

Sabbatical Leave Report
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2008/2009 Academic Year



I proposed to continue ongoing and develop new areas of scholarship in two main areas during my sabbatical leave. I proposed to spend five months in residence in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, completing artifact studies, advancing manuscripts toward publication, initiating a funded collaboration with chemists at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and beginning a new monograph on the Utah Pottery Project. I then expected to spend five more months in the field in Utah, initially proposed to include two months of regional survey and two months of intensive excavation leading an archaeological field school.

Before my sabbatical, I sought research support from the National Science Foundation, the Wenner Gren Anthropological Research Foundation, the National Geographic Foundation, and the Earthwatch Institute. None of those proposals were funded. During my sabbatical, I continued seeking funds by submitting proposals to Cultural Resources division of Utah State Parks, applying for an MTU Faculty Scholarship Grant, and applying to the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, in addition to numerous private solicitations for support from individuals. Those proposals resulted in both a two-year cooperative agreement and funded research arrangement with Utah State Parks as well as an award from MTU. Since my sabbatical began about one week before the terrible stock market collapse of August 2008, all of my foundation requests and solicitations to private patrons were declined, forcing me to scale back my budget from the proposed \$40,000 down to approximately \$14,000.

I will outline my key accomplishments during my sabbatical year, despite changes in the proposed plan forced by the reduced budget. I outline these by areas:

Progress in scholarship:

1. I advanced several publication projects toward final print. These include significant research for my co-authored monograph *Bricks and Brickmaking for the Archaeologist* (2nd edition) and final revision of the monograph *Science and Historical Archaeology*. I also advanced several articles and book chapters, including an article for the *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* and a brand new book chapter already published as part of a major book on archaeological studies of trade and exchange with Springer Press. I made incremental progress on several other publication projects as well.
2. Instead of undertaking survey work across Utah during the winter months of my sabbatical, I spent those months developing a major exhibition that featured my research in conjunction with Utah State Parks and the Pioneer Homestead State Park Museum (formerly the Iron Mission State Park Museum). *Potters of the Gathering: Clay Work in Early Utah* included more than 200 antique ceramic objects and archaeological artifacts, dozens of historic photographs, two audio programs, and an interactive touch-screen DVD with more than a dozen videos. In addition, we published an exhibit

catalog that included an appeal for ongoing study and preservation. This exhibit was on public view for almost four months, including during our nearby archaeological field school.

3. The lack of funds prevented me from developing a collaboration with Dr. Joseph Alstadt in Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. I was able to develop a new collaboration with Jaroslaw Drelich in MTU's Materials Science and Engineering program on a different topic related to my research.
4. I attended six academic conferences during my sabbatical, giving papers, recruiting new graduate students, soliciting research support, and completing professional service, as well as hosting the Industrial Archaeology and History graduate students from MTU in Milwaukee on the annual study tour. I gave an invited paper at Brown University's Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World.

Progress in field research:

1. I organized and ran the first major excavation at a site related to Utah's historic pottery industry. This excavation, conducted as a field school, was at the site of the Davenport Family Pottery in Parowan, Utah. Working with six to eight students and volunteers, the research team excavated a kiln, two building foundations, and other associated features related to the industry. The results from this excavation will provide data for one of the IA graduate students to write a thesis as well as new information for me to use in my new monograph.
2. I was awarded an antiquities permit from the state of Utah. This permit allows me to transfer the artifacts from the Davenport excavation to Utah State Parks. It also allows me to request site numbers for all the other sites identified in the past 15 years of research.
3. While severe funding shortfalls did limit our activities and will continue to hamper progress in lab research and analysis, the Department of Social Sciences was able to provide key additional support for vehicles and sponsoring geophysical prospection survey at the site.

Service and Development:

1. During the time leading up to and while in Utah, I developed an aggressive plan for public archaeology, including interconnected public programming between the exhibit and the field excavations. The museum estimated that more than 6,000 visitors toured the exhibit and the site during May, June, and July. Records show that 312 people attended special events connected to the exhibit, including the gallery opening, site tours, and a series of lectures and gallery talks sponsored in part by the Utah Humanities Committee.
2. Eight students worked on the dig, both undergraduate and graduate, collaborating with a group of volunteers on the site, including school and community groups like the Boy Scouts. The dig was open at all times with ongoing public interpretation that was interconnected to the exhibition in Cedar City. While we did not keep track of the numbers of site visitors during the summer, I would estimate that at least 400 people visited and toured the

site, some as part of organized tour groups, such as the Sons of the Utah Pioneers, but most people simply dropped by as individuals, small groups, or families.

3. I reported all of the research and public programming related to the exhibit, archaeology dig, and ongoing laboratory research using several forms of new media on the World Wide Web, primarily Facebook and a blog dedicated to the project: <http://utahpotteryproject.blogspot.com>. The Facebook account and blog showed the broad appeal of our collaborations, in which the research process became a public programming activity, moving the academic study of science and history out of the ivory tower and into the realm of public activities on an open-source, collaborative model.

Between January 1st and December 10th, 2009, the Utah Pottery Project blog attracted 4,040 visitors. Just more than ½ of those visitors were return readers, all of whom averaged 2.05 pages per visit, resulting in 8,274 page views. Visitors spent an average of 2:42 on the site reading about the project. The vast majority of blog visitors hit from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The remaining 285 visitors came from 64 other countries, including countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Oceania. These statistics must be understood in light of the fact that I have no professional guidance for new media publishing. All of this growth was entirely organic and unplanned, as I have no training in new media and did not consult with experts in this area.

4. On a final note, I worked with the staff of MTU's Office of Alumni Relations to develop "A Day in the Field with Michigan Tech Industrial Archaeologists." The idea was to welcome regional alumni to visit MTU students conducting research in the field, take them on tours of the site and exhibit, and talk with them about the exciting developments going on at MTU. While we tried to plan this event too quickly and we were not successful, we developed a plan that can become a model for future collaborations between Alumni relations and field research teams at MTU, connecting research fieldwork with public programming, Alumni relations, and new undergraduate and graduate student recruitment.

In summary, I had a very busy and productive sabbatical. The work conducted during this time was invaluable for my professional development and could not have been completed if I had not been in residence in Utah for five months. The new cooperative agreements and publicity surrounding our work has opened doors for at least two MTU graduate student researchers and continues to hold promise for increased patronage and funding as the economy improves. We developed a new mode of public science- engaged with the local community and regional partnerships.