaching and learning may include:

- Immersive environments and multisensory, interactive experiences (e.g., smell, touch, life-size models)
- Community engagement / outreach
- Object-based learning (See **John Hennigar Shuh**, “Teaching yourself to teach with objects,” *The Educational Role of the Museum* [Routledge, 1999])
- Innovative technology/use
- Accessible practices (e.g., audio to accompany displays, online resources)

Cycle of Intentional Practice

Innovation does not happen by accident; innovative teaching and learning is done with intention. When using historical collections, how do we create interpretive or educational content that will make an impact? Innovation involves continued evaluation.

Randi Korn, founding director at RK&A, a consulting company for the cultural sector, is an intentional practice leader and author of *Intentional Practice for Museums: A Guide for Maximizing Impact* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

To maximize impact, her cycle of intentional practice includes continuously asking:

- **Plan**—What impact do we want to achieve?
- **Evaluate**—In what ways have we achieved our intended impact?
- **Reflect**—What have we learned? How can we do better?
- **Align**—How do we align our actions to achieve impact?

Additional Terms and Definitions

Source: American Alliance of Museums, 2021 (except where noted)

Historical trauma

Historical trauma is intergenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural group that has a history of being systematically oppressed. (*Administration For Children and Families*)

Diversity

Diversity is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented.

Equity

Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specific goals.

Accessibility

Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.

Inclusion

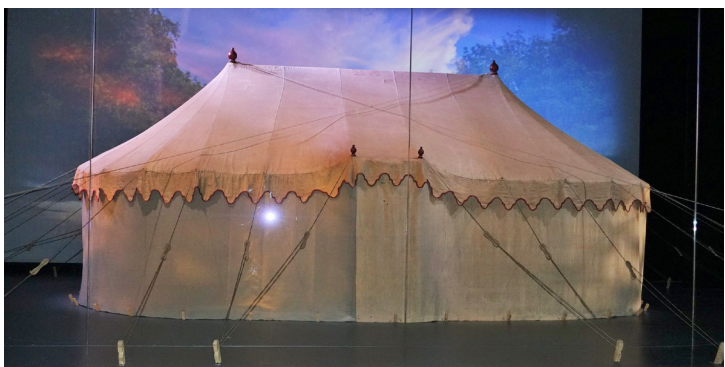
Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.

Site Visits

Best Practices: Three Examples

As part of the Innovate/Collaborate grant project, Drexel Museum Leadership graduate students visited and/or spoke with curatorial staff at three different museums in Philadelphia about how these sites are **using historical collections for 21st-century public engagement** in current exhibit programming.

On the following pages we share several key takeaways from each site that the students identified as best practices for civic engagement and/or innovative teaching and learning.



Museum of the American Revolution: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

King George's statue being taken down in "The Road to Independence" exhibit (Caleb Craig, 2021)

"Meet the Future..." and "Touch a Piece of History..." (Jim Griffin, 2022)

Washington's tent (Gordon Makryllos, 2017)

Museum of the American Revolution

101 South 3rd Street, Philadelphia
 Website: amrevmuseum.org

Discussion with Aimee Newell, Director of Collections and Exhibitions, and Adrienne Whaley, Director of Education and Community Engagement



(Photo: Gordon Makryllos, 2017.)

About: The Museum of the American Revolution uncovers and shares compelling stories about the diverse people and complex events that sparked America’s ongoing experiment in liberty, equality, and self-government. Through the Museum’s unmatched collection, immersive galleries, powerful theater experiences, and interactive elements, visitors gain a deeper appreciation for how this nation came to be and they feel inspired to consider their role in ensuring that the promise of the American Revolution endures. Located just steps away from Independence Hall, the Museum serves as a portal to the region’s many Revolutionary sites, sparking interest, providing context, and encouraging exploration. The Museum, which opened in 2017, is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.

Key Takeaways

What best practices can we learn from the Museum of the American Revolution?

- **Dealing with critical topics, past and present:** The Museum addresses critical, current topics head on—such as taking down Confederate monuments—in comparing events surrounding 1776 to modern day.
- **Prompting visitors to ask questions:** The first room in “The Road to Independence,” a core exhibition, includes King George’s statue being taken down in New York. The exhibit prompts visitors to consider: What made the colonists so angry with the king? Who took these actions? How does this compare to what is happening today?
- **Addressing historical trauma:** The Museum handles historical trauma in several ways. Exhibits recount the stories of colonist men and women, Native Americans, and enslaved individuals—all through firsthand accounts. Docents, available at all times, are trained to handle questions from visitors whose thoughts about history may not yet be fully formed or who may be traumatized by content. The Museum strives to be nonpartisan, but they are not apolitical, and serve as co-learners, alongside visitors, to unpack different topics and aim for engagement.
- **Creating immersive experiences:** Museum exhibits immerse visitors in history. An introduction, for example, begins with the first reading of the Declaration of Independence, heightening the sense of immersion. In general throughout, objects are interactive on multiple levels, through sight but also sound, touch, and even smell—as well as through touchscreen models (virtual reality). Reproductions like a model ship and model of a gun convey the look and feel of what these objects were like, along with other life-size figures/models. Washington’s War Tent, set up on display, is presented to the audience in a theater show with narration, film, and dramatic lighting effects. Exhibits enable visitors of all ages to ask questions and experience some of what it was like to live through the Revolutionary War.

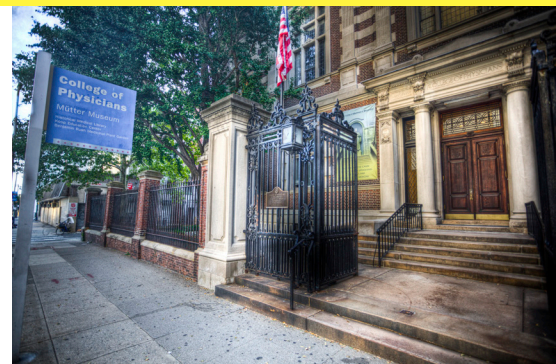
Mütter Museum

The College of Physicians of Philadelphia

19 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia

Website: muttermuseum.org

Tour with Nancy Hill, Museum Manager, and Anna Dhody, Curator and Acting Co-Director



(Photo: Terry Robinson, 2011.)

About: America’s finest museum of medical history, the Mütter Museum displays its beautifully preserved collections of anatomical specimens, models, and medical instruments in a 19th-century “cabinet museum” setting. The goal of the Museum is to help visitors understand the mysteries and beauty of the human body, and appreciate the history of diagnosis and treatment of disease. The Mütter Museum has a unique collection of specimens and objects that reflect the human history of anatomy and medicine. The collection ranges from 7th century BCE to 2014, although the majority dates from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. The collection consists mainly of human specimens and medical objects, although the Museum does have some non-human specimens. The Museum still collects objects and specimens that conform with its Collections Management Policy.

Key Takeaways

What best practices can we learn from the Mütter Museum?

- **Modernizing and improving accessibility—while staying on brand:** The Museum recently reformatted its exhibits and space, following ADA standards for accessible design. Improvements included new fiber optic lighting throughout, as well as different personal options for digesting information, e.g., sound/audio, touch, and video. The Museum worked with a designer to ensure its brand and essence would be maintained.
- **Updated exhibits and innovative learning:** Exhibits include touchscreens—including detailed interactive digitized materials—recorded historical audio perspectives, and take-home material. Windows allow visitors to watch staff working in the collections, behind the scenes. The Museum also updated its portrait displays with portraits of notable African-American physicians.
- **Community involvement and consent:** The Museum provides opportunities for visitors to share their stories and experiences. In alignment with its collection policies, it also continues to seek donations of new human specimens, emphasizing full unquestionable consent. In one instance, a donor was able to visit his own heart on display at the Museum.



Penn Museum

Native American Voices

3260 South Street, Philadelphia

Website: penn.museum/sites/nativeamericanvoices

Discussion with Stephanie Mach, Academic Coordinator

About: *Native American Voices* invites visitors to leave preconceptions behind and discover a living tapestry of Nations with distinct histories and unexpected identities. Through new and old objects, video and audio recordings, and digital interactive opportunities, this exhibition allows visitors to develop a new understanding of the original inhabitants of this land, as told through Native American voices. The gallery is organized around four contemporary topics that hold importance for many Native American and Canadian First Nations peoples today. The Museum's North American collection includes approximately 120,000 archaeological objects and 40,000 ethnographic objects. Many of these were excavated or collected by Penn anthropologists and archaeologists in the late 19th through mid-20th centuries. Other ethnographic items were donated to the collection. The Louis Shotridge Digital Archive was created in 2010 to make the Tlingit collections from southeastern Alaska—acquired by Louis Shotridge, the Museum's first indigenous curator—accessible to the public.



(Photo: Mefman00, 2011.)

Key Takeaways

What best practices can we learn from “Native American Voices” at the Penn Museum?

- **Community representation through collaboration:** Alongside 200 objects, the exhibition presents contemporary Native American perspectives, for visitors to gain a new understanding of the first inhabitants of this land.
- **Emphasis on activism and “survivance,”** not “victimry.” Powerful stories include Native American successes in achieving independence as sovereign, self-governing nations.
- **First-person storytelling:** Indigenous voices are constantly accessible and heard throughout, in first person. At multimedia stations, visitors engage with audio and video clips of contemporary Native Americans speaking of the many ways in which they maintain their religious, political, linguistic, and artistic independence.
- **Innovative interpretive layout:** To break down limitations, the layout of the exhibition is not chronological or geographical. The gallery is organized around four contemporary topics that hold importance for many Native American and Canadian First Nations peoples today: local Nations, sacred places, continuing celebrations, and new initiatives.
- **Interactive media and digital storytelling:** The exhibition includes multimedia elements and makes digitized material accessible. To introduce and anchor the space, a motion-activated central projection—modeled after the traditional Native American gathering spot, the campfire—offers a narrated, cinematic exhibition overview. Visitors gather around it to hear authentic recorded footage and see natural landscapes and original soundscapes that capture the diversity of contemporary Native Americans and their distinct stories, histories, and identities.





