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# A Plan for Progress, Preservation, and Presentation at the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center

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A Plan for Progress, Preservation, and Presentation at the

Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center


by


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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

**Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, the City of Safety Harbor and my major professor, Dr. Thomas J. Pluckhahn. I would also like to acknowledge all the love and support I have received from my family and friends throughout this process without whom I would have not finished this paper. Thank you to the USF Applied Anthropology 2018-2020 master's degree cohort for being some of the best friends I have ever had. And of course, I would like to acknowledge the support of my favorite furry study buddy – Rosco the cat – without whom I would be a sad and lonely graduate student. To my co-workers at both the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center and the Tampa Bay History Center, thank you for all of your patience with me while I completed this work.

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## Abstract

There are numerous ways in which heritage can be managed and presented to the public, such as: physical museums, virtual museums, tours of historic homes, and archaeological parks. For this project, I participated in and observed heritage preservation management under a unique partnership of the City of Safety Harbor recreation department and the Safety Harbor Museum Board in Safety Harbor, Florida. My internship was with the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, primarily under the direction of Shannon Schafer and Christine McWilliams. My initial focus was assisting these two groups with projects specific to the needs of the museum. I was specifically involved in museum programming, community outreach, exhibit preparation, and inventory analysis. The internship began in May 2019 and ended in August 2019.The major project is the development of a new overall museum design that will be used to exhibit the city's rich history and material artifacts. The goal of this thesis is to give the museum a plan that, once implemented, allows the museum to educate residents and tourists about current cultural heritage, archaeological material culture, and the overall history of the city by incorporating diverse perspectives in the preservation and presentation of the city's history.

## Chapter One: Background

The City of Safety Harbor is located on the western shore of upper Tampa Bay, in Pinellas County, Florida (see Figure 1.1) and was incorporated in 1917. The Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center has been a joint effort by the City of Safety Harbor and the Safety Harbor Museum Board since 2012 (Bartz and Anderson 2013). The rich history of Safety Harbor is presented through artifacts from Native Americans to the pioneers of rural Florida to the founders of the early 1900s community of Safety Harbor.

The museum exhibits, typical of small, local museums with limited funding, are in need of updating, reorganizing, as well as additions to make it more appealing to diverse audiences. The museum is currently a "one and done" type experience where once you have been, you do not have a reason to return because the exhibits are small and have remained the same since the 2012 remodel. The interpretations of the exhibits are in dire need of updating with contemporary anthropological perspectives on pre-Columbian, colonial, and later histories.

As part of a recent internship at the at the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, I created a plan to enhance the permanent exhibits to create a story telling experience that allows for engaging, and possibly interactive, self-guided tours. My design, if implemented, will adhere to modern anthropological and museum standards and best practices. Ideally, it will create a reason for people to return to the museum repeatedly. Additionally, I have been working with Dr. Tanasi and the Institute for Digital Exploration (IDEx) lab at the University of South Florida Tampa campus to incorporate digital photogrammetry and digital scanning to create 3D models of select artifacts into a virtual exhibit for the museum. This virtual exhibit will provide greater public

access to the museum collection and invite future research and educational programming opportunities.
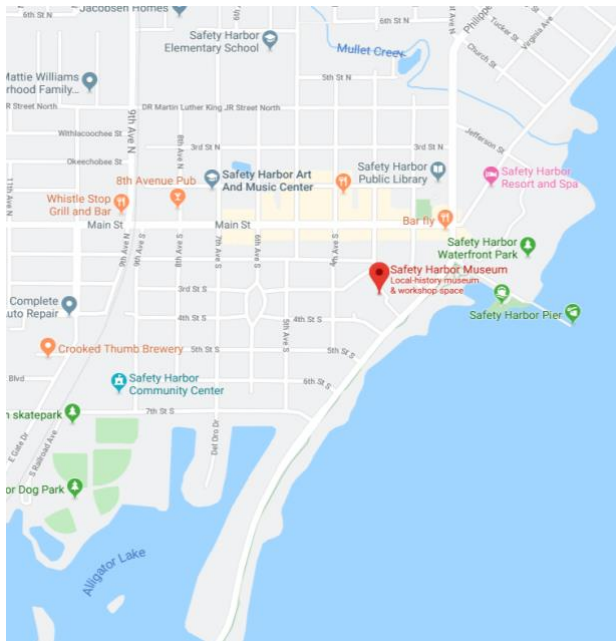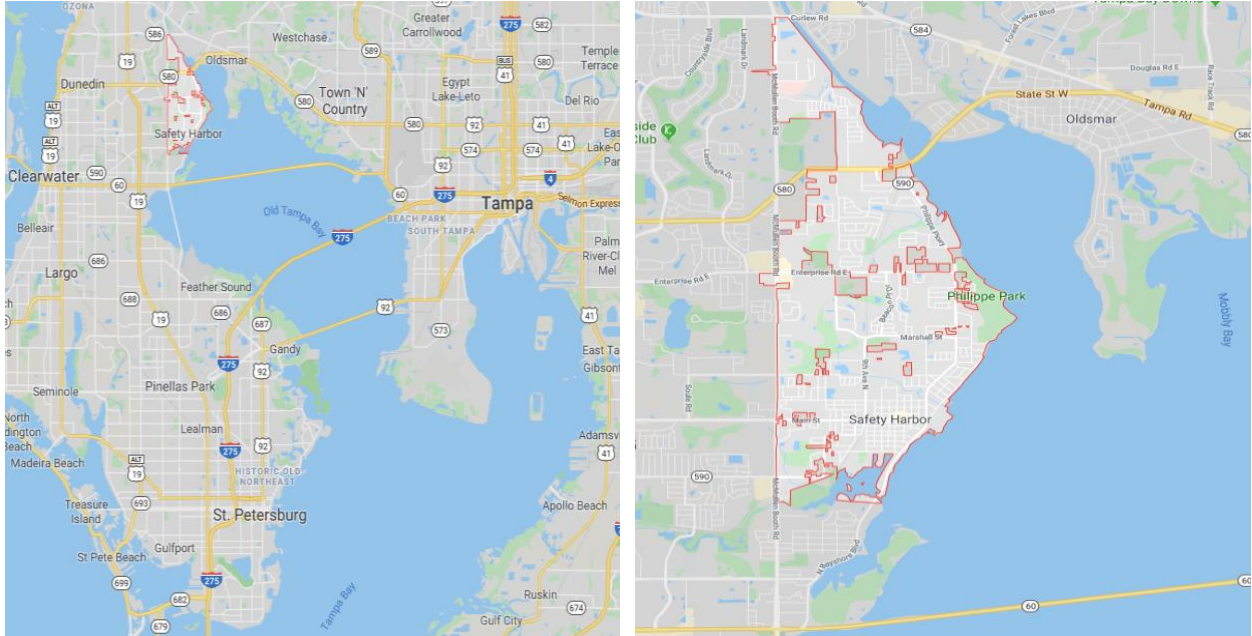


**Figure 1.1:** Google Maps of the City of Safety Harbor.

Without these enhancements to the exhibits, the museum is likely to suffer a lack of attendance and a shortage of funding, as it has in the past. These would not only affect the curation of the artifacts, but the community will lose access to their rich history. My research aims to improve the overall experience of visitors to the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center and increase visitorship for the museum.



**Figure 1.2:** Photos of Current Native American Exhibit.

Toward this end, in the remainder of this chapter I summarize the history of the Safety Harbor Museum and recent archaeology in the area. In Chapter 2, I will give an overview on previous literature on interpretation, public archaeology, museum archaeology and digital archaeology. In Chapter 3, I focus on the plan I have put together for Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center and suggestions for updates and changes to the current exhibit interpretation and design. And finally, in Chapter 4 I provide some general recommended changes and future projects for the museum.

### *History of the Museum*

The Safety Harbor Area Historical Society Inc. (SHAHS) was chartered on June 30, 1965. Archaeological excavations were conducted by the local historical society during the 1960s and

1970s. In 1969, the organization obtained a storage space for their artifacts and an exhibit area. The space was originally open on Monday evenings for the public to visit (Bartz and Anderson 2013). In 1978 the Safety Harbor Museum of History and Fine Arts, as it was known at the time, was relocated to its current location on Bayshore Boulevard.

The museum board acquired several collections over the next few years. In 1979, the museum acquired over 1,500 southeastern Mississippian artifacts, now known as the Eugene Powell Collection. This collection was a personal collection that contains beautifully crafted Mississippian period artifacts without any accompanying archaeological records. A small portion of the Nuestra Senora de Atocha shipwreck of 1622 collection was permanently loaned to the museum in 1980 by the State of Florida.

In 1990, the name of the museum changed to The Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History and renovations were made by adding office space, a storage room, and a space for visiting exhibits. Additional renovations were completed in 1993 (Bartz and Anderson 2013).



**Figure 1.3**: Photo of Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center

Over the years, there have been a few updates to the exhibits with a major renovation to the infrastructure and a name change from the "Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History" in 2012 during the "repackaging" of the museum (Bartz and Anderson 2013). The Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center incorporates all of this rich history and more into their exhibits through visual displays of artifacts, historical documents, and interpretive displays created by previous school projects.

The museum has a long history of financial struggles. In 1984 the museum had a record of $315.00 in funds and sought assistance from the city. In 1988, the museum board once again approached the city about funding, this time for help funding the salary of a full-time director. They were instead offered $4,700.00 for operating expenses. It was not until 1990 that the board approved a salary of $300 per month to fund the first paid museum employee (Bartz and Anderson 2013). Two state grants were received by the museum that year as well. Small donations have been made to the museum over the years for repairs and special projects. In 2007, cancellation of grants from both the state and county resulted in the inability to continue to pay a full-time director. Since 2007, the museum board has held an annual fundraiser known as "Chalk Fest" and is the primary source of funding for the museum board. Negotiations began in 2011 between the City of Safety Harbor and the museum board to partner together for permanent funding of the day to day operations of the museum and in 2012 an agreement was finalized. The museum was re-opened on December 7, 2012 as the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center (Bartz and Anderson 2013).

Since the 2012 partnership, the museum has seen a very slow rise in visitorship (see Figure 1.4), peaking in the 2016-2017 fiscal year which corresponded with the Safety Harbor centennial anniversary. More recently, visitorship seems to have begun to plateau, with only 19 more visitors

in 2017-2018 than in 2015-2016 (City of Safety Harbor). This could be for a variety of reasons. Perhaps there is a lack of interest in programming offered or maybe visitors do not return because the exhibits have remained unchanged. Additionally, the museum is not well advertised, and the location is hard to find for visitors unfamiliar with the area. It is also possible that larger structural forces are to blame. Interest in local history could be fading more generally. Without more information from visitors we may never know the answers. But we can take measures to grow visitorship to the museum. The visitor data provided by the city is not terribly accurate, and accounts for all visitors who contribute donations but does not always account for visitors who choose not to donate. Visitor data has not been recorded by the city for fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 at the time of this report.
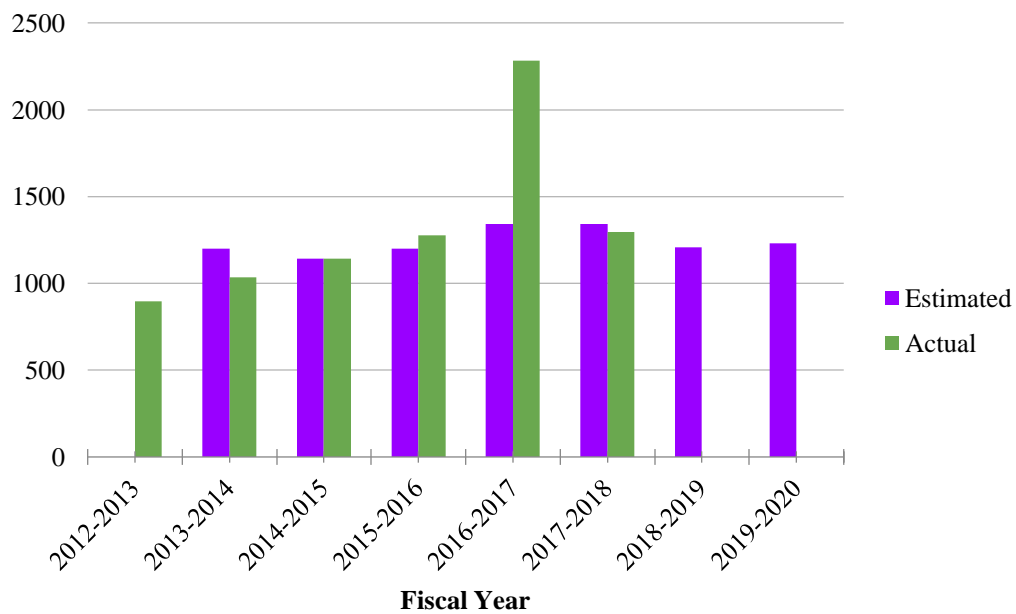


**Figure 1.4:** Visitor data trends since 2012 provided by the City of Safety Harbor.

As part of a recent internship at the at the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, I created a plan to enhance the permanent exhibits to create a story telling experience that allows for

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engaging, and possibly interactive, self-guided tours. My design, if implemented, will adhere to modern anthropological and museum standards and best practices. Ideally, it will create a reason for people to return to the museum repeatedly.

