Maximizing Archaeology's Relevance to its Publics through a Pragmatist Framework

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Maximizing Archaeology’s Relevance to its Publics through a Pragmatist Framework

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A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of the Arts

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Archaeologists are increasingly aware of the need to engage the public if the discipline is to survive outside the world of academia. This is visible in the dramatic increase in methods that incorporate collaboration with descendant communities and the general public. This task is not easy, as the diverse field of public archaeology offers many methods but little guidance on which approach is best suited for a particular project given the pluralistic nature of many communities. I suggest that a pragmatist archaeology is suitable for uniting these different methods under a theoretical position that allows for different ways of creating knowledge, and takes into account how a project’s aims can serve all those who are involved or affected. In this presentation I will apply pragmatist theory to the research conducted at Port Tobacco, a town where public archaeology efforts have largely failed, in an attempt to demonstrate how archaeology can be made more relevant for researchers and public alike.
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I must express my gratitude to the residents of Port Tobacco for inviting me into their homes and being so open and candid about their relationships with the site and the archaeologists. Also many thanks to the workers and volunteers of the Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, all of whom helped me realize my passion for public archaeology.

Love to my parents and Dave, always. Thank you all for being so patient with my studies, wherever they already have and continue to take me. You have never ceased to remind me of all the different joys that can be found in life.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Archaeologists must reevaluate their practices and foundations if they are to remain relevant to academia and the public. Questions concerning relevancy are undoubtedly connected to our stakeholders, a group that has changed considerably since the discipline's inception. While there is no single narrative for the origin of archaeological practice, many of the earliest practitioners were elite westerners interested in the material remains of the past. As such, the discipline served the interests of a very small, exclusive population in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Archaeologists at this time were predominately white European men that were drawn to the "exotic" nature of other cultures in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and beyond. Since then significant changes have occurred in archaeological practice and recognition of potential stakeholders; standard methods now guide research, and our public is increasingly diverse. Still, questions remain as to how appropriate these methods are, and how the interests of the public are best considered. In this thesis I suggest that pragmatism offers a framework for archaeological research that would allow archaeologists to balance the standards and demands of the discipline with the concerns and knowledge of the pluralistic communities of the twenty-first century, the publics that I wish to address. Based on the philosophical discussions of Charles S. Peirce, William James, Richard Rorty, and others, pragmatism is generally defined as the creation of meaning or knowledge in accordance with what is most relevant to a particular population. Generally, these philosophers sought to understand relevance for populations outside of the academy; these groups are increasingly sought as collaborators and beneficiaries of research. Pragmatism allows archaeologists to critically examine their position as skilled professionals trained in theory, methods, and ethics. These skills and values place practitioners of the discipline in a unique, and level, position to assist local communities in narrating the past.

At present, considerations of the relevance of archaeological research are very important, as visible in the rise of publications and presentations discussing the usefulness of archaeology
and its connection to the public (see Dawdy 2009, Rundkvist 2008, Sabloff 2008 and others). Arguably, efforts to apply anthropology to broad social concerns extend back to the attempts of Franz Boas (1912) to battle racism with his landmark study of the importance of environmental, not hereditary, influences on cranial capacity. Concerns over the value of archaeology in the present come at a time when the public is more interested in the field than ever before. The continuing coverage of archaeology in newspapers, popular magazines including *Archaeology* and *National Geographic*, and television series such as *The Naked Archaeologist, Time Team*, and *Time Team America* suggests that a part of the population chooses to explore an interest in archaeology through these types of media. This particular interested public is restricted to individuals with access to these resources, but researchers should still take note of how archaeology is presented in print and video to continue to draw this public while striving to make our work relevant to those outside of the influence of popular media.

Archaeological projects involve multiple stakeholders that have existing narratives of the past and particular goals for archaeological remains based on the politics of the present. Negotiating the interests of these groups while maintaining archaeological methods and ethical obligations is a current challenge the discipline faces. There are numerous examples of successful public outreach and collaboration projects, some of which I discuss, but first I must draw on my own experience with a public archaeology project that has been unable to achieve its goals in their entirety. A community with multiple publics can be found in Port Tobacco, a town in southern Maryland where The Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, which emphasizes research and public involvement, has been in place for over three years. This project has thus far produced mixed results concerning both of its aims despite initial efforts to engage some of the site’s publics.