Quaker Dolls, Atwater Kent Collection at Drexel University.

Hidden Treasures:

Interpreting African-American Objects in the Atwater Kent Collection for a K-12 Audience

Summer 2021

Students: Caleb Craig, Jasmine Mathis, Jason Valdez

Faculty/staff: Derek Gillman, Polly McKenna-Cress, Scott Hanson, Melissa Clemmer, Stacey Swigart,
Drexel University

Supported by Syde Hurdus Foundation and Colonial Academic Alliance.

The Challenge

Through this hands-on project, Drexel students explored using historical collections to engage a young audience, with ideas for exhibits and interpretation, and related educational programming. They based these ideas on a selection of objects related to African-American history in the **Atwater Kent Collection (AKC)**—the collection of the former Philadelphia History Museum that Drexel is now stewarding.

Tasked with developing K-12 educational materials for civic engagement, they took on the further challenge of targeting grades 3-4 (when local history is taught), and of using these materials to explore ideas about race and identity, taboo, and negative stereotypes, in age-appropriate ways. Their goal was to develop ideas for innovative object-based teaching and learning in a museum-classroom setting with younger children.

Outcomes

The Drexel students developed interpretive/educational programs around a focused selection of objects related to African-American history in the AKC, to engage young visitors in exploring these objects and related issues relevant to today. These prototype object-based programs and materials will be useful for future planned exhibits, as well as a starting point for further development of educational resources, for both in-person exhibits/programs, and online interpretation and educational outreach. The prototypes suggest a number of different ways to approach and interpret a wide range of historical objects, particularly for a young audience, but can also be readily adapted for different audiences.

Background

Drexel's long-term goals for the AKC include making it universally accessible to the public through an exhibit/loan program, online database, and related interpretive and educational resources. In service of this, the University received a grant from the Syde Hurdus Foundation to engage Drexel students to work on developing K-12 materials related to the AKC. In Summer 2021 (10-week academic quarter), three students worked on this project: two graduate Museum Leadership students (as a practicum project) and one undergraduate Art History/Art Therapy student (as a co-op position).

Project Description

The focus for this project was African-American material in the AKC, including three-dimensional objects and archival items. The students reviewed a list of all the related AKC material, compiled from the collection database, and each chose three items they were interested in examining. They visited the AKC (then in an offsite warehouse storage facility) to see their chosen items in person, and the collections manager (Stacey Swigart, now director) provided information from the database, which was not yet accessible online at the time. The students further decided which of these objects to focus on for the term: two students focused on one object each, and one student focused on three objects.

Polly McKenna-Cress designed an assignment (SEE BELOW) for the students to follow for the term and defining their final deliverables. The project was structured as a learning experience for the students to exercise empathy-building practices as they worked to develop prototype interpretive/educational programs and related materials based on AKC objects. The assignment was also designed as a "round robin," so each student would benefit from, and strengthen their work by investigating the object-programs from three different perspectives: as curator, program developer, and visitor.

As the task of the project was to develop K-12 materials, the students took into account state academic standards for Social Studies, as well as the Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy, "an inquiry-based content framework for excellence in history and civics" (educatingforamericandemocracy.org/the-roadmap). Drexel was also in the early planning stages of developing an inaugural exhibition of AKC objects, focusing on rarely seen items, so the students also considered how these materials could potentially be displayed as part of a physical exhibition, ultimately.

The students proceeded to study their objects and develop prototype object-based interpretive/educational programs, with frequent checkpoints along the way for feedback from collaborating faculty/staff. At the end of the term, they presented their deliverables to the Drexel AKC team.

(Adapted from Polly McKenna-Cress)

Developing empathy-building practices, the goal of this project is to collect multiple points of view to create complex, informed messaging to engage diverse audiences. You will play three major roles during this project: 1) Curator/scholar/senior scientist/historian, 2) Program developer/educator, and 3) Visitor/community/visitor researcher.

Step 1: As Curator (3 weeks)

- Select an object(s) from the collection. (It can have personal meaning, but it is most important that you can find out its history, including provenance, intrinsic and extrinsic value, and why the institution collected it.)
- Write up the facts (tombstone information), including materials; where it was made; who made it; dates when it was made and purchased/acquired—everything you can find, in terms of its history and how/why it was made, used, kept, and interpreted.
- What other discipline(s) of museum might this object be in? Why would you want it contextualized there? What story would you want it to tell? Whose point of view(s) would you want represented with this object, and why? (It can be more than one)
- Find images and dimensions of the object.
- Write up answers to these questions and any other important information, and be prepared to answer questions. Contact collection staff if possible.
- [Note: The following steps can either be done with the students actually switching roles/trading objects, or by students individually simply playing the different roles, adopting the different perspectives themselves.]

Step 2: As Program Developer (3 weeks)

- As the developer, the curator (previous role) will give you information about the object(s). Your job is to ask questions and do further research as needed.
- [Together] establish the audience for the program: Who will you target, and why? Then establish the Big Idea and Essential Question(s) for the program to be developed around the object. What do you want visitors saying/thinking/asking/further researching?
- Develop the object's interpretive program. Will you only "tell" the visitor about the object? What voice(s) will the interpretation come from—what point of view(s)? (It can be multiple) What is the role of the visitor? (Only passive reader?) Will the program ask questions? Help the visitor find/discover their own meaning or connection to the object? How can you contemporize the object? (Why should anyone care about this object today?)
- Lay out or design the program experience with a draft script. How would you train an interpreter to deliver the program?
- What other elements would you include to help interpret, e.g., images of the object, sketches, diagrams, details? What context would the object be presented in? (In a case alone? With other objects? Within an environment? On a wall, eye level, on the floor, etc.?) Would it be accompanied by a digital media component? Create a sketch for how this object might be contextualized and discussed.
- Write up 2-3 questions you want to ask the visitor about the object/program to see if they get the big idea/essence/meaning you and the curator intended. If not, why? How might you adjust the interpretation to help the object resonate the way you hoped?
- Create a storyboard for the program with wording for the script. What form and sequence would it take? Would it be in an exhibit, theater, museum common area, library? Experienced by a full school group? Write description for where/how the object would be presented and the walkthrough for how visitors may engage with the program/object. Try to sketch a scale drawing of the object in context. Set the mood and lighting in the description/walkthrough (e.g., bright and cheery, spot lit and dramatic).

Step 3: As a Visitor and with friends/family/neighbors (3 weeks)

- Read (and/or ask others to read) description and walkthrough, study object, and sketch:
- Write up your reaction to the object. What are your impressions? How do you relate to this object? Would you bring a friend over to see this object and discuss with them? Would you recommend to a friend to visit and engage in the program?
- Write up a visitor research instrument from the 2-3 questions the developer supplied that will get to the answers needed to inform the program and enhance the experience. How will the survey best help the developer? These questions are your audience testing of your prototype as the developer, to receive feedback from the visitor. These are the 2-3 questions the visitor will answer once they have reviewed and engaged with the object, interpretation, and context. REMEMBER you want those questions to provoke and provide feedback you are looking for to inform how you will make adjustments before the final deliverable. You want a combination of closed- and open-ended questions. [Full assignment included more detail about research instrument questions.]
- Ask friends and family, and anyone you can that represents both the target audience and a diverse audience, age, culture, socioeconomic, education level, to add perspectives to the thinking.

Final Deliverables: In the developer role, edit/adjust final interpretive labels, as informed by the curator(s), but also most importantly, by the visitor. Your final package should consist of: Cover/title slide; Table of contents; Executive summary of the project; Target audience; Mission, Big Idea/Essential Question, goals and objectives for the program; Curator's description/research/materials; Further research; First draft/prototype in the form of a storyboard; Visitor survey instrument and responses; Final interpretive program description/walkthrough/storyboard; Bibliography and Appendices (as needed). [Full assignment included more detail.]

“Oh, If I was a Soger Man!”

Caleb Craig, MS, Museum Leadership, Drexel University

Goals and Objectives: The goals of this program are for visitors to actively discuss with others the harmful consequences of blackface, minstrel shows, and negative stereotypes, and be less likely to partake in related behavior; contemplate how they may have previously behaved in a way that perpetuated negative stereotypes; and gain an understanding of why blackface, minstrel shows, and negative stereotypes are still relevant to the modern world.

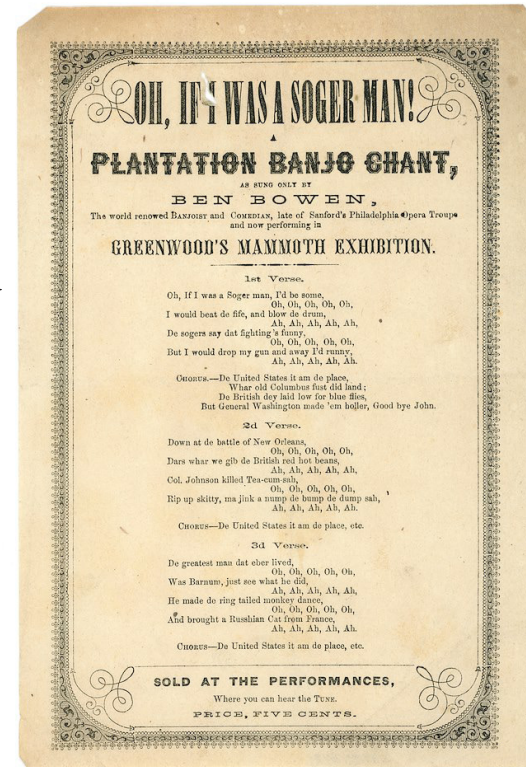
The specific objectives are for visitors to understand and define what blackface and minstrel shows are; analyze examples of negative stereotypes in the modern world; and describe why blackface, minstrel shows, and stereotypes have negative effects and consequences.