Certainly, the current interpretation of the museum's exhibits needs to be revamped with up-to-date anthropological perspectives reflecting the goals of public archaeology and the heritage studies standards of local history. Museum exhibits and displays are often the sole way most people interact with real objects and the concepts associated with them (Swain 2007:4). It is important to display the artifacts within their context in order to communicate the chosen interpretive narrative. My focus for these updates is in the organization, current anthropological theory, and the latest museum standards for the current displays as well as an incorporation of histories that have been previously omitted from the museum.

The museum currently advertises a focus on "10,000 years of history" related to Safety Harbor and the surrounding region with exhibits on "Paleo-Florida," "Tocobaga Indians," "Odet Philippe," "Florida in the Civil War," "Espiritu Santo Springs," and "Early Safety Harbor." The museum displays are outdated. They are dark, poorly arranged, and lack any new research or theory regarding the archaeology, cultures, and history of the region. There is sometimes too much focus on certain moments in Safety Harbor history, with little to no focus on other moments, people, and cultures altogether. The overall theme of the museum displays is confusing. It does not currently have a strong central theme or sequential pathway for self-guided tours (see Figure 1.5). It can be hard to determine the purpose or mission of the museum based on the random assortment of artifacts and over-filled displays that are included in the museum.

**KEY**
- Native American (Tocobaga)
- Pioneer / Odet Phillippe
- Incorporatio of City
- Mid-Late 1900s
- War / Military
- Recent history
- Boot Ranch
- Native American—Not Florida
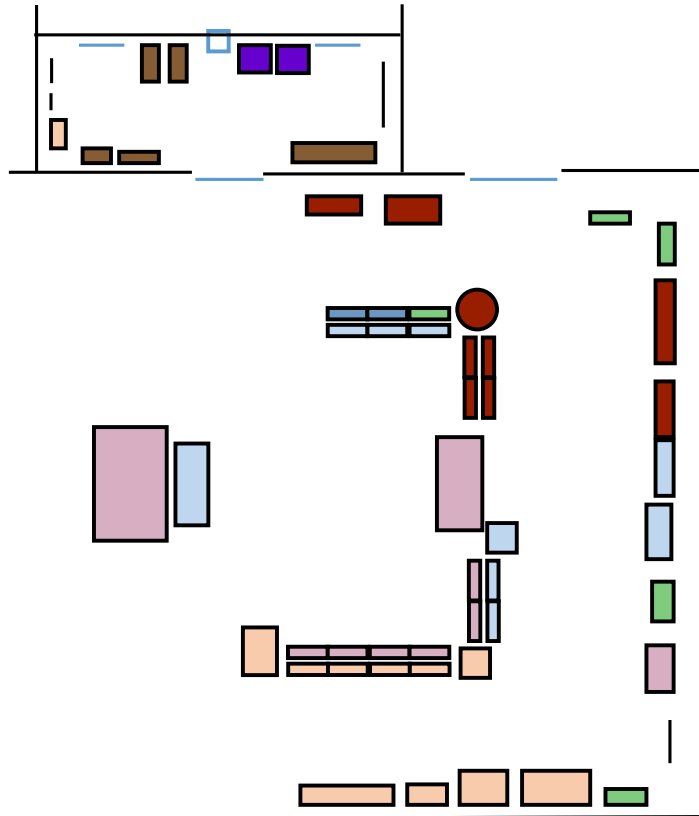
**Figure 1.5:** Current displays and fixtures.

Typical of small, local museums with limited funding, the exhibits are in need of updating, reorganizing, as well as additions to make them more appealing to diverse audiences. In this report, I offer suggestions for the reorganization of the current museum exhibits. My plan addresses the missing theme, non-sequential exhibit layout and the lack of but also the outdated displays and missing history.

### *Historical Background*

The Safety Harbor area was occupied by indigenous peoples from the late Pleistocene through the Spanish and British colonial periods. Beginning in the 16th century, Spanish colonizers, and later British colonizers, invaded La Florida with the intention of finding gold, colonizing the region, and Christianizing the Native people. Self-emancipated and runaway enslaved people made their way to the colony as early as 1515 and continued to relocate here

through the 1700s (Dixon and Twyman 2014:8). By the 17th century, Creeks and Seminoles from the southeastern United States migrated to the Spanish Florida territory. In Tampa, Fort Brooke "became one of the principal forts for the prosecution of the war against the Seminoles" (DeFoor 1997:35). After the passing of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842, many pioneers began to make the Florida territory their home. In the forty years between the 1870 United States Census and the 1910 United States Census, Florida's resident population increased from 187,748 people to 752,619 people. Over the same time period, Tampa's resident population rose from 796 people to 37,782 people (U.S. Census Bureau). People from all over the world were coming to Florida with the hope of a better life. The new residents of Safety Harbor were no exception.

Present day Safety Harbor, Florida was occupied by pre-Columbian groups prior to the first European contact in 1528, when the expedition of Panfilo de Narváez made landfall somewhere in the Tampa Bay region. Archaeological evidence for the Safety Harbor culture corroborates with accounts from Hernando de Soto's 1539 expedition. De Soto described his landing at Ucita, a Tocobaga village that was probably located on the south side of the bay, as a village of "seven or eight timber houses covered with thatch, the chief's house was on a mound near the beach, and a temple on the other end of town" (Griffin and Bullen 1950:31). However, in 1567 when Pedro Menéndez de Avilés landed in Florida, he visited a different Tocobaga village with similar architectural styles, the likely Safety Harbor Site (8PI2) on the northern edge of the bay. Menéndez saw at least 1,500 warriors according to Spanish sources with an estimated total population of 7,000 Tocobaga Indians based on all Spanish accounts. Based on the size, this would have likely been the chief's village (Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society 1994:13; Griffin and Bullen 1950:31).

The first Africans were brought to Florida as early as the 16th century by Spanish explorers, though they tend to "remain largely 'invisible' in the historical literature… due, in part, to the difficulty of the sources…and in part to the lack of interest among earlier scholars" (Landers 2013:179). Narváez brought enslaved people on his failed expedition. One of these, Estevan, was among the only survivors; he and a few comrades managed to walk the Gulf Coast all the way to the Spanish settlements in Mexico, surviving by learning the language of the native peoples (Landers 2013:181). Africans, both free and enslaved, were included in the conquest and settlement of La Florida.

In the 17th century, La Florida was declared sanctuary for enslaved runaways beginning with fugitives from Barbados. Charles II's Royal Policy of 1693 granted them freedom "on the basis of religious conversion" (Landers 2013:184). This was done out of retaliation for the establishment of Charles Town as part of the British colonies in 1670 by English planters from Barbados.

During Florida's British Period (1763 – 1784) black freedom was almost impossible as plantations similar to those in Georgia and South Carolina were being established for the production of "indigo, rice, sugar, and sea island cotton" and Florida government officials adopted similar slave codes (Landers 2013:186). As the Revolutionary War concluded and the 19th century began, Florida was retroceded back to the Spanish. By this time, the Creek had dispersed throughout Florida. They became the foundation for what was later known as the Seminole Nation. Many enslaved black runaways from the English settlements had relocated to Florida and "found sanctuary among the Seminole nation" and through the previous 1693 policy. Those who found themselves among the Seminole became known as Maroons. They used a language that was a hybrid with the creole also spoken by the Gullah people of South Carolina. They lived in separate

villages but were establishing close relationships with the Seminole nation and other native groups in the area. (Dixon and Twyman 2014:8-12).

In 1814, General Andrew Jackson commanded troops to invade Florida and capture the enslaved runaways. This was the beginning of the First Seminole War and would cause death and destruction throughout the territory for several years. In 1818 La Florida was ceded once again to the British under the Transcontinental Treaty. But it was not until 1821 that Spain gave up full control and Florida became a United States of America territory. The Second Seminole War would begin in 1835 with the Battle of Dade and would cause suffering amongst the Seminole Nation. The war ended in 1842 with the capture and removal of a large portion of the Seminole population (Dixon and Twyman 2014:8-12). Following the Second Seminole War, the United States Congress passed the Armed Occupation Act in 1842 which led to the settlement of the Pinellas peninsula, on the western edge of Tampa Bay, as well as the rest of Florida. This Act was meant to encourage population growth of white settlers in Florida and to "further pressure any remaining Seminole to leave" (Schafer 2013:230). The Third Seminole War began in 1855 and continued in south Florida until 1858, resulting in most remaining Seminoles retreating deep into the Everglades.

Odet Philippe and his family were some of the early Florida pioneers. Philippe was granted citizenship in the United States on January 7, 1829 in Charleston, South Carolina (DeFoor 1997:7). Prior to his arrival in the United States, Philippe's whereabouts are unknown and archival records have not yet been recovered from outside of the United States. Philippe resided in Key West before taking up residence in the Tampa Bay Area (DeFoor 1997:7). According to the historical record, Philippe was drawn to the Tampa area at a time of industrialization and militarization; Florida was a place "any man…can make a fortune" (DeFoor 1997:36). The 1840 United States census listed Philippe as one of nineteen heads of household in Hillsborough County who resided near Fort

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Brooke where he was actively involved in the slave trade and trade deals with the Seminoles (DeFoor 1997:40). In 1842, Philippe filed a claim for 160 acres of land in Pinellas County. According to his 1844 trust, he owned "four houses, numerous enslaved people, cattle, hogs, and hunting dogs, as well as a wagon and his plantation at St. Helena" (DeFoor 1997:42-43). St. Helena was located just to the north of the city of Safety Harbor in present-day Philippe Park. He died in 1869 and a memorial grave marker is located at Philippe Park in Safety Harbor; however his true burial site remains unknown (Griffin and Bullen 1950:7-8).

Over the years the population grew in this area as people relocated to Florida for new opportunities and better health. Espiritu Santo Springs was one of the main attractions for the new residents of this area with its "healing powers." In 1917, Safety Harbor was incorporated as a city and was quickly devastated by a fire that took out half of Main Street. In the early 1920s the Florida Land Boom allowed for new construction throughout the city including the St. James Hotel. Additionally, the mineral springs were commercialized The Safety Harbor Spa was established surrounding the springs popularization. The Great Depression hit Safety Harbor hard and the city declared bankruptcy. After World War II, Dr. Salem Baranoff invested in Safety Harbor, purchasing the spa, library and other businesses to help his new hometown flourish (Firschein and Kepner 2013). The Philippe land was acquired in 1948 by Pinellas County for the purposes of a public park (Griffin and Bullen 1950:7-8).

*Archaeology in Safety Harbor*

The Safety Harbor site (8PI2) in Philippe Park preserves the remains of a late prehistoric settlement that is hypothesized to represent the remains of the town of Tocobaga. There have been many archaeological excavations carried out at this site since Matthew W. Stirling's initial excavation in 1929. Stirling excavated over 100 burials from the burial mound at the site. Included

with these burials were a number of ceramic vessels, as well as some historic trade goods (Stirling 1930:167-172). Later, Gordon Willey (1949) examined the pottery from Stirling's excavations and used it to define the Safety Harbor pottery types and culture. In August of 1948 and again in August of 1949, excavations were conducted by John W. Griffin and Ripley P. Bullen and the Florida Park Service in the large platform mound and in the village area (Griffin and Bullen 1950:8). Safety Harbor and Leon-Jefferson type artifacts were recovered (Mitchem 1989:52).

The SHAHS conducted several excavations at the Safety Harbor site in the 1960s, some in collaboration with a group named "The Searchers" (Bartz and Anderson 2013). Around this same time the historical importance of the site was officially recognized with its designation as a National Historic Monument.

Dr. Thomas Pluckhahn and the University of South Florida (USF) archaeological field school investigated the site in 2010 and again in 2019 (Pluckhahn 2018). The reporting of these investigations is still in progress, but preliminary data reveal areas of settlement by both Native peoples and the Spanish, as well as the habitations of Philippe and his enslaved laborers.