My experience at Port Tobacco led me to question the role archaeologists have in conducting academic research that takes into account the goals of a site’s publics. The limited
application of the findings at Port Tobacco and tense or limited relationships with its communities suggest that the research framework for this site at present is unsuitable for promoting relevance. This thesis will address problematic aspects of this project and offer a pragmatist framework for increasing the relevance of fieldwork, interpretations, and publications to multiple audiences while acknowledging different means of understanding and producing knowledge. Implementing this type of approach at the start of the Port Tobacco project could have guided research in a more fruitful manner, but of course hindsight is 20/20. Looking forward, applying a Pragmatist Archaeology to the site now could have the potential to rectify some of our shortcomings and increase the success of the project beyond the circle of researchers and interested volunteers, but given other hurdles the project faces this goal may remain unrealized.

I recognize that a commitment to public involvement and the suggestion that archaeological research can effect positive change are not new to the field, and Port Tobacco is not the only case in which researchers have attempted to integrate public concerns and archaeology (see Little 2007, Silliman 2008, Saitta 2007, Meskell 2009, Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008 and others). Arguably, these efforts arose as part of the postprocessual movement that was interested in the creation of knowledge and its applications, leading to discussions of archaeology’s impact on politics of identity, heritage, ownership, sovereignty, and interpretations of the past. Attempts to address such issues have spawned numerous types of “public archaeology,” many of which rest upon their own theories or purposes. As Carol McDavid (2009) notes, the term “public archaeology” has come to include so much that is it difficult to define its goals. An analysis of these different practices shows that while there are many similarities between them, differences make it challenging to define a single methodology for including the public. In building on the need for a pragmatist framework at Port Tobacco, I suggest that pragmatism is also capable of unifying current approaches to public archaeology as its flexibility and situational application allow for multiple pathways for achieving unique, and
possibly conflicting visions of the past. Additionally, I will explain how a pragmatic approach is poised to address potentially problematic cases that have arisen from pluralistic settings, while recognizing that archaeologists may also have a legitimate stake in projects as a community of researchers with valuable expertise that lends itself to a means of understanding the past; one that may exist alongside a community’s interpretations. In addition to being equipped with special training in interpretation of the material remains of the past, archaeologists adhere to professional guidelines that define our responsibilities in research and public collaboration. Furthermore, archaeologists are in the position to take advantage of different narratives as opportunities to promote dialogue between communities about how we can know the past.

Moving towards any type of public archaeology, pragmatic or not, requires addressing to whom exactly “the public” refers. There is seldom a single public for any archaeological project, as is the case at Port Tobacco, as even individuals that identify with the same culture or ethnic group may split into smaller factions with diverse interests. For instance, this is common in Indigenous Archaeologies and African Diaspora Archaeology as many different groups exist under these umbrella headings. Determining who the public is also raises questions of who is entitled to have a say in directing research. In many cases archaeologists work with descendant communities (see LaRoche and Blakey 1997, Brooks 2007, Gallivan 2007, Kerber 2008, Meskell 2009 for a small sampling), but there are many other publics that may feel connected to the site due to a common status, history, or interest. These non-descendant communities often appear in public outreach projects (Nassaney 2009, Gibb, Biesaw, Walter 2010, Potter 1994, and others). Approaches may be curtailed to these different publics, but with many existing overlapping guidelines and methods it is clearly impossible to establish a common set of rules for ensuring that a particular project is relevant at local and academic levels. Pragmatism does not provide a single solution, but offers a flexible approach that defines methods according to each unique public and context. Given the diverse narratives of the communities with which we work it is
reasonable to expect that the determination of relevance and success will vary according to stakeholders' pasts, present interests, and future goals.

Pragmatist theory has been successfully employed in archaeology (see McDavid 2002, Saitta 2007, Preucel and Mrozowski 2010) but has been confined to limited contexts; though, Robert Preucel and Stephen Mrozowski do suggest that it may be more broadly applicable. I favor this wider approach, and suggest that archaeologists look to a pragmatist framework when outlining research that addresses the relevance of a project to the needs of researchers and communities. This is accomplished by reformulating pragmatist theory to be suitable for archaeological practice, acknowledging that there are multiple interpretations of the past including a scientific methodology which produces its own type of knowledge. Some pragmatist philosophers adhere to a relativist theory of truth, but this extreme conclusion can be avoided with careful reading of the theory's original context and selective use of the writings of its philosophers. These considerations lead to a framework that encourages dialogue and consideration of multiple viewpoints and discussions of how we know what we know, while aiming the results to a practical end. The success of each project is judged according to its relevancy to all the stakeholders involved: the various publics, archeologists, patrons, and so on. A consideration of all these voices allows communities to speak out about how archaeology can or cannot assist in their goals rather than allowing this to be determined by researchers, facilitating the formation of meaningful relationships between archaeologists and communities in negotiating the past. In some cases reflexive use of the scientific method based on observation and empirical measures may be the most suitable approach, but in others oral history or other methods may be particularly relevant to a community, requiring researchers to reflect on the importance of different practices and how they can all effectively contribute to a broader understanding of the past and how people relate to it. The role of the archaeologist often, but not always, includes use of a scientific method that is reflexive and open to critique and
interpretation, in addition to a commitment to ethical guidelines set forth by professional organizations and the ongoing discussions and revisions concerning such principles. In light of these considerations I will discuss some of the basics of pragmatist theory and its suitability for archaeological practice.