Elements of the display:

- The song sheet itself.
- Image of Samuel S. Sanford (namesake of the orchestra Ben Bowen found acclaim with).
- Philadelphia advertisements for Sanford Opera Troupe.
- QR code linking to a video playlist of minstrel performances.
- Tablet or other screen scrolling through a news “dump” of recent coverage of people wearing blackface in the news.
- Text describing the items, and defining blackface and minstrel show. Could also pose goal/objective-based takeaway questions.

Survey Questions:

- Did you know what blackface was before this exhibit? Can you describe it?
- Why do you think blackface exists?
- Has anyone ever made fun of you? How did it make you feel?
- How do you feel about blackface? Would you ever wear blackface?
- If you saw someone wearing blackface or about to put on blackface, what would you do?



OBJECT: Song Lyric Sheet: “OH, IF I WAS A SOGER MAN! Plantation Banjo Chant...,” 1860-80

Advertised as sung only by Ben Bowen, the world-renowned banjoist and comedian, late of Sanford’s Philadelphia Opera troupe and now performing in Greenwood’s Mammoth Exhibition. This song lyric sheet was sold for 5 cents, to coincide with Bowen’s blackface minstrel performance, where he was performing the song.

[Final deliverables also included background research on Sanford’s Opera Troupe, as well as minstrel shows in general.]

Display

Photo of Samuel S. Sanford



Rough Sketch



Philadelphia advertisements for the Sanford Opera Troupe



LCD or Tablet



QR Code



The Meaning of Citizenship

Jasmine Mathis, MS, Museum Leadership,
Drexel University

Goals and Objectives: The goals of this program are to support elementary students (and their learning ecosystems) in learning to distinguish who had the power to dictate who could be an American and who was able to decide quintessential “American” attributes, using instructional tools from the 1800s Americanization archives, part of the Atwater Kent Collection. This will provide a different perspective to students and learners—children, young adults, teachers, and families—who may not have encountered these questions before while tackling traditional subjects in school. The **specific objectives**—referencing Pennsylvania Academic Standards for 3rd Grade Social Studies—are to help students identify examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (personal, political, and economic rights; personal and civic responsibilities), and to define principles and ideals shaping government (justice, truth, diversity of people and ideas, patriotism, common good, liberty, rule of law, leadership, and citizenship).

Program Sequence (Excerpted):

- **Introduction:** Definitions of citizenship and naturalization.
- **Beginning discussion questions:** What are some things you have in common with other classmates that you associate with America (that you think of as American, or that remind you of being an American)? What does an American look like to you? (Do all your classmates look the same? Speak the same languages? Do you know anyone who speaks a different language? What do Americans do? Go to work? Stay/work at home? What do Americans wear? Do you watch the Olympics or other sports? What do you do for the Fourth of July?)
- **Handout:** Drawing Activity (SEE IMAGE).
- **Exhibition:** Guided tour of exhibit (ending with Quaker dolls, displayed in case with appropriate lighting). 3 sections/topics: Migration, Naturalization, and Citizenship (featuring Quaker dolls).
- **Ending discussion questions:** How are the Quaker dolls different from the dolls you drew earlier? (Are they wearing different clothes? Do you think they have their own cell phone? What do you think they like to do for fun? What could their jobs be?)
- **Conclusion:** Summary about African-American and Quaker abolitionists in the 18th century, as related to the objects, as well as key concepts comparing and contrasting American citizenship today.



OBJECT: Quaker Dolls, 1830-40

These dolls were created and sent to Quakers in England in the early 19th century to illustrate what African-American (Negro) Quakers in America looked like. Black dolls that represented famous Black activists were a popular craft made by Quaker abolitionist women. These dolls were sold at fairs to raise money for abolitionist groups and causes.

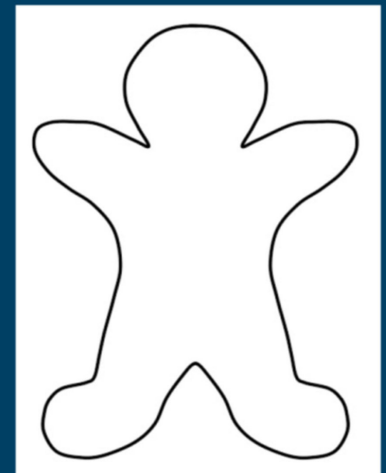
Discussion Questions: How are these dolls different from dolls sold in American stores today? Do you think it is better to fit in or be your own person? What times can you think of that fitting in is important? Not important? What times do you think being an individual is important—or not?

[Final deliverables included additional interpretive text, as well as themes and definitions for elementary students, including naturalization, citizenship, Americanization, abolitionists, migration, Quakers, and egalitarianism.]

Please draw or describe an
American citizen using the
figure below

Supporting Questions to help style your figure:

- What style of clothing does your doll wear?
- What kind of job does your doll have?
- What kind of responsibilities do they have in their family?
 - What do they learn in school?
 - What is their favorite subject?
- Who is their favorite musician/artist?
 - What is their favorite sport?



“Fun-To-Dress [Black] Barbie”

Jason Valdez, BA, Art History/Art Therapy, Drexel University

The mission of this project is to produce an interactive experience that travels through the evolution of “Fun-to-Dress Barbie,” and how the possibilities of representation have expanded beyond appearances and gender roles.

The target audience for this program are patients age 6-15 at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children and their families/caregivers.

The goals of this exhibit are to show how African-American influence has become progressively included in American pop culture; for visitors to leave with a sense of acknowledgement, seeing themselves represented in a popular figure that has been influential for decades; and to display the evolution of African-American Barbie, to present and explore possibilities for the future.

The specific objectives are for visitors to gain knowledge about the production of “Black Barbie”; interpret this exhibit through their own race and identity, relating to their own experiences/differences; and explore possibilities for what Barbie can do going forward, to allow for more representation and inclusivity.

[Final deliverables included additional interpretive text/background.]

Survey Questions:

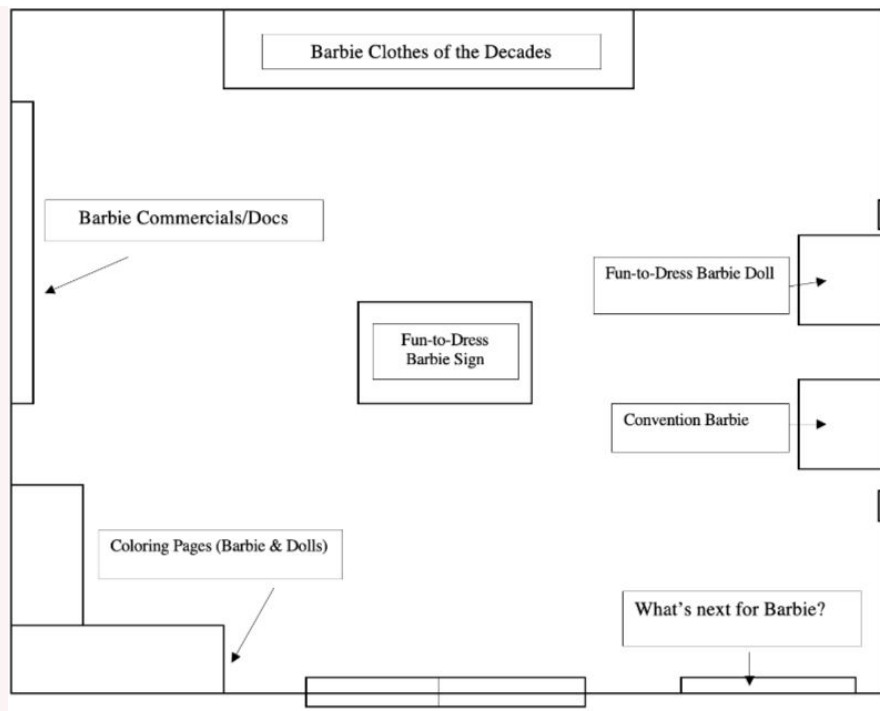
- Have you ever seen a Black Barbie?
- How do you think Barbie is a good or bad influence for girls?
- Have you ever had a doll? If so, how do/did you like to dress them?
- Did you know Barbie could be president? Or a nurse? Or an astronaut?
- Do you believe this exhibit could create a conversation about race and identity? Why or why not?



OBJECT: Fun-To-Dress Barbie, Mattel, Inc., 1988

Purchased from Kiddie City, 1989, for Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies. Although Mattel issued “friend” dolls of color by 1968, it was not until 1980 that it released the Barbie doll itself in an African-American incarnation.

Note: The Coloring Pages (SEE DRAFT EXHIBIT LAYOUT, RIGHT) idea was based on an Art Therapy activity book this student, Jason Valdez, was working on for the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, as part of a **Story Medicine** course at Drexel: a Community-Based Learning “creative writing class with a civic engagement twist” (founded by Nomi Eve) in which students write and perform shows for children patients in hospitals. The activity book was a way to connect with patients during Covid restrictions.



Conclusion

While this project did not result in a large *number* of ready-to-use educational materials, it laid a foundation for further development, including a range of important considerations for those who develop future AKC classroom and interpretive resources to take into account. Two of the students (graduate students) participating in the project continued working with the same objects for a second term, during which they also developed the introduction section materials for this Toolkit. In the second term, they worked with Dr. Scott Hanson, an urban historian, including discussion of how their exhibit programs—subject matter and interpretation—could be adapted and expanded for different ages and groups. They also shared their work above with representative target audiences, including area teachers.

Recommendations

Working with Children. One conversation that was particularly useful for Jasmine Mathis, who shared her Meaning of Citizenship program, was with an elementary teacher at Germantown Friends School (PK-12) in Philadelphia, a school with a constructivist learning style; its mission includes exploring how students come to their own conclusions.