In 1989, the Suncoast Archaeological and Paleontological Society completed test excavations at the Safety Harbor Museum Site (8PI1693). This investigation uncovered evidence of both Native American settlement and the remains of the Bayshore Hotel, which formerly existed on the site but burned to the ground in 1908 (Bartz and Anderson 2013). The death of the principal investigator Edward Denslow delayed publication of the results until 1996 (SAS 1996). The CGCAS completed a second excavation here in 1994. Prehistoric and historic materials were found as well as "burn features in the soil" (CGCAS 1994:3). Many of the artifacts recovered from the 1994 excavation are currently on display at the museum (see Figure 1.6).

**Figure 1.6:** Artifacts recovered from excavations at the Safety Harbor Museum Site (8PI1693)

Efforts are being made to recover, preserve, and promote the histories of local African American cemeteries throughout the Tampa Bay area. The Whispering Souls African American Cemetery Restoration Project Non-Profit has been collaborating with the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) to collect ground penetrating radar (GPR) data in order to help identify graves at the historic Safety Harbor cemetery site. Results from the survey show 40 to 50 grave-like disturbances as well as larger disturbed areas that are harder to interpret (O'Sullivan 2019). The list provided by the cemetery group shows 21 known burials and about 50 other possible names of individuals thought to have been buried here (Lou Claudio, personal communication 2019; Whispering Souls Cemetery Group, Inc. 2019).

The last person to be buried at the cemetery was in 1973. Since then the cemetery has become overgrown and forgotten. There is very little documentation about the history of the cemetery or

who is buried there. Many markers do no correspond with the actual burials. Some of the graves were likely relocated when the subdivision was purchased by the Alfred and Louise Ehle in the early 1950s (Firschein and Kepner 2013:131). Many of the graves, including the grave of Charlie Smith's, are no longer marked. It is a situation that the Whispering Souls Cemetery group is ready to resolve (Castillo 2017). This information is being presented in February 2020 at the museum's "Creative Conversations" series panel regarding forgotten African American cemeteries for Black History Month.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

*What is Interpretation?*

As the current interpretations at the museum date to 2012 or before, and have not since been updated, the museum's exhibits need to be revamped with up-to-date anthropological perspectives on the local history. The museum staff is ready for a fresh interpretation and reorganization of the exhibits to be implemented. Freeman Tilden was one of the first people to define interpretation, with his publication of *Interpreting Our Heritage* in 1957; his guide has been utilized by the National Park Service, museums, battlefields, and historic homes and sites for over fifty years. Tilden defined six fundamental principles to guide interpretation, which he defines as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" (Tilden 2007:33). The most important points to take from Tilden's six fundamental principles of interpretation are that interpretation is more than information; it should be provocative, relevant, present the whole, and should be presented at different developmentally appropriate levels for the audience at hand (2007:34-35). Tilden's mantra for interpretation: "through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection", will be employed throughout Public Archaeology and Museum Anthropology as a way to determine successful methods of interpretation. (Ham 2013:3).

Mark Leone's work in interpreting historic Annapolis is widely considered a seminal case study in public archaeology and local historical interpretation. Concerned by the "inevitability

narrative" being told at many of the popular historic sites--in that it was inevitable that the colonial lifestyle lead to the present-day way of life--Leone developed a theory of critical archaeological interpretation that followed Tilden's fourth principle with the goal to "provoke some viewers into a heightened consciousness of their own position" (Leone 1995:254). He applied this theory to his work at the Annapolis site and his interpretive tours were very popular and allowed for city support of the protection of the archaeological site. Since it is not difficult in local settings to "identify living people who want to know more about a past they see in some way as their own" (Leone 1995:262), Leone and his team were able to create a dialogue with the local African American community and answer questions they had about the local African American heritage at the site. Interpretive archaeology is an applied method of acting on and being active in the world of archaeology.

### *Public Archaeology*

In 1787, Thomas Jefferson "spurred public interest in Native American culture" with the excavation of a prehistoric Indian mound on his Virginia property (Jameson 2004:22). The first publicly supported archaeological program emerged in 1881 as the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology. In the 1930s, the New Deal established government programs that supported archaeological work. Furthermore, the Historic Sites Act of 1935 required that the Department of Interior develop educational programs and services for the purposes of making facts and information about historical sites and resources available to the public (Jameson 2004:22-29).

However, it was not until 1972 that the term 'public archaeology' was used by Charles McGimsey (Merriman 2004a:3). At the time, the term was primarily associated with cultural resource management (CRM) work and referred to archaeologists managing cultural resources "on behalf of" the public. It has since evolved to encompass "educational archaeology and public

interpretation in public arenas such as schools, parks, and museums" (Merriman 2004a:3-4). Along with the emphasis on public engagement has come an increased understanding of the necessity of critically examining our own best practices of interpretation. As Merriman (2004a:15) observed, "it is now time to study that relationship [with the public] with the same degree of rigour as archaeologists study societies of the past" supporting the movement of public archaeology becoming a true subdiscipline of archaeology. In the past ten years, the field of public archaeology has diversified. Gabriel Moshenska (2017), in his recently edited volume of *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology*, identifies seven types of public archaeology: archaeologists who work with the public, archaeology by the public, public sector archaeology, archaeological education, open archaeology, popular archaeology, and academic archaeology (Moshenka 2007:6). His definition of public archaeology is "practice and scholarship where archaeology meets the world" (Moshenka 2007:3). The simplicity of this definition allows for the most inclusion of the large spectrum of people, places, and publics that work together to practice public archaeology. Smardz (2004:7) made a defining statement towards public archaeology saying that we need to "stop taking archaeology to the public for archaeology's sake and start doing it to meet the general public's educational, social, and cultural needs." Public archaeology has begun allowing the public to be active in the decision-making process. This advancement in public archaeology emphasizes the "process of archaeology as a means to directly involve and educate the public in the discovery and experience of the past. It has become a vehicle for making the past tangible and relevant to the present." (Stottman 2010: 4). This co-creative process has been proven to work well in a museum setting. One method of this would be the Participatory Museum set forth by Nina Simon. She uses citizen science to define a museum as a place where "visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content" (Bollwerk, et al. 2015:180).

It is through public archaeology that archaeology "can consciously be used to benefit contemporary communities and perhaps create positive change or help solve modern problems" (Stottman 2010:3). Activist archaeology finds its roots in public archaeology when it is used "to affect change in and advocate for contemporary communities, not as the archaeologist sees it but as the community itself sees it" (Stottman 2010:8). Directly or indirectly, archaeology can be used as an agent for change in benefitting society. As Stottoman (2010:6), observes with regard to Public Archaeology, CRM, and activist archaeology:

> whatever we call it, when we do archaeology, we are not alone. There is so much more at stake than our research objectives. There are politics, economics, and a community context in which we work that we cannot ignore. We really should view ourselves as partners in a much larger web of community.

According to Merriman, "museums are a significant and powerful vehicle for the public construction of the past and for public involvement in archaeology" (2004:85). Museums are generally seen as an authoritative figure in terms of the public perception and scholarship. In terms of public archaeology, museums have begun to be places of discovery and learning through educational outreach programs, loan boxes, summer camps and public programming. As archaeologists begin embracing museums as a platform to reach the public, we can begin incorporating a museum-based focus in public archaeology (Merriman 2004b:85-104).

*Museum Archaeology*

Since the beginning, museums have been associated with the artifacts, or treasures, of ancient civilizations. It is in museums that most people come in contact with archaeology for the first time. In local museums, local archaeology is on display primarily for the local community but also for visiting audiences. According to Hedley Swain (2007:5), an expert in museum archaeology, "An interest in the past seems universal – how it is negotiated by different presents may change, but the raw material will maintain its fascination". Over the years, local communities

have become more involved in the curation and investigation of artifacts in museums. They have a personal, vested interest in the interpretation. I think Swain described it best when he said, "a museum archaeology experience can be anything from a visit to the Louvre, to a demonstration of prehistoric basketry at a small local museum" (Swain 2007:6). The size of the museum does not matter as much as the level of interpretation. Museums only exist as long as a public interest justifies their existence (Swain 2007:7); thus, they must evolve and enhance their exhibits to continue to maintain public interest. It is important that museum staff take public opinion seriously as "it is the main way by which museums are judged: how many visitors they have. Like it or not, numbers of users will always be a crude but effective measure of success. This, in turn, will be used in terms of market forces as a measure of sustainability" (Swain 2007:196). Visitor evaluations and comment cards can be useful tools for museum staff.

> Regional archaeology museums are defined as:
>
> museums, and displays within museums, that illustrate and interpret the prehistory and early history of a particular locality, region, or nation…In North America and Australasia, the discontinuous link between modern, white-dominated culture and prehistoric Indigenous culture makes such museums more problematic, and also these become more often linked to ethnography…These museums tend to be actively collecting fieldwork in their regions. The rapid increase in fieldwork due to the linkage of archaeology to building development means that, particularly in Europe and North American, collections are often growing rapidly and in an unsustainable way (Swain 2007:36-37).

In line with Tilden's forth principle, one of the most important steps in developing a museum exhibit or gallery is to have a strong, thought-provoking theme. Museum visitors are typically considered a non-captive audience, meaning they have no incentive to pay attention or learn something. In order to best hold the attention of a non-captive audience, museums must engage with their audience through interpretation that has a theme, is organized, is relevant and is enjoyable. These are the basic elements that if done well, successfully communicate information

to the non-captive audience (Ham 2013:12-14). Ham explains that "the trouble with a lot of interpretation is that it's guided by only a topic" and many museums have no focus or direction (2013:23). A theme is what gives your interpretation a direction that inevitably steams from the "so what?" question. In order to provoke your non-captive audience into a critical-thinking audience, you have to guide them towards the big picture or a moral to the story. Your theme and your exhibits should be organized in a sequential pattern that is easy to follow. Adapting your theme to connect with universal concepts is one way to make it relevant. Your theme and exhibits should be engaging and entertaining, that is what makes them enjoyable to your audience (Ham 2013:24-49).

It is important to be aware that when exhibits are being created, we are projecting assumptions onto artifacts from other cultures as it "inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it" (Lavine and Karp 1991:1). Historically, "Eurocentric and Western perspective dominates museums, both in terms of their content and philosophy in the West, and in the approach taken to museums in the non-Western world" but as the discipline moves towards a more inclusive narrative approach, we can use new methods of interpretation (Swain 2007:69). When writing text panels, we must make clear that these artifacts in their original environment were probably not perceived in the way in which they are interpreted in a contemporary museum setting. When it comes to interpretation of objects on display, "there is a danger that objects are given too much prominence, or too little, through the vagaries of preservation. It is almost impossible not to give the impression that early prehistoric people only used stone tools and that Neolithic farmers only used broken pots, and green knives, and that axes weighed down early metallurgists" (Swain 2007:217-218).

Nevertheless, it is important to provide context and resources that allow for the audience to experience the artifacts in a way that will provoke learning and critical thinking (Lavine and Karp 1991:20-23). There is now a movement in exhibit design away from the "book on a wall" approach to text paneling. It has been proven through evaluations that "most visitors were simply not reading it" (Swain 2007:219). Above all else, the museum is a vessel for artifacts that are a visual representation of the past. It is important to understand that museums have a long history of encouraging attention and visual interest to the objects themselves. Early museum exhibits were more concerned with the aesthetics, with little to no attention being given to the historical or cultural context of the artifact. Artifacts would be sorted based on their origin: nature or culture. The museum effect of "turning all objects into works of art" can be seen throughout history and even prehistory where humans created a separate space for art and culture (Alpers 1991:26). Rather than working against the museum effect, Alpers suggests we work with it using the visibility of an object to create a culturally informing exhibit. This will not always work. Sometimes objects are not exhibited in a way that allows for this, much like the current arrangement at the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center (Alpers 1992:27).

When it comes to museum archaeology, "one of the primary reasons that archaeological material is collected, curated, and managed is so that research can take place and new knowledge and ideas about the past developed" (Swain 2007:169-170). For this reason, the archaeological research in museums will be predominantly "collections and object based, although much other research, including field work, has taken place from a museum base" (Swain 2007:169-170). Some of the earliest archaeological collections have lost their context and provenience over the years. Many became individual objects that were sold, traded and "valued on their individual merits" by collectors and early museum curators "often with very vague provenance, if one at all" (Swain

2007:95). Even now, most museum archaeological collections, including that of the Safety Harbor Museum, "continue to be dominated by such material and museum staff struggles not to value such individual items over assemblages of more mundane material with good archaeological provenances" (Swain 2007:95).

