

the MoA Quarterly

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, MIZZOU

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NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR - ALEX BARKER

Like everyone else, the Museum of Anthropology is dealing with the personal and professional disruptions caused by the current pandemic. Our thoughts are with all of you, as you and your families meet those same challenges.

The Museum's galleries are currently closed, and all public programs, events and tours have been canceled or postponed. We feel that loss keenly; face-to-face interaction, the opportunity to help learners of all ages experience authentic artifacts and the myriad ways of being human, and welcoming visitors to our galleries are some of the most fulfilling and enjoyable past of the Museum's mission.

Our work continues. Museum staff have transitioned to remote work—we meet by telepresence and online meetings, and coordinate by phone and email. Time previously spend offering in-person tours is now spent designing online exhibitions and instructional materials.

We respond to public “whatizzit” requests and scholarly research inquiries by email, and facilitate access to the Museum's extensive online collections databases. We continue to work on our rich and extensive collections, improving, enhancing and extending both our knowledge of the collection and our ability to meet the needs of our many users and stakeholders.

While it's a circumstance none of us wanted, we'll doubtless discover new opportunities and ways of meeting public needs that will serve us in good stead once conditions improve; in the meantime we're adapting to new constraints while continuing to pursue and achieve the Museum's continuing mission.

Stay with us on social media or by visiting the Museum's website, and be part of the Museum's growing online community. ♦

COLLECTION SPOTLIGHT

BY JESSICA BOLDT

Le Faivre Gunsmith Cache
MAC # 19730144

In 1933, Joe LeFaivre, then 15 years old, discovered numerous gun parts and tools partially exposed in the middle of a freshly graded road. The collection, apparently the remains of a buried gunsmith's cache, consisted of 108 gun parts, 18 gunsmithing tools, 6 unidentified iron objects, and the lock and key of a wooden chest that had long since rotted away. LeFaivre found the cache on the edge of a Little Osage village believed to be occupied between roughly 1730 and 1775. The cache itself, though badly rusted and difficult to firmly identify specific dates or locations of manufacture, is thought to have been buried sometime between 1770 and 1780.



Selections from the Gunsmith Cache are part of a loan to The Centre for French Colonial Life in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri and will be part of a special temporary exhibit on the American Revolutionary War in the West planned for May of this year. ❖

The Museum of Anthropology collections and archives have been online and accessible to the public for almost two decades. Click the quick link to the databases on our website's home page to learn more: anthromuseum.missouri.edu.



Photos taken by Candace Sall at Smithsonian Institution's Museum Support Center.

MOA'S MUSEUM SUPPORT CENTER UP TO SMITHSONIAN STANDARDS

BY CANDACE SALL

In February, on an advocacy trip to Washington D.C., I had the opportunity to visit the Smithsonian Institution's Museum Support Center. Just like the Museum of Anthropology's support center, the facility serves as a storage center for collections not currently on exhibit as well as supplemental materials. It provided a fantastic opportunity to compare their standards and practices to those used at the MoA. Notable similarities included an access policy to the Smithsonian's objects for researchers to visit, as well as the center serving as a place for new acquisitions to be processed and standing collections maintained. Like the MoA, the SI holds extensive archives with vital information on objects, archaeological sites, anthropologist's records, and other research papers. The papers, photos, maps, films, and other documents are housed in acid-free boxes and objects are stored by geographic location in museum-quality cabinets with each object's needs in mind. Among their anthropology collections is a waterproof seal intestine parka almost identical to the one on exhibit in the Museum of Anthropology's Arctic exhibit. The Smithsonian's parka is stored in a drawer with the sleeves stuffed to keep their shape. Other objects similar to those at the MoA include ceramics from Pueblo Bonito which were steadied with protective material and engraved shells from Spiro Mounds. Materials and practices used in object and archive storage all reflected the same standards used at the Museum of Anthropology and I left feeling pride in our MU standard of care. I would like to thank the SI staff for their kindness and courtesy during my visit. ❖



ANTHROPOLOGY IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY

BY ALEX BARKER

Some might imagine that anthropology would be on hiatus during a global pandemic, that the discipline's disparate subfields would have little to contribute in a time of uncertainty and anxiety. But one of the things we learned in [containing Ebola](#) is that medical responses rarely succeed without an understanding of the human [dynamics that foster the spread of disease](#) on the one hand and limit the effectiveness of [medical interventions on the other](#). And while the physical doors of museums may close, in times of social distancing, self-quarantine and isolation, their online offerings become even more important.