Specific methods she uses in the classroom include:

- **“Notice and wonder”** (What do you notice? What do you wonder?): questions they ask their students, before proceeding with a topic; similar to inquiry-based learning.
- **Discussion groups.**
- **Discussing difficult topics head on** (e.g., race and inequality): not being afraid to discuss these topics with their students; discussing current topics, and also making that support clear to parents/caregivers. Students at GFS, for example, have discussed related topics to the Meaning of Citizenship program in class and have even attended a naturalization ceremony.

Innovative Teaching and Learning.

The student-authors working on this project felt the three most important methods of achieving their program goals, through object-based and inquiry-based learning, are:

1. Comparing modern experiences and objects with the past.
2. Encouraging discussion through targeted questions/prompts and guided discussion groups.
3. Providing creative opportunities for students/visitors to express themselves, such as through illustration activities.

Opportunities

Regarding the format of this project as a college/graduate student assignment for engaging with collections, Drexel's relatively short 10-week quarter and small size of this group presented challenges with respect to the “**round robin**” structure of the original assignment. The project did not end up following this suggested outline strictly. The round robin—with students taking turns playing different roles and exchanging each other's work—may be easier to execute with a larger group and more regimented schedule. In this project, the three students shifted perspectives more informally, and also benefitted from frequent interaction and collaboration with each other, as well as faculty/staff.

With the short length of the project term, there also ended up being a lack of time (and access) for **contacting representative elementary teachers and children**, to review and comment on the Drexel students' work. For a larger, more formally structured class or project, building that experience into the schedule—with an existing teacher advisory group or focus group, or teacher contact willing to implement a quick test in their classroom—may be beneficial, but was beyond the capacity of this term-limited project. Even in the second term of this project, for the two students who continued, reaching teachers (who are already stretched thin, particularly during the pandemic) poses a challenge. Alternatively, students could share their work and collect responses from a range of outside readers (including parents, young adults, any children they know, etc.) and compare results.



Response from Nora, age 8.



UD students at Johnson House
(Wendy Bellion, 2021).

Researching Art & Material Culture

in Early Philadelphia

Fall 2021

Faculty: Wendy Bellion, PhD, Department of Art History, University of Delaware

Supported by Colonial Academic Alliance.

The Challenge

In an interdisciplinary graduate seminar at the University of Delaware (UD), **Art and Material Culture in Early Philadelphia**, Professor Wendy Bellion and students explored the people, objects, and places that made Philadelphia a dynamic center of painting, printmaking, photography, performance, and craft between the early years of European colonial settlement through the Centennial Exhibition of 1876.

The seminar attracted a diverse interdisciplinary student cohort from the Department of Art History, the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, and the American Civilization Program in the History Department.

Outcomes

Beyond the students presenting research to the class, additional outcomes included:

- Two of the papers were later presented during UD's Department of Art History's 2022 Graduate Student Symposium; one will be presented as part of an online UK symposium in November 2022; and an editor of a flagship journal in American art history is in discussion with one of the students about possible publication of her findings.
- One student leveraged her seminar research to win a summer 2022 fellowship with the Mt. Vernon Hotel Museum and to apply (successfully) to the American Antiquarian Society's Center for Historic American Visual Culture (CHAViC) 2022 summer seminar "On Stage: Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century America."
- Another plans to continue developing her seminar paper research for her PhD dissertation in American history.

Background / Project Description

Students completed a challenging weekly reading load, engaged in group discussions of assigned readings on the online annotation app Perusall, completed an original research paper, and delivered class presentations on their research.

Returning to in-person teaching after 18 months of remote learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the seminar incorporated numerous hands-on experiential learning opportunities, taking field trips both on and off campus to museum collections and historic sites, and meeting with prominent museum professionals.

Field trips included:

- UD Special Collections
- Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library
- Stenton
- Johnson House Historic Site
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

The seminar also included virtual guest speaker appearances from curators and librarians at several Philadelphia institutions (the Library Company of Philadelphia, PAFA, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum).

UD students at Philadelphia Museum of Art
(Wendy Bellion, 2021).



Conclusion

Generous funding from the Colonial Academic Alliance grant to UD's Center for Material Culture Studies made it possible to undertake the collections-based research and field studies that enriched the course in measurable ways. Without this financial support, the seminar would not have been able to engage the students in this invaluable mode of experiential learning. The outcomes speak for themselves, underscoring the continued need for funding to support historical learning both within and outside the classroom and the transformative effect such support can exert on the education of graduate students.

The main challenge we faced was one of timing, caused wholly by the pandemic: we had to delay implementation of the grant funding until we could come back together on campus for in-person learning, and even then, we had to work around the admission hours of various museums and libraries, and staff availability at those institutions. Again, as the outcomes suggest, the challenge was worth every minute in terms of the opportunities the students experienced.



LEFT: UD students at Stenton
BELOW: UD Special Collections in Hugh Morris Library
(Wendy Bellion, 2021)





hereas Isaac Norris of the City of Philadelphia, Son of Isaac Norris, late Sheriff in the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia in the Province of Pennsylvania Deceased, And Sarah Logan, Daughter of James Logan of Merion in the County of Philadelphia aforesaid, Having declared their intentions of Marriage with each other before several Monthly Meetings of the People call'd Quakers at Philadelphia aforesaid, according to the good order us'd amongst them, And having Consent of Parties and Relations concerned, their said and proposed Marriage was allowed of y. said Meeting, Now these are to Certify, Whom it may concern, That for the full accomplishing their said intentions, That both Day of y. fourth Month in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand seven Hundred and Sixty Nine, In y. said Isaac Norris and Sarah Logan, Appeared in a publick Meeting of the said People at German-Town in the said County, And the said Isaac Norris taking the said Sarah Logan by the hand, did in solemn manner openly declare, That he took the said Sarah Logan to be his Wife, promising to be unto her, by the Lords assistance a faithfull & loving Husband until Death should separate them, And then and there in the said Assembly the said Sarah Logan do likewise declare, that she took the said Isaac Norris to be her Husband, in like manner promising to be unto him a loving and faithfull Wife until Death should separate them, And Moreover the said Isaac Norris and Sarah Logan (she according to the Custom of Marriage, assuming the name of her Husband) as a further confirmation, did both of them subscribe their Names, which Names are here under also subscribed.

Detail of marriage certificate
(Tom Price, 2022).

Family Histories:

Contextualizing Portraiture at Stenton

Summer 2022

Student: Tom Price, PhD Candidate, Department of Art History, University of Delaware

Supported by Colonial Academic Alliance.

The Challenge

During the course of this project, significant collections and archival research was undertaken with a local historical institution and museum, [Stenton](#), which is administered by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Following the acquisition of a **portrait depicting a member of the Logan family who once resided at the colonial estate, Sarah Logan Norris** (eldest daughter of the site's founder), Tom Price, a PhD student at the University of Delaware, collaborated with museum curator Laura Keim to determine the portrait's maker and relate the portrait to other extant works depicting family members.

The project utilized resources and collections from across Philadelphia, tying the work to the complex networks of early Philadelphia and beyond.

Outcomes

A final attribution of the portrait of Sarah Logan Norris was determined. While the portrait of Norris was unsigned and undated, it had previously been attributed to the English painter Sir Godfrey Kneller. Given the unlikely nature of this attribution—Kneller died before the portrait was likely painted and neither Kneller nor Norris crossed the Atlantic—a number of alternative makers were considered. In the absence of a signature or confirmation through archival evidence, such as a letter or an account book noting payment, a stylistic comparison formed the basis of a new attribution to **Gustavus Hesselius**, a Swedish emigrant painter who established himself in Philadelphia in the late 1720s.

Archival research and collaborations with other local institutions yielded further information, providing the basis for future collections care and object interpretation by museum curators and educators. Technical analysis by conservators, including staff at the **Winterthur Museum and Library**, provided key insights into the painting's physical production, and generated helpful guidance and best practices for the object's continued care. This was especially beneficial, as Stenton is situated in a historic house with limited climate control. Archival research, primarily at the **Historical Society of Pennsylvania**, complemented this practical approach with sources that revealed a complex family history and illuminated the short life of the portrait's sitter. This research helped integrate the painting into the museum's substantive material culture collection, bringing a new visual identity to one of the home's historic inhabitants. It also helped draw connections beyond Stenton itself to the other families that lived in colonial Philadelphia.

Background

Situated in present-day North Philadelphia, Stenton is a house museum preserving and interpreting the historic estate of **James Logan**, the secretary of William Penn and an important member of the Philadelphia Quaker community. Completed in 1730, Stenton served as Logan's country seat, a place for him to retire while serving his political and personal business duties, and to build his impressive collection of books. In 2019 Stenton acquired the portrait of Sarah Logan Norris, eldest daughter of James Logan, from a descendant of the Logan family living in the United Kingdom. The work joined a handful of portraits and a large collection of material goods. This project sought to expand knowledge about the portrait, attribute the portrait to a painter with more certainty, expand the interpretive possibilities of the portrait given the strengths of the museum, and illuminate the work's relationship to other images of Logan family members and other members of early Philadelphia elite extant in other regional Philadelphia institutions. Stenton's interest in researching the portrait also fits within a longer effort to expand interpretation of underrepresented individuals who worked or resided at the house, a large part of which has focused on Dinah, an enslaved and later-emancipated house servant.



Focus of the project: portrait of Sarah Logan Norris
(Tom Price, 2022).