## *Digital Archaeology*

Numerous studies have shown that models and reconstructions are popular and effective forms of public interpretation (Economou 2015, Neumuller, et al. 2014; Onol 2008; Wilson et al. 2007). Where is the line between authenticity and imagination when designing reconstructions? Archaeologists and architectural historians debate the merits and ethics of reconstructions. For example, dioramas are often "associated with outdated 'ethnographic' representations of 'primitive' peoples" (Swain 2007:230). When not done carefully, reconstructions may mislead the public by conveying conjecture as truth, by sanitizing the past, and by "freezing" a site in time. As a result of these and other issues, visitors and interpreters alike have become uncomfortable with reconstructions. Still, as Jameson (2004:2) notes, "many educational archaeologists, historians, and park interpreters believe that reconstructions that are well planned and do minimal damage to the archaeological resource are useful and justified as public interpretation tools." Especially when used in combination with other interpretive methods, reconstructions have been proven to produce desirable outcomes (Noble 2004:273-286). It is also important to offer alternative interpretations when presenting reconstructions and dioramas as they are just one possible version based on the archaeological and historical records and supplemented with information from similar sites. It is suggested that, when possible, they be used only as support materials and do not overpower the original artifacts (Swain 2007: 229-230).

In the words of Roland Wells Robbins, known for the original Walden Pond excavation, it should be the goal of archaeology "to make history come alive by digging it up, getting others involved – making something live again in people's imaginations" (Linebaugh 2004: 21-44). It is also becoming common to have interactive, tactual experiences in order to gain and maintain interest (Swain 2007:229-231). Digital Archaeology can be utilized to "tackle old and unanswered research questions about the past with solutions that technologies now offer…[and] the opportunity to ask and address brand new research questions" (Tanasi 2020:14). It is a tool that can be used to engage the audience in "archaeological thinking to enter into conversation with us, and to do archaeology for themselves. Digital Archaeology is necessarily a public archaeology" (Tanasi 2020:2).

Archaeology as a discipline relies on "recognizing and comparing patterns, spotting outliers, identifying relationships and building arguments to forward interpretation" (Llobera 2011:195). For this reason, we should utilize visualization as a way to include the public in archaeology. Visualization in Digital Archaeology and Virtual Museums can be used as method to simplify the complexity of the archaeological message to reach the public through the visual power of images and 3D models, regardless education level, culture and language. It offers a unique way to "capture, represent, manipulate, analyze and model archaeological information" (Llobera 2011:219). We as archaeologists need to "embrace what information science and technologies can provide to archaeology…as active participants" (Llobera 2011:219).

There is a rapidly growing popularity of 3D modelling as a method to educate. Archaeological artifacts are typically fragile and irreplaceable, so they are generally not used in educational programs or in interactive museum experiences. Through the use of Digital Archaeology, 3D models can provide a tangible or interactive learning experience that visitors

may not otherwise get. Replicas, computer technology such as touch tables and haptics, or puzzles are just a few examples of ways to improve the visitor experience (Swain 2007:210-233). Tactile interpretation can not only aid in maintaining the attention of the general public, but it can also allow for additional accessibility for impaired museum visitors who may greatly benefit from such a meaningful experience. Multisensory interaction can greatly improve the overall museum experience for everyone. The aim is not to "replace the traditional museum display, but to enhance the information conveyed about the exhibit" (Onol 2008:103). 3D printing can also be a way to incorporate artifacts and collections into an exhibit that might not otherwise be available in your area. "Digital 3D technology and 3D printing has given archaeologists and museums new tools for research and education" (Awayda 2018). Many larger museums are putting 3D models online for open access to their collections that you may not be able to visit for financial or other reasons. Some of those museums even allow for other institutions to make 3D prints of their models for display and use in exhibits. In 2013, the Smithsonian digitalized a wide range of artifacts from fossils to the Wright Brother's flyer. These artifacts were made available for public view and even printing capabilities for a few dozen models (Mack 2013).

Another way to utilize 3D models in a museum setting would be to use them in the repatriation process of culturally significant objects. Museums can work with indigenous communities to develop an agreement regarding the use of replicas. Replicas of culturally significant objects allows for the public to learn about material culture and the repatriation process. In 2007, the National Museum of Natural History worked with the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe of Wisconsin, the Delaware Nation and the Delaware Tribe of Oklahoma to repatriate a ceremonial pipe. In the process they created a 3D replica that was presented at the official repatriation ceremony for the tribes and copies were given to the tribes so they could educate their tribal

members. They were still able to "address the spiritual concerns with the original by burying it" (Isaac 2015: S288). It is important to note that when making these replicas and presenting them to the public under the terms of the agreement, that it should always be made clear that these are replicas, and that the context of the repatriation should be made clear as well. The co-production of these replicas and the displays within a public gallery allows for the public to be conscious of the challenges and rewards of the diversity of knowledge, production and power of ownership of material culture (Isaac 2015).

With the advances in technology available for museums, the internet has become an additional space for the display of content, collections and additional information. Many museums have created digital extensions of their exhibits. This can be especially useful for temporary or travelling exhibits to highlight or supplement aspects of the physical exhibit. Even when the physical exhibit no longer exists, the digital extension is still available. But then we have to ask, what do we do next? Are there methods of curation for digital information? Do we update these to allow for continued interaction in a post-exhibition experience? Dennis addresses these questions in a recent case study on The Interface Experience Web presence exhibition by the Bard Graduate Center. Alongside the physical exhibition, there was a digital extension that is still live to memorialize the content of the exhibition. While it does not appear to be outdated, much of the information and content is frozen in time to 2014 and 2015. There was no post-exhibition plan for the digital space (Dennis 2018). The internet as an additional, unlimited space has so much potential in cultural heritage projects. And just like with any physical exhibit design, there needs to be a plan for long term sustainability and curation of the digital project. Utilizing the internet as additional museum space, some museums have taken it upon themselves to create virtual museums. In some instances, these virtual museums may even mirror the physical museum. In

2018, the USF Institute for Digital Exploration (IDEx) partnered with the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida with the goal of virtualizing the museum as a digital global sharing project. The museum is "one of the most important cultural heritage sites in Florida" (Tanasi, et al. 2018a:1). Museum virtualization projects are taken on for a variety of reasons but the most common is site preservation. There are so many threats against cultural heritage sites, natural or otherwise, that it is important to preserve as much of it as possible with the technology available to us. Museums can then use these virtualizations as teaching tools or to make available content they might not otherwise have the space to display. Some museums, such as the Cravens Museum, use the concept of virtual museums to allow for global public access to the collection and 3D models. These models and collections can be used as education and outreach opportunities for museums (Awayda 2018).

### *Advocacy and Agency in a Museum Setting*

More often than not, museums have historically portrayed Western societies as being more advanced, civilized, and enlightened than Eastern, native, or "other" traditional societies. They have been perpetuators of the prominent imperialistic conquest narrative. More recently, museums have been working with "ethnic, often local communities and empower[ing] them to construct their own public narrative…[defining] their story…and who they are today" (Dhingra 2016:14). It is becoming common practice in anthropological museums to have collaborative partnerships with descendant communities during the process of redesigning their exhibits. In ethnographic exhibits especially, it is important for communities to have their voice reflected in the displays. "Native American activists have provided trenchant analyses of the broader historical context of colonialism in North America, which many hope will become part of the 'Second Museum Age'" (Harding and Martin 2016:9)

Over the years there has been a great deal of progress in the way in which Anthropology and other disciplines have addressed Native Americans and their cultures. The presence of Native American culture and artifacts began to appear in museums at the same time as "Salvage Anthropology" emerged in the United States; and when Native Americans were in a time of great suffering and removal from their native lands. Many scholars refer to this time as the Native American Holocaust (Lonetree 2012:11). Today Native Americans are more involved in scripting the narrative they are associated with. Thus, they are also now more involved in the development of exhibits and interpretation at museums and heritage sites. As a result, these museum displays are generally becoming more inclusive and collaborative. Such collaborations are part of a movement to decolonize museums with the first goal being "to address the legacies of historical unresolved grief by speaking the hard truths of colonialism and thereby creating spaces for healing and understanding" (Lonetree 2012:5). Many museums and communities feel that emphasizing survival techniques of Native Americans is less upsetting and less offensive, thus it becomes the go-to narrative for many exhibits. Many Native American historians are working to change the discourse and push for the acceptance of the decolonization paradigm (Lonetree 2012:6-7). It is important to be aware that "particularly through dioramas, a museum can freeze people in time and place, fostering stereotypical views" which are detrimental to the public's interpretation of indigenous and descendent communities (Pohawpatchoko, et al. 2017:52). Only since the 1970s have museums began to address the issues of representation and depiction of Native Americans. By the 1990s, Indigenous communities began to establish their own museums within their communities. Today, museums are hiring indigenous curators, archaeologists, and historians to share the stories of their people. Many museums are collaborating with Indigenous communities

to starting inclusivity projects that are mutually beneficial as an effort to decolonize and reform the narratives (Pohawpatchoko, et al. 2017:52-53).

Since the time of Samuel Morton, there has been an interest in the study of human remains. Museums began collecting remains as early as the 1800s. The SHAHS was no exception. For many years, human remains laid dormant in collections storage at the Safety Harbor Museum without being studied or even acknowledged. On December 5, 1981, the remains from the collection were reinterred on the museum grounds and the Treaty of Tocobaga was signed between the Safety Harbor Museum and the council of the United Lenape Band at Nocatee, an Indian tribe with origins in Delaware. The treaty proclaims that the burial mound and the skeletal remains "will never be disturbed or desecrated. The sacred rites performed before the great spirit on this, their holy ground, will be recognized as a part of the heritage of the people that once inhabited this fair land" (The Safety Harbor Museum 1981). A ceremony was performed by the tribe at the internment. By 1990, when the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was instituted, "scholars estimate that museums, federal agencies, and private collectors held anywhere between 300,000 to 2.5 million Native American bodies and untold millions of cultural objects" (Lonetree 2012:12-14). In 1993, more remains were found in the collection. After testing at the University of Florida they were determined to the Native American and were also reinterred in the mound on the museum grounds under the terms of the original pre-NAGPRA treaty. A third collection of Native American bones were found and tested in 2003 and were added to the mound in 2007 with an additional ceremony also under the original treaty. This mound is considered sacred ground and is roped off (Bartz and Anderson 2013). I discuss this more in Chapter 4 with some recommendations for the museum regarding compliance with NAGPRA regulations.

**Figure 2.1:** Treaty of Tocobaga Burial Mound at the Safety Harbor Museum.

Museums and heritage sites have not only had a strong history of mistelling the Native American stories, but also the mistelling or full on neglecting of the stories of the African American histories. These instances have been referred to in some of the more recent literature as "forgotten histories," "hidden histories," "silences" or other similar terminologies and descriptions (Jackson 2010, Jackson 2016b, Karp and Lavine 1991, Landers 2013, Lonetree 212, Stottman 2010, Trouillot 1995, Yelvington 2002). In many cases, stories of enslaved Africans have been told in such a way that barely scratches the surface of their lives. Numerous museums, like the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, have failed to mention African Americans at all in their narrative.

History is written by those who have the power to do so. Museums are no exception. There is power in silencing narratives that do not fit within the niceties many museum goers have come to expect. It is now up to museum and heritage practitioners to "take into account those who would

consider themselves the '(mis)represented Other' as well as, of course, those who benefit by such representations" (Yelvington, et. al. 2002:345). However, it is important when addressing these stories to remember that historically, "Black communities in the United States have a history of resistance to the objectification and commoditization of blackness in museums" (Yelvington, et al. 2002:369). Many African Americans are concerned about how their histories will be told and worry that they will be degrading or de-humanizing. This is why when developing these exhibits to engage the local African American communities in the planning of these exhibits and museums from the beginning.

> As the National Trust for Historic Preservation (2018:3) states, it is vitally important that:...in all projects and in all departments, institutions must be humble and self-aware about their histories, their legacies, and their reputations. Working with descendant communities is about building trust and restoring justice. Working alongside descendants is critical to achieve innovative interpretation and field-advancing research.

## Chapter Three: Museum Organization and Observations

The International Council of Museums defines a museum as:

> a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment (ICOM 2001).