It is reasonable to be concerned that a pragmatic approach would discount the interests of archaeological researchers, but this is not the case when archaeologists are included as another interested community. Investigation of some potentially problematic cases in archeology (Smith and Jackson 2008, Rossen 2008) suggests that we should be prepared to examine the role of the archaeologist when our stake may be at risk, overlooked, or discounted as selfish or elitist. This is not a prevalent situation, but it is important to acknowledge the possibility in a conversation that addresses an archaeologist’s role. By examining some of these problematic cases in light of pragmatist theory I will show that there are alternatives and better solutions. Incorporating a community’s interests and guidelines into a research design may be a way to make archaeology more relevant to peoples’ lives.

The pragmatic approach is not only applicable to long-term projects that have typically served as venues for public collaboration. Cultural resource management (CRM) has in some cases been successful in engaging communities (Herbster and Cherau 2006), but generally operates within a business framework: contracts are bid upon, projects are completed, and technical reports are filed. Mandatory consultation with interested parties, as chosen by the investigator, is written into Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (King 2008), yet costs of public collaboration and/or outreach are rarely incorporated into the overall cost of completing a project, making it difficult to include these elements unless a contractor is willing to expend additional time and funds. In some cases it may not even seem possible to make a project relevant to the public. In such cases pragmatism may ask, “Is it even worth doing?” If one recalls that the archaeological community has a fundamental and irrevocable stake in research then it is
very possible that these projects remain necessary, but this justification may not always result in a
satisfactory answer, as not every project may produce valuable information.

There are solutions to these CRM issues. The legal framework surrounding CRM should
require a pragmatic approach that allows for consideration of both the law and alternative
approaches; it may not always be possible for standard survey methods to incorporate different
interests, but this does not mean that these legally required practices should be abandoned. In
actuality, the National Historic Preservation Act as administered by the State Historic
Preservation Office, which guides most CRM, has considerable room for flexibility on
appropriate methods for archaeological practice as well as public involvement. Also, questions of
to whom CRM is relevant cannot be ignored, lest we forget why CRM legislation was created in
the first place—to protect valuable cultural heritage resources for the public’s sake.
Archaeological testing requirements do not exist as make-work projects for contract
archaeologists, but are in place so professionals can ensure these resources are available to benefit
the public, whatever that may entail. To appreciate the ways in which pragmatism can inform the
practice of CRM, I will examine the legislation behind the practice and its flexibility in working
with different practices of knowledge creation. Community involvement and outreach is
consistent with the laws, and a pragmatic approach can be applied to this area of the discipline.

I must acknowledge that there will be cases where a collaborative approach does not
succeed. Pragmatism does not promise consensus, but the success of the approach is in its
framework that encourages discussion and negotiation. This is not to say that the approach is
useless in these problematic cases, as James Bohman (1996) suggests that the goal of critical
inquiry is self-reflection, not necessarily a solution. Concerns that we may not always be able to
determine a project’s relevancy must not delay us from trying, and given the increased emphasis
on public collaboration and engagement I do not think that it has. After beginning with a case
study of the difficulties at Port Tobacco and an evaluation of the current state of public
archaeology I will suggest that a pragmatic approach, emphasizing the exploration of multiple interpretations and maximizing a project’s relevancy, is prepared to deal with the different concerns of pluralistic communities. In addition, a pragmatic archaeology includes archaeologists as stakeholders, and is capable of confronting the problems that may arise from current public archaeology practices including excessive demands of researchers, questionable treatment of archaeological resources, and risks of overlooking the unique voices that comprise our publics. I will extend the application of this theory in a discussion of compliance archaeological investigations, and close by suggesting pragmatist solutions for Port Tobacco. For archaeology to remain relevant to some publics and become relevant to others, it must engage communities, listen to them, and offer its own thoughts. Pragmatism makes this possible.