Project Description

This summer research project took a three-pronged approach, focusing on:

1. Primary source archival research
2. Secondary source research on colonial portraiture in Philadelphia and early Quaker life
3. The painting itself and similar works in the region

In order to augment knowledge about the portrait and painting in colonial America, a thorough literature review was conducted, utilizing the collections of UD's Morris Library. This work, which covered **portraiture, Quaker history, and the history of fashion and apparel**, among other areas, provided a basis of knowledge about the work. It also served as one of the foundations for the work's attribution to Hesselius. While research and archival records on the artist are relatively limited, they suggest his prominence in the Philadelphia region after the late 1720s. This research also entailed a study of comparable portraits from the first half of the 18th century made in the region, which further supported the attribution to Hesselius on stylistic grounds. Moreover, this undertaking highlighted the **exceptional nature of this portrait, since there are significantly fewer examples of colonial portraiture produced in the early 18th century** than those produced after 1750. This was accompanied with in-person visits to collections when the opportunity permitted in order to see related portraits, as a notable number of early Philadelphia portraits still survive. A trio of paintings owned by the City of Philadelphia, formerly kept at Loudon and now on deposit at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, were graciously made available to see in person.

Archival research formed another backbone of this project. Stenton's own archival records are on deposit at the Library Company of Philadelphia. Several important records, include the **marriage certificate** of Sarah Logan Norris and Isaac Norris, are contained within their holdings, which helped illuminate not only the sitter's identity but also the greater Quaker community that witnessed her marriage. Further archival research was conducted at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which holds superlative collections covering early Philadelphia, including extensive records on both the Logan and Norris families. These records were primarily consulted in order to search for evidence of payment, commission, or mention of the Sarah Logan Norris portrait. While such evidence was unfortunately scant, the archives at the Historical Society offered great insight into complex family relations, the sitter's identity, and the profound impact her death had upon the Logan and Norris families. Despite the archival research not answering many questions in this regard, it brought these long-deceased family members to life and ultimately enriched the stories the portrait can tell.

These separate areas of research culminated in an object report, attribution justification, examples of related works, and digitized archival records for Stenton, establishing a strong basis of research on the painting that can be supplemented with future endeavors. A public talk regarding the painting attribution, and its ties to family and local history took place in December 2022.

Examining back of frame, portrait of Sarah Logan Norris
(Tom Price, 2022).



Conclusion

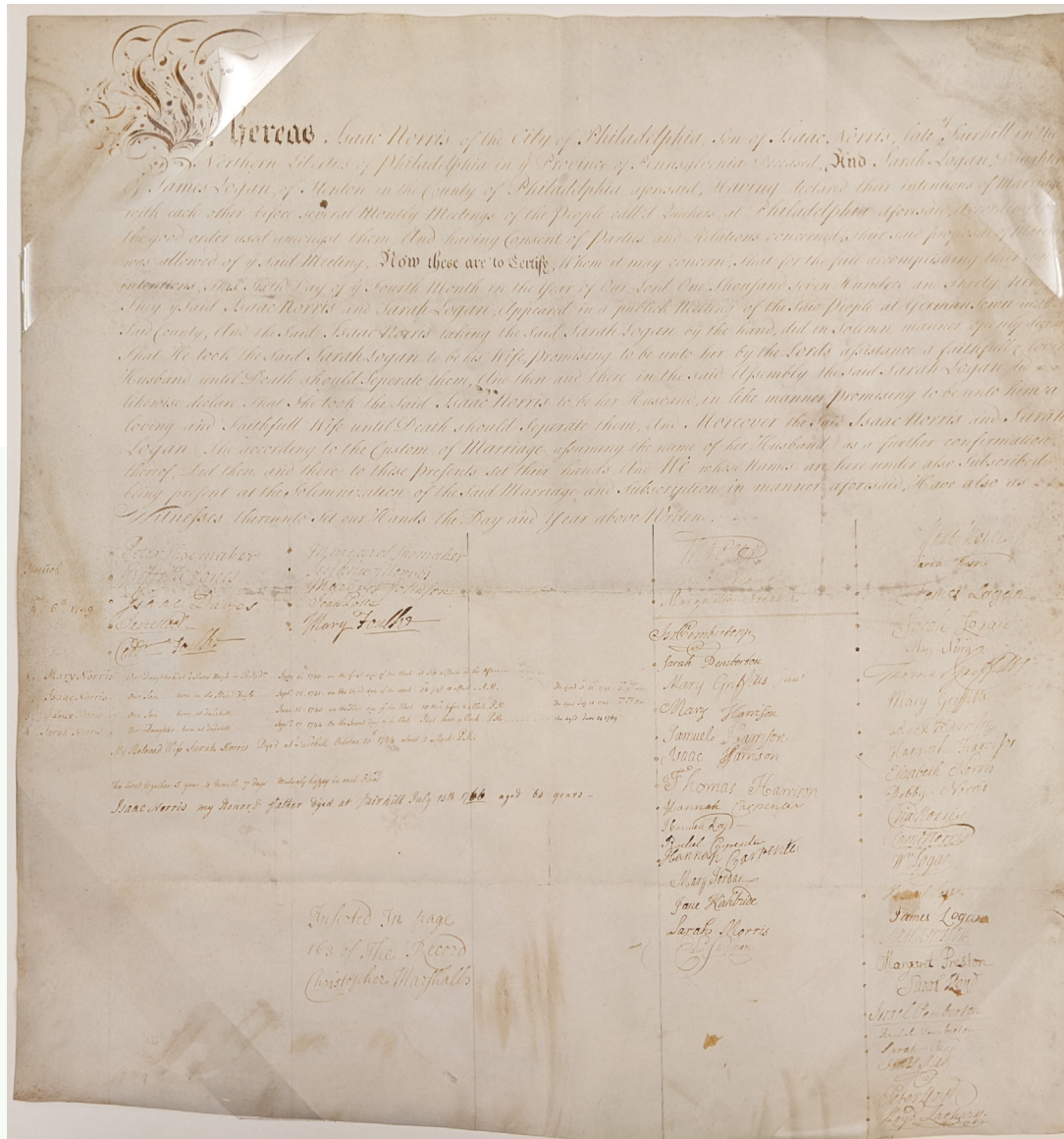
This project—which grew out of a site visit to Stenton as part of Dr. Wendy Bellion’s course Art and Material Culture in Early Philadelphia (SEE PREVIOUS SECTION)—took place thanks to a collaboration between the Colonial Academic Alliance and UD’s Center for Material Culture Studies. The summer research project not only enhanced and inspired PhD student Tom Price’s own understanding of early Philadelphia art and material culture but also enlivened colonial portraiture at an important regional museum. CAA’s support allowed us to establish a much more thorough understanding of the painting and its context in the early Philadelphia art world, as well as forge connections with partners that might also lead to future collaborations and exhibitions.

The project’s main challenges proved to be ones that were anticipated from the outset. **Scant records exist** for artists working in Philadelphia during the early 18th century, so a definitive attribution proved difficult. More broadly, **researching women in colonial America is itself challenging**, even in wealthy and well-documented families. There are often limited traces of female members of households left in archives, so careful examinations of letters and other documents must be used to outline their lives. Additional research in the Historical Society of Philadelphia’s Logan and Norris collections would certainly yield more results here, since there was not enough time to review these areas in full.

Future collaboration with the Atwater Kent Collection at Drexel University would also benefit both institutions, and perhaps others in the area as well.

The Atwater Kent Collection contains a number of important works by Hesselius, and other portraits of Logan family members and prominent Philadelphians. Together with Stenton they contain an important cross-section of 18th-century society.

Marriage certificate of Sarah Logan Norris and Isaac Norris (Tom Price, 2022).





Students' contributions to MoWWA.

The Museum of Where We Are

Est. 2020

Faculty: Joseph Larnerd, PhD, Assistant Professor of Design History, Westphal College of Media Arts & Design, Drexel University

Supported by Drexel Founding Collection and Joseph Larnerd.

Outcomes

For examples of student work and gallery views of the exhibitions, please visit:

themuseumofwhereweare.com

The Challenge / Background

The Museum of Where We Are (MoWWA) taught Dr. Larnerd that to make design history meaningful for his students, he needed to embolden them to create it in their own image. He founded this virtual museum at the outset of the pandemic for students in his “History of Modern Design” class, most of whom are training in design practice and not art or design history, to ensure that his object-based pedagogy continued during remote learning. The project continues to the present (2022), such has been its success in empowering students to see the impact of design and its histories in their own lives and, importantly, model that critical thinking for the wider publics the MoWWA engages, through digital and physical exhibitions.

Below, Dr. Larnerd provides the steps for the quarter-long project as outlined in his syllabus. Brief annotations reflecting on his experience developing and teaching the project follow each step.

Project Description / Recommendations

Assignment and Annotations

Final Project: An Interpretive Label

(60% total; breakdown below)

We have a shared final project: a new collection of entries for The Museum of Where We Are (MoWWA). What object histories and affordances might emerge from our careful, critical, and creative study of everyday design? Labels for the objects in our virtual museum will offer thoughtful responses to our virtual visitors (or to visitors in person at physical exhibits).

Each student will choose *one* example of modern design in their current place of residence, and conceptualize, research, and write an original 150-200-word label for our virtual museum. You can choose any three-dimensional object that is *not* an example of fine art (here defined as painting, sculpture, and architecture). Ideally, your artifact will be mass-produced. You can, however, select a one-of-a-kind utilitarian object that someone has made for and/or gifted to you, if you feel especially compelled to do so.

This project will be completed in stages throughout our quarter (as follows).

Object Introduction Paper

(5%) due Week 2 (of 10-week quarter)

In 250-300 words, provide a specific explanation for why you chose your object; include the word count in parenthesis at the end of your essay.

Conclude your paper with a high-resolution photograph that you have taken of your object. This will be the image that is uploaded to the MoWWA. Include the object's maker, title, year of production, medium, and dimensions beneath the photograph.

Annotation: I strongly encourage students to choose an object to which they *have a response*.

That response can be positive or negative. Their object might incite interests that seem at first entirely academic or personal, historical or contemporary. How their object and meditation might upend these false dichotomies is for the student to discover through the richness of their own thinking; they are more apt to perform such intellectual rigor if they choose an object to which they have a response.

They can even feel what I call **animated indifference**: that is, an indifference that the student wants to pursue as a subject in itself.