Museums began when individuals and societies decided to share collections of artifacts with the public. From this founding as personally built collections, museums have more recently moved to a broader approach of educational and advocational displays of inclusive cultures. In accordance with this shift, many museums have reexamined their exhibits with a critical lens, while also taking into consideration what the visitors and local communities want and expect when redesigning exhibits.

As Leone suggested (1995:261-263), when working in small, local museums such as the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, it is much easier to work with the community to develop a narrative that is both inclusive of the community and archaeology and history of the site or area. Swain coins the term 'Museum Archaeology' to describe the "discipline of archaeology as it affects museums" and the work museums do to "make archaeology relevant to modern communities" (2007:xv). The Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center in its original founding 1969 was an institution for the storage and display of local archaeological artifacts. Museum archaeology can be a tool of activism if we choose to use it as one whether that be through updating the narrative, incorporating technology as a teaching tool or collaborating with descendant communities to design inclusive stories, exhibits and lesson plans.

The modern regional museum model is explained by Swain through a case study of the Corinium Museum in Cirencester:

> The museum in its current manifestation…has all the ingredients discussed elsewhere of a model modern museum. The rich collections are well-displayed in good-quality, secure, and well-lit cases with ample captions and accompanied by colour-coded attractive graphic panels that use hierarchy of text aimed at a general reading and ability level. The objects are supplemented, possibly slightly overpowered, by sets and reconstructions that use life-size realistic mannequins. In addition, there are computer terminals offering more detailed information about the collections and, in some cases, touch-screen supplementing displays; children's activities and interactives including specialist activity sheets and trails. There is a widespread use of painted reconstructions in a modern style that provide the dominant visual message for the gallery. Consideration has been given to disabled visitors, including some text in braille and tactile exhibits. As a museum dominated by archaeology, there is also some information on archaeological techniques, most notably a reconstruction of an archaeological section showing stratigraphy and finds back through the town's history (Swain 2007:243-244).

The Corinium Museum model described by Swain is reflective of many of the modern, updated museums I have researched and visited that have similar content to the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center and are of similar size, and in some cases even have a similar management and organizational structure. These museums include but are not limited to: The Marco Island Historical Society, The Tampa Bay History Center, The Heyward-Washington Historic House Museum, The Northeast Georgia History Center, The Powder Magazine Museum of Charleston, and Ah-Tha-Thi-Ki Museum. Additionally, many of these elements were discussed as model museum exhibit methods at the Southeastern Museum Conference in 2019. This model is the goal in which the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center should aim for as they work to improve their facilities.

After spending four months at the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center this summer, I have been able to evaluate the current condition of the museum, the artifacts, and displays, and

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the cataloging process for the on-site museum collections. I was unable to evaluate the off-site collections due to logistical issues. The chronology of the museum displays is not sequential and an overall theme has not been established, thus I have written a report for the museum board with suggestions for the reorganization of the museum exhibits and the implementation of a thematic narrative. The museum exhibits, typical of small, local museums with limited funding, are in need of updating, reorganizing, and additions to make them more appealing to more diverse audiences. I have taken the museum's limited budget into consideration in this plan and have prioritized the improvements so that they may be implemented in steps. Additionally, I have compiled a list of grants for small museums that I believe would help support the upgrades that I have included in this report (see Appendix A).

The improvements to the exhibits suggested in this report are based in research; many of the suggestions I make have been utilized successfully in other museums of similar size and with similar content. My research aims to improve the overall visitor experience to the museum and increase daily visitor counts for the museum.

*Recommendations*

In order to properly orient the museum displays, a central theme needs to be established that can be carried throughout the museum as a whole and allow for a more cohesive design to the museum. The current theme of the museum is "10,000 Years of History", which encompasses both regional and local Safety Harbor histories. While this theme encompasses the wide range of exhibits in the museum, it is quite general and not very compelling. This theme does not define a regional focus nor does it have any specific message or learning outcome. It does not answer the "so what?" question or provoke visitors to think more or engage with the local history and heritage.

The first step to defining a theme is to determine what the museum is representative of as a whole. After discussions with the museum staff, the city employees and the museum board members, as well as information based on my own education and research taken into consideration, there is an agreement that  an effort should be made to focus the theme of the museum to the regional history of Safety Harbor and the Tampa Bay area. The staff has always considered the museum a regional history and archaeology museum since the establishment of its first location in 1969. However, there are artifacts on display and large collections cared for by the museum that are outside of the regional scope of the museum that have been donated over the years. Some of these collections, such as the Atocha collection, aid in filling some gaps in the historical information of the Spanish Period. Other collections, such as the Eugene Powell Collection, while full of beautiful and interesting artifacts, have no provenience or context and could potentially misrepresent the histories of local Native groups.



**Figure 3.1:** Current entrance to the permanent museum gallery.

The museum should establish a theme that is simple, relevant and thought-provoking. For this report, I am suggesting that the theme of the museum would be "Safety Harbor: Was it really a safe harbor for all?" This is just one of many directions that the themes of the museum could take. Other suggestions could include: "Safety Harbor: At the edge of Tampa Bay, at the Center of It's History", "Safety Harbor: Where Florida's history meets the wider world", "Safety Harbor: A small town with a long history", "Safety Harbor's Mineral Springs: How healing water made a city", or "Safety Harbor Stories: The people and personalities of Safety Harbor history." The theme is what determines how the gallery should be constructed.

The next consideration for the museum is the layout of the exhibits and how that reflects the overall theme. The current overall museum layout can be perceived as puzzling. The rotating gallery is the first thing guests are exposed to. It is usually occupied by an art exhibition of various sorts and typically unlabeled. In the current museum layout, from the rotating gallery guests can move in a variety of paths, none of which are chronological or otherwise logically ordered.

The layout of the permanent gallery is equally confusing. It does not have a definite beginning or ending point and does not reflect the historic timeline accurately or diverse history of the area. Generally, the museum staff suggest visitors start their self-guided tours with the early Native American exhibit; however, the first thing a visitor encounters is a citrus wagon that is surrounded by an alcove filled with random artifacts with no real description as to their purpose in the display area. Many guests will then venture into the over-filled alcove and explore a random assortment of pioneer era and early 20th century artifacts before exiting the alcove to follow the path behind it, which is where they will then begin exploring the earlier native history of the Safety Harbor region (refer to Figure 1.5). However, others may not, and the intended path is circuitous.

Taking into consideration the size and limitations of the space at the museum, Figure 3.2 represents a museum flow that allows for a more chronological tour of the exhibits and the ability to construct an inclusive and evolving narrative. This new museum layout utilizes only the current display cases and fixtures within the museum for an easy budget friendly transition. Additionally, this kind of flow would allow for easier navigation during the self-guided experience, as "visitor tracking surveys have shown that visitors tend to move through a gallery using the quickest possible route" (Swain 2007:226).
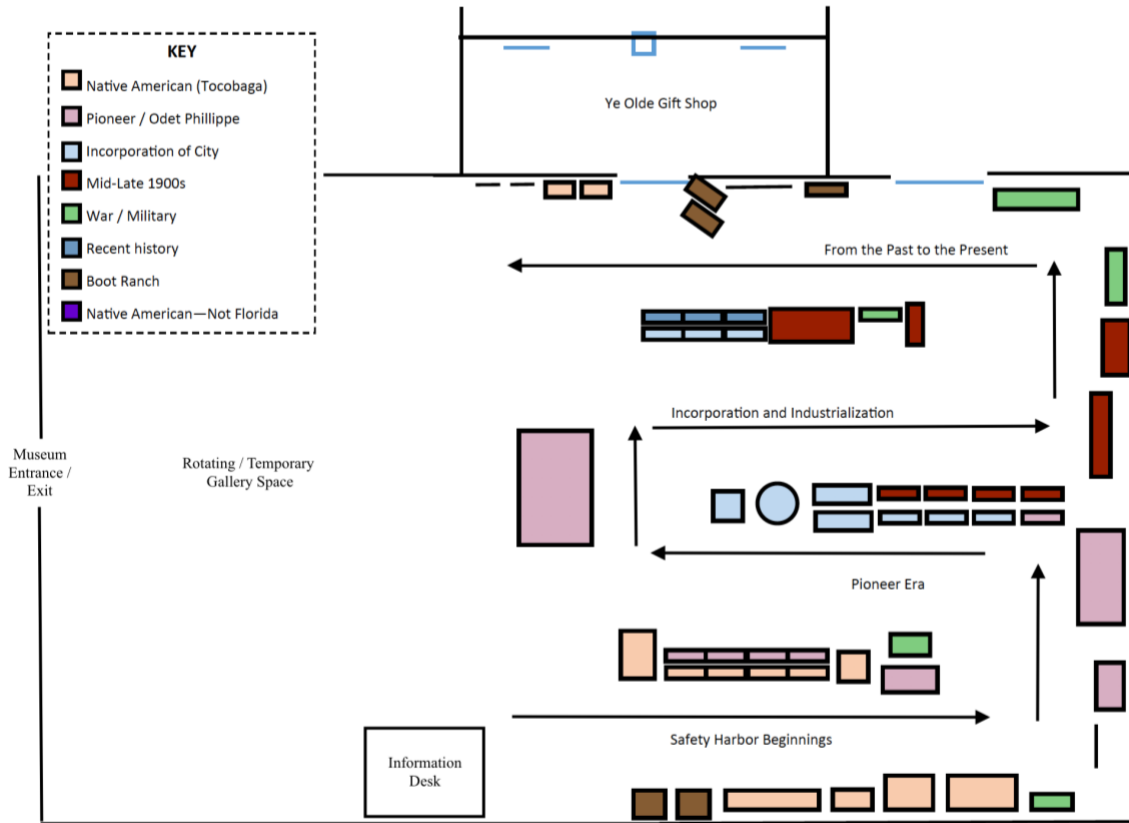


**Figure 3.2:** Reconfiguration of current displays and fixtures.

The design proposes four major topics: "Safety Harbor Beginnings", "Pioneer Era", "Incorporation and Industrialization" and "From the Past to the Present." These four sub-themes

break down the current artifacts in a way that tells the story of Safety Harbor from prehistory to the present. I will break it down to examine what is currently included in the displays, what should be included or excluded, and how these changes play into the overarching theme.

Another other major change in this proposed re-design is the relocation of the gift shop from its current location to the hallway by the restrooms. This area allows for more organized shelving and additionally can allow for the area surrounding the television to be a more functional space for presentations and events. More often than not, museum's house their gift shops near the restrooms. Due to the restrictions of the building and the content of the gift shop, it is my belief that this would be the best location to allow visitors to shop before, during, or after their museum tours, as well as to attract visitors who are only there for a specified event.

Appearance is one of the most important aspects in continuing to attract visitors. I spent the summer visiting a number of museums around Florida and talking to the curators about the decisions they have made regarding upgrades. On this basis, I offer several budget-friendly ideas to enhance the overall look of the museum. The first suggestion is to update all text panels to more colorful, thematic graphics that would then be displayed on a cheap, yet durable, backing such as foam core to give the text panels the flexibility to be displayed in a variety of ways and without the use of bulky and breakable frames. Many museums I visited have begun incorporating individual artifact labels into a single text panel with a numbered key to reduce clutter within the display cases (see Figure 3.3). Additionally, it is becoming increasingly common to use photographs and images within the text panel graphics, rather than as supplementary displays. It is recommended that another step would be to swap out the wood shelving inside the display cases with clear shelving (plastic, glass or plexiglass would be best). This alteration not only allows for the overhead light to shine throughout and brighten the displays, but it also allows the visitors to

focus on the artifacts themselves. It is important that each of the touch tables within the exhibits incorporate a "Please Touch" sign so visitors on self-guided tours are aware of the interactive content within the museum.

The final two general suggestions I have in regard to the overall appearance of the museum is to incorporate two things: maps and timelines. These two features allow visitors to orient themselves to places and time when reading text panels, interacting with artifacts and moving through the exhibits. It is very common for museums to utilize "timelines of one sort or another," as "they are generally accepted to be the most straightforward way of communicating easily a new or complex period or culture…This is also used to reinforce the conceptual design of the gallery and make links to events elsewhere in the world" (Swain 2007:225). It is my belief that these minor changes to the museum displays would greatly enhance the overall appearance of the museum from its current state.