Anthropologists are responding in a variety of ways: currently the Society for Medical Anthropology is developing an expertise database to help coordinate [anthropological responses to health emergencies](#), while others are using their studies of other kinds of social arrangements that offer [lessons in adaptability, flexibility and resilience](#) in times of sudden change, while still others continue research [studying past epidemics](#) to help us better understand for those we face today.

Because Anthropology also studies the social dimensions of learning, it can help inform how colleges and universities respond to [the different demands of remote classes](#), as well as how to [teach about the pandemic itself](#). And because we're a community, anthropological organizations are responding to support their colleagues, communities and students. The American Anthropological Association began piloting its [virtual meeting platform](#) last year, and last year also launched the [Open Anthropology Research Repository](#), which allows scholars from around the globe to post preprints, conference presentations, teaching materials and other resources for use by others without cost or membership requirements. Other social science organizations are also [providing resources](#), and a range of anthropological publishers have made some or all of their journals and volumes free to support users during the crisis, including [Wiley](#), [Sage](#), [Oxford University Press](#), and [Berghahn Books](#), among others (Berghahn even has a special program making e-books available for [free to individual scholars](#)).

We're doing our part. Visit us [online](#), and check out our [e-exhibits](#), or [search our global collections](#). Spend some time exploring the diversity of world culture, past and present, and remember that--as fellow humans--we're all in this together. ♦

MUSEUMS ADVOCACY DAY 2020 BY CANDACE SALL

Did you know, more people visited museums than attended professional sporting events last year? Museums play an important role in communities beyond just collecting and interpreting objects for exhibition and preservation. Museums are also economic engines. For every dollar in funding, museums bring in five dollars in tax revenue. Museums add \$50 billion to the GDP. **Missouri museums have an \$852 million financial impact on the economy, and support 13,653 jobs** (Oxford Economics, 2017.)

Members of the Missouri Association for Museums and Archives visited Capitol Hill for Museums Advocacy Day on February 25th, where, with other museum supporters across the nation, we spoke with congressional representatives about museums. We let them know about what we provide to our visitors, both in person and online, as well as our plans for the future. We also shared how we preserve Missouri's rich cultural and natural history; train future museum staff, both at the university and in individual museums; and how we are working to improve diversity, inclusion, accessibility and equity.

Advocating for museums is important as our elected officials decide what laws to support (like charitable contributions) and what entities (for example: National Endowments for the Humanities and the Arts, or the Institute for Museum and Library Services) to fund. Email your representatives and governing organizations and let them know that you support museums in your community! ♦



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

BY AMANDA STALEY HARRISON

As I conclude this newsletter, I will continue with the theme of outreach and virtual engagement. As may be expected, we had not planned to have our spring issue be as heavy as it now presents, but it is important to acknowledge that we are standing in an event that will be studied by anthropologists and historians for decades/centuries to come. At this time spring children's classes are canceled, all tours have been postponed or canceled, and we can only tentatively plan to have our annual July summer archaeology camp. As our education coordinator and strategic communications manager, I have embraced the challenge of instead bringing the museum into the homes of our supporters virtually. The primary medium for outreach at this time is social media as it remains one of the most accessible platforms for communicating to large quantities of individuals. Up to date news, articles, and activities will be posted regularly to our [Facebook page](#). We also have a museum [Instagram](#) that will feature artifacts from our collections. The staff is also working diligently to prepare a variety of new e-exhibits for our website. As they are created and posted, links will be shared via social media. We also already have a host of fantastic resources on our website, including archives of a collaboration with Columbia Public Schools called [Source by Sunday](#), which highlights topics to use in tandem with our online databases.

So if you haven't already, head over to our Facebook and Instagram and follow along as we navigate this time of social distancing together. I very much look forward to when I can see all of your smiling faces again in person at the museum. Until then, safe wishes and well thoughts. ♦



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