Description Paper

(15%) due Week 3

This assignment has three parts:

1. First, write a 1,000-word description of your artifact. Imagine that your description will be read by a friend who will need to sketch the artifact from your observations. Include the word count in parenthesis at the end of your essay.
2. Second, sketch your object in a medium of your choosing.
3. Finally, share at least two **new** questions or ideas for interpretation generated by your close looking, description, and sketching. Be **specific**—and **have fun!**

Additional Voices Paper

(15%) due Week 5

This assignment will help you think more expansively about your object by encouraging you to engage other voices who have considered your object, object type, mode of analysis, and/or so on. Respond to **two** readings in our Essay Vault and **two** sources relevant to your object located via the Newspaper Archives (see Annotation below).

Each response must answer three questions:

1. First, what is the author's central thesis or claim? **Clearly state this in the first sentence of your entry.**
2. Second, what **specific ideas or evidence** do they use to support that claim?
3. Finally, what did you find convincing, lacking, and/or helpful about the reading as it relates to your label/object study? The responses should be 150-200 words each (include the word count in parenthesis at the end of each entry) and have Chicago-style **bibliographic** citations.

This assignment, too, affords you a deeper engagement with ideas from our class that have **meaning for you.**

Annotation: The Description Paper assignment helps students *slow down*. It requires that they look closely at their objects, detailing it in their prose, and sketch the object's visual and material particularities. Nearly every student finds the written description difficult; such is their desire to include preliminary research. I noticed an overall improvement once I framed it as a letter to a friend. The assignment ends with a moment for the students to reflect on their process of examination and see, already, how looking closely invites us to ask new questions or pursue new avenues of interpretation. It also prepares students to connect specificities of the object's form to the story or provocation that will animate their interpretive label.

Annotation: The Additional Voices Paper brief research assignment shows students that to write a design history is to join a conversation (historical and/or contemporary) and make an intervention. Texts in the "Essay Vault" ensure they engage academic scholarship and/or material culture theory outside what we cover in class; the collection, too, offers students a quick view of the many disciplines engaged in the study of objects. I have included the introduction to and a selection of readings from the "Essay Vault" below (see Appendix); many of these readings directly influenced the MoWWA project, especially *Camera Lucida*, "The Force of Things," "Mind in Matter," and "The Things That Matter." Articles accessed via "The Newspaper Archives" offer students an opportunity to work with primary sources. I provide the students with links to Newspaper databases that can be accessed through our university library and the Library of Congress.

Polished Draft of Interpretative Label

(10%) due Week 7

Your 200-250-word label draft will tell a story or offer a provocation to critical thought. Open it with an activating question or description that initiates the analysis to follow, and then provide specific content (formal, historical, or otherwise) that supports that interpretation. Include the word count in parenthesis at the end of your entry. Your draft will be sent to your peers in anticipation of our Label Workshop.

Annotation: We read and discuss museum professional Beverly Serrell's chapter "What are Interpretive Labels?" (*Exhibition Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, 2015) in Week 6. Such a label tells a story or offers a provocation to critical thinking; it is not a mere information dump. I place the label drafts into a single pdf file that I distribute to the students in advance of our Week 8 meeting. Before class, I post a survey to BBLearn (the virtual learning environment/management system Drexel uses) where I ask the students:

1. Which is your *favorite* label draft? What makes it a successful, engaging interpretative label?
2. Which is your *least favorite* label draft? (Or what is one that could be improved?) What specific revisions would you offer its author?
3. What general editing advice would you give a classmate whose label draft exceeds 200 words?

During class, we workshop 5-6 labels in the spirit of celebrating and encouraging our peers as we work on our first interpretive labels. I share a slide with advice about editing that the students provided in the survey.

Final Interpretative Label (150-200 words)

(15%) due Week 9 or 10

Annotation: For examples, see themuseumofwhereweare.com. Before posting the labels, I copyedit and match formatting.



Wyck rose garden.

Our Germantown Stories:

Using Collections to Connect with Community

2018 - 2021

Drexel University Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships with Wyck Historic House, Garden & Farm and Germantown community members

Supported by Drexel Areas of Research Excellence (DARE).

The Challenge

How can a historic site be meaningful to its community? In 2018, Drexel University and [Wyck Historic House, Garden & Farm](#) (in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia) began a collaborative project exploring this question and the future of historic sites, using Wyck as a model. Wyck has been a house museum since the 1970s, but the Germantown history told there has not historically reflected the diversity of the neighborhood, then and now. Wyck believes its resources belong to everyone and is working to ensure this is reflected in practice.

Outcomes

Through this collaborative project, Drexel and Wyck engaged a group of nine Wyck Community Fellows who shared their local perspectives and ideas with Wyck, as well as their personal experiences and connections in Germantown. Their stories laid a foundation for a **pilot community storytelling project**, establishing a series of interpretive themes for Wyck to use in connecting with community members' stories through the site's own collection and history. One of the Fellows, a professional oral historian, Julie Rainbow, interviewed a diverse group of community members about their past and present experiences living and working in Germantown, excerpts of which the project shared alongside related stories and objects from Wyck's collection in a small printed booklet; Wyck also received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to produce an online exhibit version, with the added ability to include audio clips from the interviews. Wyck plans to continue engaging community members in adding to this online exhibit.



Community members John Lewis and Regina Robinson sharing African breastplate (Julie Rainbow).

Background

This interdisciplinary project built on the foundation of the Drexel Lenfest Center's inaugural Faculty Fellowship program (2018-19), where we began the collaboration with a partner site, Wyck Historic House, Garden & Farm (wyck.org) in Germantown.



View of Wyck/rose garden.

About Wyck

At Wyck Historic House, Garden & Farm, traditional Quaker culture blended with a passion for innovation. The people who lived and worked here expressed these values through their commitment to education, horticulture, equality, natural history, and preservation. Wyck is a remarkable survival of historic Philadelphia life in a 21st-century urban neighborhood. Today, Wyck seeks to engage learners of all ages—through its house, landscape, and objects saved over 300 years—and strengthen its community.

Wyck—a National Historic Landmark known for its house/collections, historic roses, and home farm—was home to nine generations of one family for nearly 300 years.

- *2.5-acre National Historic Landmark in Germantown, Philadelphia*
- *Ancestral home to one family for nine generations (1690–1973; Wistar and Haines most prominent names)*
- *Colonial house with innovative 1824 alterations by William Strickland*
- *Oldest rose garden in its original plan in the United States*
- *Collection of 10,000+ family objects, furniture pieces, historical curiosities; 100,000 family papers*
- *Perennial gardens, woodlot, fruit trees, vegetable and herb gardens, historical outbuildings*
- *Fruit and vegetable gardens grow food for Home Farm Club, provide an outdoor classroom, preserve historical agricultural traditions*



Germantown view shared by Community Fellow Ann Doley.



First Community Workshop.



Mockup of story cloth / smartphone concept.

The Lenfest Center received a two-year grant (2019-21) through the Drexel Areas of Research Excellence (DARE) program to explore **The Future of Historic Sites: Increased Access, Engaged Communities, Sustainability and Archives Without Walls**. The DARE project resulted in a series of virtual workshops with community members; two new related courses at Drexel; and a pilot community storytelling project, as well as additional grants for Wyck.

Community Workshops

In 2020, we recruited nine community members to be **Wyck Community Fellows**. These Fellows participated in three virtual workshops with the DARE team, and Wyck staff and board members (plans for public events were adapted in the pandemic). In these workshops, we tested ideas about how Wyck can better connect with the community—particularly through storytelling: Fellows shared objects and stories related to their experiences living in Germantown, and Wyck shared related material from its collection. Five **interpretive themes** emerged that Wyck is using to make connections with the community. The Fellows continued to meet independently to brainstorm ideas for Wyck, and they also mentored Drexel students in the course below.

New Class: Cultural Planning and Digital Storysharing

In Spring 2020, Drexel faculty members Neville Vakharia and Glen Muschio developed and taught this course in Drexel’s Westphal College of Media Arts & Design, based on the collaboration with Wyck. From remote, 12 students (mostly graduate) interacted with Community Fellows and invited leaders as guests. With input from the Fellows, students conducted community-based research (data collection, interviews) and developed a plan for a proposed project: community stories animated with community artwork, to be presented via “story cloths” and smartphone app, and archived at Wyck. The class resulted in a database of 60+ community resources for future use. The course also stands as a model for future community-based efforts.

New Class: Community Archives and Collective Memory

In Spring 2021, Alex Poole (College of Computing & Informatics) and Julie Rainbow (social researcher, oral historian, artist and teacher) developed and taught this course, offered through Pennoni Honors College, related to the collaboration with Wyck. With a civic engagement priority, the course was place based, addressing community archives, oral history/collective memory, and emphasizing unheard/marginalized voices. Twelve students enrolled in this seminar.