**Prehistoric Tools**

At the time of the earliest migrations into north Florida (approx. 10,000 BC), when many large animals still lived here, the native inhabitants were almost exclusively hunters. They had wooden thrusting spears tipped with distinctive stone points called "clovis" points. The Clovis point was shortly superseded by the "Suwanee" point which is found in Florida from Vero Beach northward. As large animals became extinct, hunters were forced to concentrate on smaller game; thus, projectile points became smaller, side notched, and frequently beveled. Around 5,000 BC the typical tool was a fairly large stemmed spear point, the most common chipped artifact found in Florida. Other tools included a great variety of stone knives, scrapers and drills. Gouged and celts were used for the construction of dugout canoes.

1. Mississippian Triangular Points
2. Fluted Points
3. Knife Blade
   Found in Marshall Park, Safety Harbor
4. Spear Point
   Found near Marshall Park, Safety Harbor in 2009
5. Crude Uniface
6. Flaked Stone Chisel
7. Hafted or End Scraper
8. Antler Tine Flaker
9. Hammerstones
10. Flake Stone Blade
11. Bifacial Implements
12. Drills

**Pleistocene Fauna**

1. Megalocaros Giganteus
   *Giant Deer*
2. Eremotherium
   *Giant Ground Sloth*
3. Glyptodon
   *Armadillo*
4. Bison Antiquus Leidy
   *Giant Bison*
5. Ursus Spelaeus
   *Cave Bear*
6. Miotapirus
   *Tapir*
7. Dinohyas
   *Giant Pig*
8. Giant Tortoise
9. 1-Toed Horse
10. Smilidon
    *Saber-toothed Cat*
11. Megladon
12. Mastadon
13. Mammoth

**Figure 3.3:** Example of Caption Labels for "Safety Harbor Beginnings"

There are many things that should be kept in mind when writing signage in a museum. When guests visit a museum, they are non-captive audiences. They are not required to learn anything, and many have no motivation to learn. We have to present information to them in a way

that provokes them to learn and think critically without realizing it. Signage should be reflective of the overall theme. It is important that the signage is interpretive, meaning that they "tell stories, contrast points of view, present challenging issues, or strive to change people's attitudes" (Serrell 1996:9). There should be title labels to identify the exhibit. This is how we first draw in the visitor so it should be short, sweet and to the point. Then you should follow up with introductory labels that orient the visitor within the exhibit. These types of labels are helpful for the visitor to understand the sequence or timeline that they will follow throughout the exhibit. Because you are introducing a big idea here, these can be a bit longer if needed but should never go over 300 words. Our next set of labels should be for sectioning off the exhibits. This is where we incorporate our topics: "Safety Harbor Beginnings", "Pioneer Era", "Incorporation and Industrialization", and "From the Past to the Present". And finally, we have caption labels for specific artifacts, photos, events, etc. When possible, this type of signage should include stories of specific people during an event in history who did something. Sometimes these are the only labels that visitors read and because of that, they should be short and still have enough information to stand on their own (see figure 3.3). Serrell recommends about 50 words per label for both section and caption labels. These labels should also be positioned to where they are visible and legible to children, people in wheelchairs and adults of average height. They should not be too close to the ground or so high that they are overlooked. If additional interpretation is needed for an exhibit or section, it is recommended to utilize handouts and brochures that visitors can carry with them. Video, audio and demonstrations can also be helpful tools in adding to the interpretation of the exhibits (Serrell 1996:22-34). Moral of the story: more text does not equal better interpretation!

**Figure 3.4:** Photos of current pre-historic faunal artifacts.

*"Safety Harbor Beginnings"*

My first suggestion for the prehistoric section of the museum is to downsize the Pleistocene Fauna exhibit space to only include the artifacts that are necessary to tell the early story of Florida history. It is important to also relocate this information to the very beginning of the exhibit so that visitors understand the chronology of the prehistoric history. I have created example text panels for the museum so they may have a visual understanding of what information is most important to include in this area, and what information may be able to be excluded due to being outdated or unnecessary (see Figure 3.3).

There is also a large visitor focus in this section of the gallery on the diorama (see Figure 3.5). The focus of this exhibit should be shifted, as the diorama is only one possible interpretation of the Tocobaga village. Through the artifacts, maps, timelines and text paneling, we can provide additional theories and information from recent archaeological research. With better lighting, more attractive displays with new paint and graphics can do so much to redirect the attention of the visitor. I also believe that the contents of the storage unit need to be evaluated by a registered

professional archaeologist who specializes in the Tampa Bay area, as there are many boxes of artifacts from local excavations that could be useful in providing contents for this exhibit.



**Figure 3.5:** Diorama of "Typical Tocobagan Village Depicting Cut-Away of Mound"

The organization of the artifacts does little to aid in the understanding of the timeline of occupation of the Tampa Bay region. A timeline of occupation with an explanation of each period, or a stratigraphic display featuring archaeological information and artifacts would work well as an addition to the current exhibit displays. Figure 3.6 is an example from the Marco Island Museum of a stratigraphic display. The Safety Harbor Museum does not have the space for something quite so large but could utilize a simplistic and smaller version of this design concept. In addition to these display ideas, I re-created "Florida Unearthed", an interactive poster design from FPAN's (2011:43) *Beyond Artifacts: Teaching Archaeology in the Classroom* Resource , that can be

incorporated into the exhibit or utilized by docents on guided tours that helps younger visitors understand the kinds of artifacts that can be found in the different stratigraphy layers (see Figure 3.7).



**Figure 3.6:** Marco Island Museum, Marco Island, Florida - Archaeological Stratigraphy Exhibit

Furthermore, there is a complete omittance of the presence of Seminole Indians in Florida. It is my understanding that there are a multitude of Seminole artifacts in the offsite storage that can be incorporated into the gallery. The museum recently obtained a large wooden display case that would potentially be ideal for the display of the Seminole artifacts and additional information regarding the impact their presence has had on Florida. The incorporation of the Seminole

occupation would be a great transition from the prehistoric cultures to the pioneer era, through a text panel discussion on the Seminole Wars and the Homestead Act.



**Figure 3.7:** Florida Unearthed Interactive Poster.

*"Pioneer Era"*

Currently, exhibits regarding the pioneer history of Safety Harbor are scattered about throughout the museum. It is important to consolidate this information into a single location to allow for visitors to comprehend the timeline of Safety Harbor history and how the pioneer era fits within the broader historical context. The updated design features a few key elements: Odet Philippe, Pioneer Home Life, Civil War in Florida, and Espiritu Santos Springs. As visitors enter the "Pioneer Era," they are first met with a portrait of Odet Philippe. In the new design, I recommend updating the text paneling to summarizes his life story according to Allison DeFoor's book, *Odet Philippe: Pinellas Pioneer* since many of the stories told of Philippe's life are that of folklore. I suggest including his role in the early history of the immediate area, as well as Tampa

Bay more generally. Mention could also be made of his impact on the citrus industry and his involvement with the slave trade. I will discuss this information further in the section entitled *African American History.* The Philippe Family Tree could remain featured in its current location but should be updated to include the family member additions that have been temporarily added via Post-It Note to the current display (see Figure 3.8). In my plan for the museum, the piano would be relocated to fit along this wall underneath the Philippe Family Tree, and photos of family members would be framed and placed within the display area atop the piano. The Tampa Bay History Center has an archive of old photographs of some of Philippe's descendants and would be happy to provide copies of these to the Safety Harbor Museum for display in this exhibit.



**Figure 3.8:** Photos of some parts of the current Pioneer Era exhibit areas

The next section will be the Pioneer Home Life area, where interpretation will focus on the lives of the early Euro- and African-American settlers. The museum has a number of artifacts and antiques that can be used to interpret this era, but it is important to keep in mind that clean, open displays are more attractive to visitors; as Swain (2007:218) observes "just because archaeological objects are in a collection they do not need to be displayed if they are not materially contributing

to the story" and "often, the very best displays are those centered around strong iconic objects". Here I strongly suggest minimizing the objects on display to minimize clutter. This exhibit area should include a designated touch table here for items such as the iron, washboard, and butter churner to allow for a more engaging experience with the pioneer way of life. Text paneling will need to be incorporated to this area to give visitors more information on the importance of early pioneers, cracker style homes, and daily life. This exhibit area will also include a display on Civil War information and include the collection of Civil War area weaponry currently on display. Updating all of the displays to incorporate new, colorful text paneling and an artifact key, as well as incorporating the clear shelving will bring new life to this exhibit area.

### *"Incorporation and Industrialization"*

This area will focus on the development of the city, railroad information, history of the Safety Harbor Herald, as well as local school and law enforcement history in a similar way that it does now. Much of the information about the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa would be in this section as well as other information on the local tourism industry. The post office and moonshine barrel will be incorporated into this area. I recommend incorporating new text panels that discuss prohibition, the growing citrus industry, and transportation. More than anything, this section needs a more thematic plan and some more vibrant and updated displays. I recommend using this section as a way to brag about the growth of the area and how the city bounced back after the Great Depression with the help of Dr. Salem Baranoff. Additionally, this section will need to incorporate African American heritage histories as the museum continues to work with the local communities to research the impact that African American people had on this history of Safety Harbor.

*"From the Past to the Present"*

"Location, location, location" can be just as important in museums as it is real estate. Utilizing the location of the museum can sometimes be the most important interpretive tool available. Many museums are located at archaeological sites and incorporate archaeology into the exhibits in a way that is engaging and memorable. Indeed, some museums have gone so far as to incorporate the site itself into the structure of the museum building (Swain 2004:233). Unfortunately, at the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center site, the only visible remains of the Bayshore Hotel are a single tabby well. Despite this, there should be a larger focus on the excavation of the hotel site and the archaeology that was done on the museum grounds.



**Figure 3.9:** Artifact Stratigraphy Display at the Heyward-Washington Historic House in Charleston, South Carolina.

My suggestion is to relocate the information on the 1989 and 1994 excavations to the present-day portion of the displays to help visitors align the excavation in the context of more present-day archaeology. Should the museum board elect to not incorporate the stratigraphic display in the prehistoric exhibit, this would be another area within the museum gallery where could be appropriate to discuss stratigraphy. Figure 3.9 is an example from the Heyward-Washington Historic House in Charleston, South Carolina. This display contains artifacts from an excavation on the property with the stratigraphic historic layers designated by shelf (with the top layer, representing the most recent period, on the top shelf). Note that the artifacts are displayed on clear plastic mounts. Incorporating this information as well as other archaeological excavations in this way allows the museum exhibits to come full circle and help the public understand how the past becomes the present.

### *African American History*

The African American history of Safety Harbor has been hidden from the public for some time. At least one enslaved African was present on the Narvaez expedition that passed through the Safety Harbor area in 1528. Later, enslaved African Americans were brought to work on plantations. In an unusual historical twist, Pinellas County pioneer Odet Philippe was likely of African descent, and was also an owner of at least five enslaved people who likely resided at his Safety Harbor home. While historical records in Safety Harbor are scarce, there are U.S. Census records that "account for many people who worked as tenant farmers, farm laborers, 'helpers,' and turpentine laborers" in the Safety Harbor area (Firschein and Kepner 2013:127). There was a Ku-Klux-Klan presence in Safety Harbor from the 1920s to 1930s and again in the 1950s which would have been unlikely if there was not also an African American community in the city. As of 2017, there are 905 African American residents in Safety Harbor, Florida (U.S. Census 2017).

Only recently has this hidden history come to light. There have been three main things that have been the trigger for this – the emergence of the Whispering Souls African American Cemetery Group and the publication of *Odet Philippe: Pinellas Pioneer* in 1997 which made the case for Odet Philippe being of African descent, and *A Brief History of Safety Harbor, Florida* in 2013 that highlighted some of the local African American history.

Throughout American history, "racial segregation has played a critical role in shaping both what is publicly acknowledged, remembered, and preserved with respect to heritage and what is forgotten, whispered about, or relegated to the status of other in many communities" (Jackson 2010). Even to this day, the African American members of the Safety Harbor community feel excluded. They do not always feel welcome at town events or to walk down Main Street, a road that was originally constructed by local African American people (Jacqueline Hayes, personal communication 2019). There have not been any significant efforts to invite the African American communities, churches or social groups to be a part of the larger Safety Harbor community. This is not surprising considering that they have been completely left out of the historical narrative of Safety Harbor. There was an African American presence in Safety Harbor at least as early as 1843 and the narrative should be told as such (Firschein and Kepner 2013:127).

The production of the historical narrative of African Americans in Safety Harbor like many other historical narratives "involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such productions" (Trouillot 1995:xxiii). At the museum, there is only one mention of African Americans in Safety Harbor history consisting of a brief sentence noting that Odet Philippe owned five enslaved people at his Safety Harbor plantation. The exhibits exclude mention of Philippe's own possible African heritage (Defoor 1997:10). The historical narrative at the museum make it one of the many institutions in which

silences that have been invoked. The narrative is need of an update to include historical information lost to "segregated spaces and processes of isolation and control—as seen through the lens of spatial and social geography; administrative records and recordkeeping; laws; and historical and ethnographic accounts" (Jackson 2016a:169).

Throughout history, "the exclusion of blacks from the national consciousness was an active process that was reinforced through written symbols, material symbols, and commemoration" (Jackson 2010:89). There is still so much work that needs to be done in Safety Harbor in regard to the interpretation of the historical narrative and how the past is affecting the present-day citizens. One of the biggest challenges will be to discover and document those untold stories. It will be up to the gatekeepers of heritage (the museum, the historical society and the cemetery group) to break down the racial barriers of the Safety Harbor community and bring forth the historical narratives of the African American communities.

When I first approached the Whispering Souls Cemetery Group, they asked me what histories and stories I was planning to incorporate into my exhibit proposal at the museum; I took this as their suspicion that I was planning to sugar-coat the African American involvement in the historical narrative of Safety Harbor. My response was that I would recommend that the museum be redesigned to incorporate as much of the African American history of Safety Harbor that the museum could uncover--the good, the bad and the ugly. However, the decision on what to incorporate into the museum, and how it should be incorporated, is not just for me to decide. To create a truly inclusive narrative, the museum must engage with community members. My recommendation is that a committee be developed that incorporates members from the museum board, the city, the Whispering Souls group, the local historical society, and members of the African American community of Safety Harbor (there are at least seven African American

churches in the Safety Harbor area and I suggest that this committee include members of those churches). It is extremely important in projects like this to engage and work with descendant communities as "empowering descendant voices challenges the public to consider their point of view, which until recently have been marginalized from the dominant historical narrative" (National Trust for Historic Preservation 2018:1). I am advocating for the utilization of *Engaging Descendant Communities* by the museum board, and committee once developed; this is a rubric of best practices established by the National Summit on Teaching Slavery. The rubric is comprised of three pillars "upon which to build descendant engagement: historical research, relationship building, and interpretation" (National Trust for Historic Preservation 2018:2).

When developing exhibits related to African American histories, there are generally two ways museums go about it: a separate exhibit that highlights the main points of the local African American history or imbedding the African American history into the narrative already in place. While there are positive and negative outcomes for each of these methods, "the tension between focusing separate attention on a specific group or embedding that group's experiences and perspectives into mainstream narratives and practices is one which resonates across different equality concerns" (Nightingale and Mahal 2012:28). One of the goals of the new museum design should be to make the museum relevant and equitable in its interpretation of history. Making a stand-alone exhibit can "potentially take African American history and culture out of American History and Culture" (Nightingale and Mahal 2012:28). For that reason, it is my recommendation that the additions made to the museum in regard to African American heritage and history be intertwined in to the general Safety Harbor history narrative.

There are a few projects I am recommending for the committee to consider integrating into future museum exhibit displays. The first is a timeline of general African American history and

how that was reflected in Safety Harbor; for example, the interpretation could consider how the Homestead Act, the Emancipation Proclamation, Reconstruction and Jim Crow laws, the civil rights movements, and other pivotal moments effected the city of Safety Harbor and the Tampa Bay region throughout history. This timeline would be incorporated into the greater timeline of Safety Harbor history I recommended at the beginning of this chapter (see page 37).

Furthermore, I would recommend a deeper consideration of Odet Philippe's possible African heritage. While he claimed origins to Lyon, France, there is some reason to believe that he was actually from Saint Domingue and was considered "*Affranchis"* (DeFoor 1997:10). Information on the enslaved peoples he owned should also be noted more prominently on his text panel. There is enough information provided in his will to note who these enslaved peoples were. There are records of at least 13 enslaved people owned by Philippe over the years, 7 from his time in Charleston, 3 in his Fort Brooke home of which 2 would move to the St. Helena property(present day Safety Harbor), and 3 more at his St. Helena residence (DeFoor 1997:54-61).

The Whispering Souls Cemetery land was first owned by the Coachman's, one of Pinellas County's pioneer families and was designated for continued use as a resting place for the local African American community. In 1951, the cemetery became the property of the St. Paul Helping Hand Society, an African American organization, who then deeded the property to the "Safety Harbor Colored Community", which is still listed on the Pinellas County Property Appraiser's website as the official owner (Firschein and Kepner 2013:131-132). The last person to be buried at the cemetery was Charlie Smith in 1973, a pivotal member of Safety Harbor history who was unrecognized for his accomplishments. There are so many things that can be done to incorporate this history within the museum displays regarding the cemetery. A physical display of the life of Charlie Smith could be created for the museum utilizing bricks, old photographs of Main Street

and city blueprints to design an exhibit that could be incorporated into the museum with text panels of information. It would also be great to research and incorporate the histories of the other members of community buried at this cemetery. A memorialization of some sort could be crafted to represent the people buried in the cemetery and were lost to history. These kinds of projects are where the committee can shine and come up with results that best reflect the wants and needs of the Safety Harbor African American community in regard to memorializing their ancestors.

### *Digitization of the Collections*

A part of this internship has been to bring the museum into the 21st century through digital initiatives utilizing the resources available at USF. I worked with the IDEx Lab to digitize a portion of the museum's collection. This digital collection pinpoints key monuments in Safety Harbor history from the Native American occupation, to the early pioneer settlers, the city's founding and incorporation in 1917, the industrialization of the city, and through the conclusion of publication of the Safety Harbor Herald newspaper in 1989. These artifacts will form the foundations for an online museum exhibition that will not only be useful to attract visitors to the museum but will also provide data for researchers and educators (see Table 3.1). This project also acts as a beginning of the process of correcting the cataloging deficiencies within the museum. The digital collection preserves the artifacts as they existed in 2019, allowing researchers to understand how the artifacts are changing over time, and digitally saving them in the event of damage or destruction (Tanasi 2018b: 1:11).

Digital photogrammetry is being used to highlight artifacts representing pivotal moments in Safety Harbor history in an effort to better define a timeline for the museum of the city's rich history. The models are created using a Nikon D3400 camera with a AF-P Nikon 18-55 mm 1:3.5-5.6G lens at a resolution of 6000 x 4000 megapixels. Artifacts are captured in a minimum of 3

artifact orientations with at least 3 camera positions per artifact orientation. Camera positions are from a high, lower, and straight on angle. Each camera position captures 24 images during a full rotation of the turntable with a minimum of 72 images captured per artifact. The artifacts are placed on a different side for each orientation and are occasionally stabilized with a foam base. The 3D model was created using many images in Agisoft Metashape Professional (v 1.5.1). Some models required additional editing in Geomagic Wrap 2015 before publication to Sketchfab.com.



**Figure 3.10:** Finalized 3D Model on SketchFab of an Espiritu Santo Springs Print Block.

Many studies, like that of Neumuller *et al.*,Wilson *et al.* 2018, and Tanasi *et al*. 2018b, have shown that multisensory and digital experiences create a more meaningful and memorable experience when visiting and interacting with museums. Virtual curation has the ability to create an entirely new learning experience in classrooms, as well as in museums. They can be a fun alternative to the typical field trip. Since they can be viewed remotely, virtual collections can also bring field trips to the classroom in a time where schools are struggling to find the time and money to visit the physical museum. Students can explore the collection and lesson plans can be developed to reflect the artifacts. Every summer the museum provides opportunities for kids and teens to

enroll in summer camps, some of which involve archaeology, history and science. The digital

collection is just another resource for the campers to interact with the past in the present.

**Table 3.1**: List of Digitized Artifacts

| Name/Identifier | Collection | Sketchfab URL |
|---|---|---|
| Safety Harbor Utilitarian Pot | Prehistoric | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/f9b7ecc8b58046afadc18bcc119face0 |
| Civil War Union Baldric Breast Plate | Fort Brooke | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/b3a32bbc12884aaab5d124527b130e38 |
| Safety Harbor Herald Camera | Safety Harbor Herald | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/42f7305dfce64e7ea5251bd2619494e6 |
| Vet's Garage Comic Ad Newspaper Print Block | Safety Harbor Herald | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/560245fe2dad486db4d45f2eb1d5936e |
| Espiritu Santo Springs Print Block | Safety Harbor Herald | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/3f015aef47a2491daf965faf2f610cf1 |
| General Sanitariums Incorporated Print Block | Safety Harbor Herald | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/d3bf94024fab416fb7cf95de72b35183 |
| Burnt Ceramic Pitcher (8-PI-1693) | Bayshore Hotel | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/0da7637ac9d54f13a52e2baa7d70fa5b |
| Bassett Creamer Pitcher (8-PI-1693) | Bayshore Hotel | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/dc0854fbd41e431cb291e3bb4a828078 |
| Spear Point | Prehistoric | https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/759ec9dbe97d4146a6b8e6a252c51d87 |

**Chapter Four: Conclusion**

The Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center is the point of contact between history and the public for the Safety Harbor residents and visitors. It is the vessel through which much historical information passes from academia to the public. The museum regularly holds informative presentations on local historical and archaeological research happening in and around the community. Many of the summer camps taught through the museum are educational programs meant to demonstrate the local history and archaeology to younger audiences in a fun and active way.

The museum has survived a long history of financial hardship and, with its current partnership with the City of Safety Harbor, has the ability to continue to enrich the lives of the community for years to come. However, to do so changes need to be made, not only to the exhibits themselves, but to the operations of the museum as a whole. A system needs to be put in place for the management of the museum collection. A policy regarding proper storage, inventory, preservation management and acquisition should be developed and utilized. The museum also needs to have in place a collections database that is continuously updated with artifact condition reports, new acquisition information and inventory reports on the in-house and off-site collections.

*Collections Management*

In 2015, an initial self-evaluation was done on the museum collection and storage facility utilizing the International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)'s Self-Evaluation Tool. This tool was developed so that museums can have a glimpse of their current situation and a have preliminary diagnosis of the storage conditions. This tool also

gives museums the information they need to help them to decide whether they should embark on a storage reorganization project. It is especially important to remember that the "acquisition is easy, it is caring for something once a museum has it that is difficult, and made more so by the tyranny of antidisposal that persists despite reports, such as the Museum Association (2005) and the NMDC (2003), that have accepted the need for selective disposal" (Swain 2007:93).

**Table 4.1**: Results from the Self-Evaluation Tool for Museum Storage

| Areas of Responsibility | 2015 Evaluation Score and Diagnosis | 2019 Evaluation Score and Diagnosis |
|---|---|---|
| Management (M) | 1 – "Your collection is at serious risk" | 1 – "Your collection is at serious risk" |
| Building & Space (B) | 27 – "You need a reorganization project" | 24 – "You need a reorganization project" |
| Collection (C) | 18-20 – "You need a reorganization project" | 14 – "You need a reorganization project" |
| Furniture & Small Equipment (F) | 5-7 – "Your collection is at serious risk" | 5 – "Your collection is at serious risk" |

The results of this initial evaluation were that in terms of Building and Space (B) and Collection (C), the museum collection is in need of a reorganization project and in terms of Management (M) and Furniture and Small Equipment (F) the museum collection is at serious risk. Since the evaluation in 2015, no measures were taken to rectify the issues in the collection's storage procedures. During my internship, I completed a second self-evaluation of the museum collection utilizing the same Self-Evaluation Tool, but only evaluated the collection within the museum building and did not include the storage facility. The results of the second evaluation showed that in terms of Building and Space (B) and Collection (C), there was some decrease in the scores but has not shifted to being in serious risk, in terms of Management (M) and Furniture and Small Equipment (F) the museum collection is still at serious risk (see Table 4.1). The results of both evaluations prove an immediate need for the reorganization and improvements to the

storage and care of the museum collection in both the museum itself and the storage facility. I am recommending that the museum board seriously consider reviewing and utilizing the small museum grants list that I have compiled on their behalf (see Appendix A).

I also recommend that the board consider allocating funds for a collections-based software that will allow them to manage their collections by evaluating the condition of the artifacts, track loans, and locate artifacts in an easy to navigate system (see Appendix B). The museum currently uses Microsoft Access as their database system, but as it stands no one is trained in the retrieval and utilization of the database and it is housed on a portable storage device that is consistently misplaced for long periods of time. During my internship, I reached out to the previous employee who developed the database in 2015 and was able to educate myself on the basics of accessing the information. I found that the database was not completed and that since this employee's resignation, no artifacts have been added to the database, additional inventories have not been taken, nor have the condition of any artifacts been reported or updated. Many of the newer collections-based softwares are user-friendly, cloud-based and provide training to new users as employees and board members come and go.