Project Description

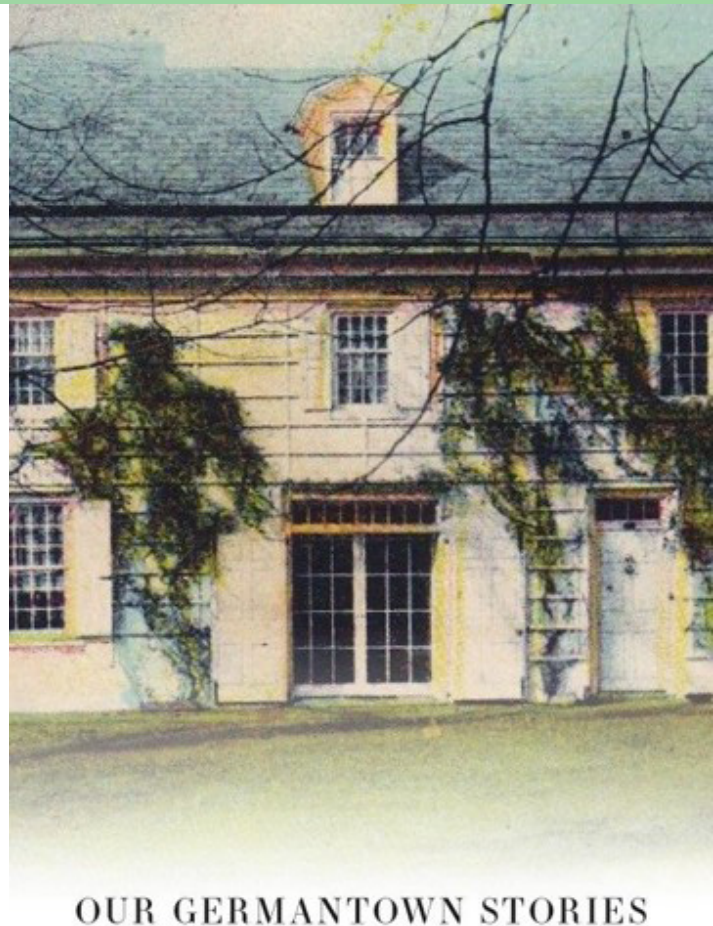
Our Germantown Stories

As an example of how a historic site can connect with its community through storytelling, Drexel produced a printed booklet, *Our Germantown Stories*, in collaboration with Wyck and the community. Oral historian **Julie Rainbow** interviewed 14 community members, and the booklet features their words and images alongside thematically related content from Wyck.

Wyck distributed the booklet to neighbors and visitors. Also using the interviews, Wyck has produced an online exhibit, “Our Germantown Stories,” intended to be an ongoing, evolving project.

On the following pages are the five thematic sections of the booklet, showing the Wyck story/objects highlighted under each and excerpts of related community stories shared.

The goal was to provide a sample of how community stories—from a range of perspectives—relate to this historic site. It is also a celebration of the people of Germantown and their rich, diverse history.



Booklet Viewable Online:
[issuu.com/drexellenfestcenter/
docs/our_germantown_
stories_2021](https://issuu.com/drexellenfestcenter/docs/our_germantown_stories_2021)

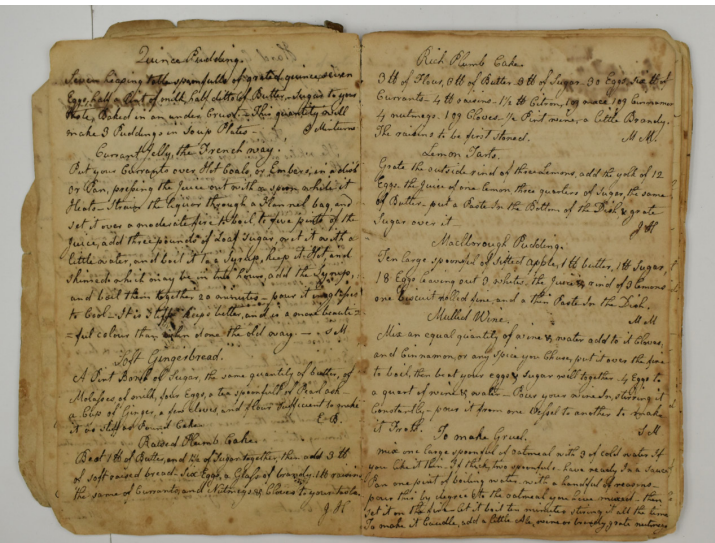
Online Exhibit:
[wyck.org/our-germantown-
stories](https://wyck.org/our-germantown-stories)

Theme 1: Germantown Generations

Wyck Story:

Neighborhood Recipe Sharing
in the Early 19th Century

OBJECT: Hannah Marshall Haines's
recipe book (BELOW)



Community Story (Example):

Breaking Bread Together

OBJECT: Catherine Brown's cast iron pot
(BELOW)

*My grandmother always had something on the stove—the gas stove and the two illegal potbelly stoves, one of which was literally in the dining room in the middle of our house in Germantown. We were never cold... even in the summertime when we wanted to be. / One of our family's heirlooms is our **cast iron pot**. It was responsible for many Soul Food cooked meals for our family. When we were young, every night was a sit-down dinner experience. As we grew and life got busy, it faded away for a bit, but when I was grown and with my own family, my mom prepared Sunday sit-down dinners every Sunday! At some point Mommy felt we were not appreciating her Sunday meals and threatened to stop cooking every Sunday. We weren't having that! So even if my husband and I had snuck out on a Sunday afternoon date and weren't very hungry, we ate. Most Sunday dinners were done in our family cast iron pot. Her turkey wings were amazing! What she knew is that eating together as a family is what creates your bond. That's where you get to look eye to eye to make sure everybody is okay. The cast iron pot was passed down to my mom from my grandmom, and to me from my mom. Every time I think of this pot, I remember, this is us!*



(Photos:
Julie Rainbow)



Theme 2: Local Businesses

Wyck Story:

The Germantown Brewery

OBJECT: Germantown Brewery sign,
c. 1794 (BELOW)



(Photos: Julie Rainbow)

Community Story (Example):

Gathering at the Salon

OBJECT: LeRoi Simmons's salon chair
(BELOW)

I had the unique experience of running a large salon chain. When I separated from that, I went to Africa in 1976, and it changed my mind about working for somebody else. I came back and opened up a small shop. I really benefited from the diversity of people who came in. They would explain where they were coming from. We spent a lot of time calling the library...because of course arguments will come up—it was like the Google of the day. I wasn't the fastest stylist, but it was wonderful interaction. The shop allowed me to set my own time and hours, to volunteer. We all want to have the same things. We want to raise our children, we want to be able to survive, we want to be happy... The thing I found most uplifting here is that it offered me an opportunity to open up a business, and to present ideas and thoughts that would help folk—to be able to sustain ourselves as we helped in this community.

(Sadly, Mr. Simmons passed away not long after this interview.)



Theme 3: Living in a Historic Community

Wyck Story:

The Wyck Rose Garden

OBJECT: Garden plan, 1821

Community Stories:

Multiple community members shared stories related to this historic community, particularly personal experiences and feelings about Germantown historic sites and historical architecture.

Theme 4: Green Space

Wyck Story:

Exploring the
Wissahickon

Objects: Reuben Haines
III's nature suit and
childhood nature journal
(1798) (RIGHT)



Community Stories:

Multiple community members shared stories about their appreciation of the access to nature and parks that Germantown offers, and the role that has played in their lives, growing up or how it is an important part of their reasons for choosing to live here.

Theme 5: Art & Activism

Wyck Story/Object:

The Anti-Slavery Plate (BELOW)

Community Stories:

Multiple community members interviewed were artists, musicians, and/or activists who reflected on the importance of art and activism in the community and in their own lives.



Conclusion

Recommendations

Following are some specific lessons learned through this community storytelling project, particularly the oral history production. Depending on the project:

- **Transcribing audio:** There is a lot of work that needs to take place between an oral history interview being conducted and any portion of the interview being usable for sharing with the public in writing. The audio needs to be transcribed, and copyedited for spelling and punctuation, probably by at least two people. Ideally this should also be done before the transcript would become part of any institutional record, to not perpetuate errors.
- **Quotes vs. written stories:** A direct quote/excerpt from an oral interview is different from a written story. This is something to consider ahead of time, depending on the end use. In this case, when we gave interviewees the chance to review the excerpts we chose, as promised, about half were happy with the excerpted stories as is, but the other half wanted to rewrite, inevitably expanding (and needing to be edited again) and losing some of the quality/feeling of the original oral interview—the way things were phrased/rephrased. This also made the stories less parallel to each other in style as a group—something to be aware of. It is not as cohesive feeling having some direct quotes and some heavily edited.
- **Community approval:** When someone gives an hourlong interview and you are choosing a brief excerpt(s) for a specific end use, they may or may not agree or be happy with the selection(s), in the context of everything they discussed in their interview. Making it clear to interviewees up front how their words will be used (and approximately how many of their words) may help with this—what will dictate selections, etc. Also, consider for the project, is it better to try to get blanket permission/consent from a contributor/interviewee up front, as opposed to having them review/approve final excerpts? Or is this also important that they have the chance to weigh in at the end before excerpts are finalized?
- **Interview questions:** When gathering community stories with a specific goal/end use in mind, it would be helpful if the interview questions are in alignment with that. This will also help with the previous issue, so the interviewee will be aware of how their interview will be used.
- **Review/approval process:** Build in extra time in a project for the community review/editing/approval process, if this is what you have agreed to, especially if you are working to meet a project deadline. As with any time you are contacting a group of people (with various schedules, etc.), some will respond right away, and others will not and may need multiple follow-up attempts/reminders via email, phone, text—some people do not monitor email. And then build in time for back and forth once they respond.

Opportunities

Although the DARE team applied for but did not receive a federal grant to implement a larger digital storytelling project, the collaboration did lead to Wyck receiving a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a related online project (Our Germantown Stories online exhibit). The DARE project has also enabled Wyck to be competitive in other fundraising efforts, such as through PIDC, Philadelphia’s economic development corporation.

The Cultural Planning and Digital Storysharing course (Spring 2020) also produced a database of community resources for future use, through community-based research—data collection and interviews. The courses themselves also stand as models for future community-based efforts. And the project resulted in a collection of multigenerational oral histories (interview audio and transcripts) from diverse community members, sharing experiences living and working in Germantown, that are now part of Wyck’s archives.

Additional Grants

Although the DARE team applied for but did not receive a federal grant to implement a larger digital storytelling project, our collaboration did lead to Wyck receiving a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for a related online project (“Our Germantown Stories” online exhibit, see below). The DARE project has also enabled Wyck to be competitive in other fundraising efforts, such as through PIDC.