Another important aspect of collections management that needs to be discussed is the acquisition of artifacts. Many local museums become a dumping ground for old, and unwanted family memories. Many of the artifacts in the museum's collection do not have any rhyme, reason or relevance to the museum. It is important that moving forward, the museum only acquires artifacts that have significant relevance to the unique history of Safety Harbor and have been researched by a museum employee prior to acquisition. I have created a new museum acquisition form (see Figure 4.1). This form should be utilized for artifacts received by the museum. This form

will also be a useful tool to aid in the process of inventorying the museum collections and establishing the collections database.

Artifact Acquisition Form                                    Collections ID:_____

**Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center**
329 Bayshore Blvd., Safety Harbor, Florida 34695

_____ I hereby give, without limitations, to the Safety Harbor Museum and Cultural Center, the item(s) listed below. I affirm that I am the owner or representative of the owner and have the rights to make the donation.

_____ I hereby give, on a permanent loan basis, the below listed item(s). Items on permanent loan must be of historical value to the Safety Harbor region. Items are owned by: _____ _____ and should be credited as such while on display.

_____ I hereby loan the below listed item(s) to the Safety Harbor Museum temporarily for a rotating exhibit. Item(s) will need to be returned at the close of the exhibit or by this date: _____. Items are made / owned by: _____ and should be credited as such while on display.

**Artifact List:**

1._____
[ ] Certificate of Authenticity          [ ] Historical Document [ ] Archaeological Record
Color: _____                         Time Period: _____

2._____
[ ] Certificate of Authenticity          [ ] Historical Document [ ] Archaeological Record
Color: _____                         Time Period: _____

3._____
[ ] Certificate of Authenticity          [ ] Historical Document [ ] Archaeological Record
Color: _____                         Time Period: _____

4._____
[ ] Certificate of Authenticity          [ ] Historical Document [ ] Archaeological Record
Color: _____                         Time Period: _____

5._____
[ ] Certificate of Authenticity          [ ] Historical Document [ ] Archaeological Record
Color: _____                         Time Period: _____

Name of Donor (Print):_____

Signature: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____
_____
**For Museum Use:**

Date of Donation: _____ Received By: _____ Title: _____

Location: [ ] On Display       [ ] Collections Storage – [ ] Flat [ ] File Cabinet [ ] Box # _____

**Figure 4.1:** New Artifact Acquisition Form Sample

### *NAGPRA Compliance*

My final recommendation regarding the management of the museum collection is to the adherence to NAGPRA policies regarding Native American remains in the museum collection. According to the Association on American Indian Affairs, the enactment of NAGPRA in 1990 required all museums to complete "an item-by-item inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects owned or possessed by them". Claims can be made against museums by descendants of Indian individuals or Indian Tribes.

> Museum is a broad term used by NAGPRA to describe "any institution receiving federal funds after November 16, 1990 which has possession or control over Native American cultural items. This includes museums, state and local governments and colleges and universities. NAGPRA applies even if the museum itself has not directly received Federal funding if the museum is part of a larger entity (such as a local government or college) which has received Federal funds" (AAIA).

By adhering to these policies, I am referring to the current Treaty of Tocobaga and related mound on the museum property. This repatriation method was well-intentioned, however it was problematic and does not measure up to current NAGPRA regulations. NAGPRA regulations require that museums repatriate human remains upon request of a culturally affiliated Indian tribe. The Lenape group is not culturally affiliated or federally recognized and none of the tribes that should have been consulted seem to have been. "'Cultural affiliation' means that there is a reasonable connection ("shared group identity") between the present-day tribe or organization and the tribe or group to which the dead person belonged at the time that he or she was living" (AAIA). It is vitally important that the museum take steps towards adhering to NAGPRA regulations. The AAIA also notes that "if a museum repatriates an item in good faith, however, it cannot be sued if it has made a mistake" but it should work to right the wrong.

It is important that the museum board and employees know how to handle human remains if any additional remains are discovered in the future. The current Treaty of Tocobaga and

memorial mound may not be the way the rightful tribal claimants would want to handle it. Each museum employee should be trained on NAGPRA policies not only to have awareness for if remains are discovered in the collections but also for the purposes of educating the public about skeletal remains and how policies regarding burials have changed over time in archaeology. It would be beneficial to also develop signage for the mound as well as within the museum to discuss what the museum did as well as the current NAGPRA regulations regarding skeletal remains so the visitors understand laws.

*Future Projects*

Below I present a list of project ideas for future interns (see Table 4.1). These projects will vary in scale and intensity and do not need to be completed in any particular order, unless specified. Projects will also vary in skill level so that interns at various educational levels may have projects to complete. This list is not exhaustive and there will be other projects that come up as a result of others being completed as well as addressing the changing needs of the museum.

While many of the tasks and suggestions in this report can be done by interns, college students, museum board members, and part-time staff, it is important to recognize that these people will have other responsibilities and are only around for a limited amount of time. The most significant suggestion I can make in this report is that the board should strongly consider allocating funds for a full-time, qualified museum employee who can be responsible for long term projects and work continuously on maintaining the condition of the collections and exhibits, as well as work on research and grant applications. I also strongly recommend that this full-time employee should be someone with not only museum experience, but also training in archaeology since a large portion of the museum collection is archaeological in nature. This person would ideally be an employee of the museum board and work in a partnership with the city. There is currently a

part-time employee who is paid in part by the board and also by the city. This position may need to be adjusted to an internship level position in order for a full-time position to be possible. While that is not ideal, the combination of a full-time employee and intern would be better for the overall operation of the museum than a single part-time employee. There are many grants that will assist small museums in the funding of an employee or will supplement other areas of the budget to redirect money for an employee salary.

However, in order for a full-time position at the museum to be truly fruitful, there needs to be a re-evaluation of the agreement between the museum board and the city. As it stands now, museum board members and employees are only able to access the building during city business hours and when city employees are present. It is understandable that they wish to monitor access to their facility, however, since the city does not own the artifacts and all of the responsibility for the artifacts falls on the museum board non-profit organization, there should be a way for them to have access outside of city business hours in order to complete restoration projects, install new exhibit features and other collections related projects. This is something that will take some time, multiple meetings, negotiations and potentially some reconfiguration to find a solution, but it should be something that is discussed by all parties as an important step towards improving the overall operations at the museum.

The museum has the potential to become a modern, dynamic, and engaging regional museum. The ongoing archaeological research in the area can only benefit the museum popularity and visitorship. During my internship at the museum, visitors came, called and emailed weekly to inquire about the excavations at Phillippe Park. The proximity to USF allows for a continuous flow of potential interns who would be thrilled to embark on museum-based projects. It is now up to

the museum board and the City of Safety Harbor to move forward with this report and begin the

steps needed to undertake these projects.

**Table 4.2**: Project ideas for future interns and volunteers.

| Project Category | Project Description |
|---|---|
| Collections | Inventory of the offsite collections should be taken, documented and digitalized in the Access file. |
| Collections | Evaluation of the preservation condition of the archaeological collections within the museum, as well as offsite collections. |
| Exhibitions | Updating all text paneling in a vibrant and uniform manner utilizing foam core backing or other common text paneling materials. |
| Exhibitions | Removing all hot glue from artifacts in the proper manner and remounting the artifacts using wire, pegs, or other current methods of mounting that preserve the artifact without adhesive materials. |
| Exhibitions | Developing new exhibit ideas – temporary and permanent – that allow for a more inclusive and up to date narrative. There should be an exhibit calendar that is planned in advance, so all materials and artifacts have been acquired and are on display prior to the opening of the exhibit. |
| Education / Collections | Engaging with the diverse local communities in an effort to collect oral histories and stories for the purposes of research, education and inclusivity in exhibit design. |
| Exhibitions | Exhibit installation of design ideas provided in this report. |
| Collections | Cleaning, cataloging, re-shelving and preserving the artifacts on display. |
| Exhibitions | Conduct research on the historic cannon in front of the museum and design an informational text panel. |
| Collections | Continue the digitization of inventory process already started in Access. |
| Education | Develop ideas for more educational programming that involves the museum and local history in a way that will be engaging for the public. |
| Collections / Digitization | Digital Photogrammetry of the Eugene Powell Collection. |
| Education | Conducting historical research, community outreach and public programming on local African American histories. |
| Education | Conducting historical research, community outreach and public programming on local women's histories. |
| Collections | Researching and documenting the acquisition of artifacts that are missing information so that they may be properly inventoried and cataloged. |
| Collections | Historical and heritage research on Odet Philippe and descendants and connections to African Americans, slavery, and Charleston slave trade. |

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A: Small Museum Grants**

| Name of Grant | Funding Agency | Amount | Website |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inspire! Grants for Small Museums | Institute of Museum and Library Sciences | $5,000 - 50,000 | https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/inspire-grants-small-museums |
| Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) Program | Foundation for Advancement in Conservation | Allocation amounts range from $3500 to $3900 per assessor based on the annual operating budget of the institution. | https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/collections-care-for-institutions/cap |
| Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections | National Endowment for the Humanities | Maximum Award Amount: Planning: $50,000; Implementation: $350,000 | https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/sustaining-cultural-heritage-collections |
| Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions | National Endowment for the Humanities | $10,000 | https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/preservation-assistance-grants-smaller-institutions |
| Humanities Collections and Reference Resources | National Endowment for the Humanities | Varies | https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/humanities-collections-and-reference-resources |
| Access to Historical Records: Archival Project | National Historical Publications and Records Commission | $100,000 | https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/announcement/archival.html |
| Community Project Grant | Florida Humanities Council | Up to $5,000 | https://floridahumanities.org/what-we-do/grants/ |
| Special Category Grants: MUSEUM EXHIBIT | Florida Division of Historical Resources | Up to $500,000 | https://www.dos.myflorida.com/historical/grants/special-category-grants/ |

## Appendix B: Recommended Resources and Vendors

| Type | Company | How Can They Help? | Contact Information |
|------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Conservation | Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts | Conservation Treatment, Digitization, Surveys & Assessments, Fundraising Assistance, Housing & Framing | 264 S. 23rd St. Philadelphia, PA 19103 (215) 545-0613 Website: ccaha.org |
| Collections Management | CatalogIt | Catalog and Management of Collections | Website: catalogit.app Email: info@catalogit.app |
| Collections Management | Collector Systems | Catalog and Management of Collections, Condition Reporting, Cloud Based, Software Training | 169 Hudson St. New York, NY 10013 (212) 431-0897 Website: collectorsystems.com Email: info@collectorsystems.com ekahan@collectorsystems.com |
| Ticketing and Membership | Blackbaud Altru | Ticketing, Membership, Admissions, Fundraising | Website: blackbaud.com |
| Storage | Aurora Storage Products, Inc. | Cabinets, Mobile Carriages, Art Racks, Shelving | 600 South Lake Street Aurora, IL 60506 (630) 897-6951 Website: aurorastorage.com |
| Lighting | Available Light | Insightful lighting design solutions | Website: availablelight.com |
| Displays | Museum Rails | Flexible and reusable graphics rails | (800) 862-9869 Website: museumrails.com |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Displays | Museum Signs | discreet and versatile signage systems | (800) 862-9869<br>Website: museumsigns.com |
| Exhibit Design | Creative Arts Unlimited, Inc. | Design, Build and Install Quality, Award Winning Exhibits | 3730 70th Avenue North<br>Pinellas Park, FL 33781<br>(727) 525-2066<br>Website: creativeartsinc.com<br>Email: Chucks@creativeartsinc.com |
| Exhibit Design | Riggs Ward | Planning, Researching, Graphics, A/V Media | 2315 West Main Street<br>Richmond, VA 23220<br>(804) 254-1740<br>Website: riggsward.com<br>Email: Info@riggsward.com |
| Exhibit Design | 1220 Exhibits, Inc. | Produces message-driven exhibits, environments and event experiences. | 3801 Vulcan Drive<br>Nashville, TN 37211<br>(615) 425-5143<br>Website: 1220.com<br>Email: vking@1220.com |
| Exhibit Design and Digital Media | Impact Communications | Designing, creating and installing digital media and exhibits | (216) 861-1063 ext. 224<br>Website: impactcommunications.com<br>Email: kristy@impactcommunications.com |
| Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Experience | Timelooper | VR and AR technologies and storytelling techniques | Website: timelooper.com<br>Email: partnerwithus@timelooper.com |