Evaluation

As part of the DARE project evaluation, we surveyed the Community Fellows before and after their fellowship, and shared feedback with Wyck to inform future work. In addition to constructive suggestions for the site, feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Project Team

In addition to Drexel Lenfest Center staff (Rosalind Remer, Page Talbott, Bruce Melgary, Melissa Clemmer) and Wyck staff/board (Jennifer Carlson, Kim Staub, Tess Frydman, Sandy Lloyd), the project team included faculty from Drexel’s:

- **Westphal College of Media Arts & Design** (Troy Finamore, Alan Greenberger, Elizabeth Milroy, Glen Muschio, Neville Vakharia)
- **College of Arts and Sciences** (Scott Knowles and Gabriel Rocha)
- **College of Computing & Informatics** (Alex Poole)
- **School of Education** (Aroutis Foster)

The interviews were transcribed by Roman Golebiowski, Drexel University Arts Administration & Museum Leadership Program.

Wyck Community Fellows: Catherine Brown, Chantel Carden, Ann Doley, Lurie Forney, Maleka Fruean, Robert Platt, Julie Rainbow, Zendra Shareef, Steven Taylor.



Drexel students at Mütter Museum.

Ethics of Display:

Examining Ethical Questions of Medical Collections at the Mütter Museum

Winter 2022

Faculty: Sharrona Pearl, PhD, Associate Teaching Professor,
College of Nursing and Health Professions, Drexel University

Supported by Drexel University Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships.

The Challenge

In an interdisciplinary undergraduate course, Ethics of Display, at Drexel University, Dr. Sharrona Pearl and students considered the fraught ethics of putting bodies, medical narratives, and historical details on display, with hands-on practice and examples, in collaboration with the [Mütter Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia](#). Drawing on historical methodology; critical race, gender, and disability studies; and philosophy, the class considered how to reveal what is hidden without violating the rights of those discussed, using materials from the Museum to practice curation/collections stewardship in an ethically responsible way. Students worked with primary sources in the collections and were challenged to produce a related tool/resource for the Museum's prospective use.

Outcomes

Through this course, students learned how to critically discuss the ethics of display of human and non-human artifacts, displaying critical thinking, and developing other skills for applying in their personal and professional practice. As a collaborative partnership with the Mütter Museum, students were also able to present their research, considered in collaboration with Museum staff, to the Museum for their prospective use, including: a brochure addressing ethics of medical archives for the Museum's Medical Library; a proposed draft Living Donor Enhanced Consent Form; a series of questions considering the ethics of replicas; and interpretive content focused on a Philadelphia Black doctor and the founding of the second Black hospital in the United States.

Background

This interdisciplinary course, offered as Special Topics in Health Services Administration (HSAD T380) through Drexel's College of Nursing and Health Professions, was cross listed with History; Science, Technology & Society (STS); and Africana Studies. Initially intended as an opportunity for students to work directly in the Mütter Museum's archives to curate a video or online exhibit of Philadelphia's Black Doctors in History while considering the ethics of display, the primary focus ended up being the ethics of display more broadly. The Mütter is a medical museum in Center City, Philadelphia, containing a collection of anatomical and pathological specimens, wax models, and antique medical equipment.

The course was also taught as a **Community-Based Learning** (CBL) course. Drexel's [Lindy Center for Civic Engagement](#) supports faculty in creating and advocating for Community-Based and Community-Engaged learning (CEL) pedagogy. This pedagogy unites classroom learning, engagement opportunities, group dialogue, and guided introspection to make students more informed, proximate, and reflective about pressing issues that shape society. In these courses and initiatives, student learning takes place in some form beyond the traditional classroom, whether it be through dialogue with guest participants, case studies relevant to community issues, or other forms of experiential or applied learning. There are several different categories of CBL/CEL courses and experiences offered at Drexel, including Foundations; Service Learning; Service Immersion; Side by Side (half Drexel students, half community members); Community Hybrid (on campus and in the community); and Community-Based Research.

Drexel students at Mütter Museum.



Project Description

This 10-week Ethics of Display course (Drexel operates on a quarter system) oriented students to museum work, and included readings on generating big ideas and the history of medicine in museums, as well as anti-Black racism and healthcare in the United States, exhibition ethics, and discussion of the MOVE bombing victims' remains (see Toolkit Bibliography). Students wrote brief Reaction Papers on readings. Other class meetings included guest speakers on the ethics of display, including Riva Lehrer ("Where All Bodies are Exquisite," *The New York Times*, August 9, 2017); Amanda Mahoney (regarding curating the history of medicine and the role of the patient); and Jessica Martucci (regarding public history in practice).

Onsite at the Mütter Museum, the class participated in a curated tour, as well as a discussion on the creation of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital and Training School. They also worked on materials in the Museum, researching and refining their final projects in consultation with curatorial staff. At the end of the course, students presented their projects (in groups), as well as completing a self-assessment of their contributions and the process.

To help plan their final project, students submitted an initial proposal/overview, outlining their big idea, key documents, work plan, medium of the final project, required resources, bibliography, ethical considerations, value as a work of public history, and sample text. They also authored a blog post outlining their project for prospective use on social media. The students presented their proposal to the class, and together brainstormed approaches and ideas. To help improve everyone's projects, and work on giving grounded, thoughtful feedback, the class responded to colleagues' presentations with oral and written feedback. At the end of the course, students presented their final project and discussed the big idea, medium and why it was chosen, implications for public history, ethical considerations for display, research process, next steps for the topic, and bibliography and further readings. For a self-assessment of project contributions and process, students also handed in a 1-2-page paper discussing how the group functioned, their role, and any strengths and weaknesses they observed in the process. They were also evaluated on attendance and participation (including discussion questions).

Primary Source Analysis

Students also completed a Primary Source Analysis assignment to help familiarize themselves with key documents for their final project, as well as practice basic historical skills. They identified a key primary source for their project, and analyzed both the text of the document and its physical context, writing a 1,000-word essay describing the document or source, including:

- Who wrote it, when, and where?
- Why was this document created? What was its purpose?
- Are there important physical properties to the source?
- What can we tell about the perspective and biases of the author(s)? What does the document tell us about the author's opinion of the views of other people? Does the document suggest that the author's point of view was widely shared, or was it controversial and confined to a few people?
- Who is the intended audience? Were there multiple audiences? How might the audience have shaped what the author says? How might the audience(s) have reacted to the document?
- Think carefully about the choice of words and tone of the document. How do the words reflect the author, time, and audience? If the document makes an argument, what strategy does the author use?
- You may want to consider: Comparison to other sources: How are the tone, perspective, and purpose of this document similar or different than others I have read on this topic?
- Historical significance: Overall, how does this document contribute to my understanding of this historical period? What other information might help me better understand the significance of this document?
- Some of these questions apply better to some documents than others. Choose the questions (it could be several) that you think can best be used to analyze and reveal the meanings of your document. You may choose to answer questions by asking more questions. I suggest beginning your analysis by identifying and interpreting/analyzing authorship and when the document was created get the basic contextual information down first before you proceed.

Students' final group projects included:

- **The Historical Medical Library (HML) – Addressing the Ethics of Medical Archives:** This group created a brochure for the College of Physicians' HML, including sections on: Welcome to the HML (introduction with statement about inclusivity and equity, and outdated and problematic language in archival materials); Content warning/before you research; What is the HML doing to address outdated language in its collections?; Ethical considerations for researchers; and Further reading (links for writing about people with disabilities, a crowdsourced database of Library of Congress subject headings deemed outdated/offensive, etc.). The brochure also included QR codes for accessing digital and text-to-speech versions.
- **Living Donor Enhanced Consent Form:** This group researched and designed a form for the Museum's suggested use, giving living donors donating to the Museum the opportunity to explicitly and officially convey their personal preferences, while they are still living, with regard to how their human/medical donation is used by the Museum in perpetuity. The form included a preface and sections (with yes/no questions for consent) on imaging (including copyright law); medical use (potential research); commercial use (including museum website, catalog, gift shop and museum/institutional loan/promotional); educational, research-oriented, and publication use (as well as creation of replicas and donor's note); and an addendum, including donor privacy questions and a closing statement.
- **Ethics of Replicas:** This group produced a poster displaying questions related to the ethics of replicas (particularly in the context of this medical museum). The poster asked: What is the intent of the original or replica?, with a series of questions for considering replication and implications with regard to doing harm, legality, morality, violating policy, and meeting staff/community expectations.
- **Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital and Training School for Nurses:** This group produced content for a digital exhibit, including interpretive text (and related historical artifacts/images) about Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell (1856-1946)—the first African American to earn a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania and leading figure in the founding of this Hospital and School—and the founding of the Hospital/School in 1895. The second Black hospital in the United States, it not only treated African-American patients, but also offered internships to Black doctors and nursing training to Black women. Interpretation also addressed systemic racism in the United States' healthcare system.

Drexel students at Mütter Museum.



Conclusion

Recommendations

- In planning, explore and discuss shared goals with the partner organization, and consider how these goals could inform the focus and scope of the course/projects, which could be more narrow or broad. In this case, the original focus was Black doctors, but the course shifted to a focus on the ethics of display/museum practice more broadly; an exhibit related to Black doctors ended up being only one project, rather than the whole focus.
- Complete a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the partner organization up front, to ensure you are in agreement on the intended actions and to establish clear expectations on both sides. On a related note, the Museum staff in this case made themselves available to students for consultation outside class hours; this went above and beyond expectations, but helped enormously, especially given Covid-related constraints that also affected access to material.
- If the course/projects might involve any social media communications, have a clear discussion about this. Partners/institutions may have varying in-house rules and styles, and the issue of consent may need to be considered, particularly on the part of students if the course or their work is shared publicly.

Opportunities

Dr. Pearl is hoping to have the opportunity to teach future sections of this course, Ethics of Display, in collaboration with other partner institutions/collections. As the course framework for teaching and learning could be applied in a range of contexts, other potential partners locally might include the Atwater Kent Collection at Drexel University (collection of the former Philadelphia History Museum, strong in medical-related artifacts/archives) or the Science History Institute in Philadelphia.



Drexel students at Mütter Museum.

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