Today, archaeology serves the interests of a very different public compared to personalities like Flinders Petrie and Heinrich Sliemann, collectors and investigators of antiquity in the 1800s and early 1900s. We have acknowledged a requirement to engage communities outside of the field, which is especially important given the shift towards incorporating different interpretations of the past. In this thesis I examine how pragmatist theory is suited for maximizing the relevance of archaeological practice to diverse publics while maintaining its foundation in academic discussion, debate, and critique, two aims that are often compatible. I have divided this research into five sections beginning with my personal experience as a participant in a problematic public archaeology project (Chapter II). Pinpointing the problems at Port Tobacco, as well as examining current approaches to public archaeology leads to a discussion of how pragmatism offers a useful framework for uniting outreach and collaborative practices (Chapter III). This is followed by a more in depth consideration of pragmatist theory and its application in a Pragmatist Archaeology (Chapter IV). Next, I consider some of the potential problems associated with public archaeology, including conflicts of interest between archaeologists and publics, and how a Pragmatist Archaeology positions researchers to take into account different
ways of knowing while implementing the scientific method (Chapter V). I then show how cultural resource management laws and practice are conducive to a pragmatist approach, though the emphasis on public involvement has largely been neglected in practice (Chapter VI). I conclude that while Pragmatist Archaeology may not be a cure all, it is a productive approach both locally, for increasing the relevance of the Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, and more broadly by making archaeological practice and purpose relevant in the twenty-first century.
CHAPTER II: PORT TOBACCO, A CASE STUDY

It was a crisp morning at Port Tobacco, Maryland, and despite the early hour volunteers were arriving at the excavation site with chipper attitudes and coffee mugs in hand. Almost immediately people were picking up shovels, grabbing trowels, taking their places next to a screen, or setting up at the field lab. This was my first opportunity to participate in archaeological field work, and I soon realized that while artifacts, soils, and features of the excavation were fascinating, it was the community of diverse individuals brought together by a shared interest in archaeology that charged the atmosphere with excitement.

My volunteer experience at the Archaeological Society of Maryland’s Annual Tyler Bastian field session in 2009 at Port Tobacco, Maryland was only the beginning of my involvement with this site. I was hired to help conduct research with the Port Tobacco Archaeological Project (PTAP) which was formed to explore the history and archaeology of the town and promote public outreach. The project, established in 2007, has accomplished a systematic shovel test survey, extensive excavation of test units, soil and artifact analysis, public outreach exhibits and online blog, and also has succeeded in implementing a volunteer program. The enthusiastic community of dedicated volunteers created the perception that the research being conducted was relevant to a broad audience, but this illusion was shattered when I began to conduct interviews with local residents in an effort to determine their interest in our research and gather input for the future directions of the project. I found a public that was frustrated with our work, and realized that our efforts to make our research relevant to the pluralistic publics of Port Tobacco have fallen short.

The failures at Port Tobacco thus far do not necessarily spell doom for the project, though its further development will depend upon more than successful outreach including factors like funding and local government support. To begin to address the public component, a pragmatist approach would provide a framework for reconsidering our motives at the site as well as those of the communities with which we are interacting. To illustrate this potential I will begin with a
brief history of the site, demonstrating that there is significant scholarly value to the
archaeological deposits. This research potential is what led to the formation of PTAP, but an
analysis of the project’s vision statement also shows a strong commitment to public outreach and
collaboration. This background information combined with my experience as a member of the
project sheds light on why we have suffered difficulties with many of Port Tobacco’s publics,
save for a dedicated volunteer community. I suggest that in our outreach efforts we have at times
failed to take into account the priorities of others. I will briefly cover these publics, elaborating on
our relationship with the local community to show how our neglect to go beyond a basic
recognition of their connection to the site has resulted in disagreement as well as apathy.
Identifying the problems at this site speaks to a need for a new framework for archaeological
research capable of addressing multiple publics.

History of Port Tobacco

A brief account of the history of Port Tobacco reveals the pluralistic communities
connected to the site and the value of the deposits for studying the early history of Chesapeake
towns. Port Tobacco is located near a branch of the Potomac River in Charles County in Southern
Maryland (Figure 1). Based on John Smith’s 1608 map of the Chesapeake, prior to European
settlement this area was inhabited by Native Americans living in a village called Potobac.
Europeans named the creek for this village and the name eventually morphed into Port Tobacco
and was changed in 1820. Following exploration of the area, Jesuit missionaries were active in
their efforts to convert the Piscataway Indians, marking the start of a European presence in the
area that obscured the presence of Native Americans on the landscape. The exact location of the
village of Potobac remains unknown, but archaeological findings at Port Tobacco point towards a
significant Native American presence that may shed light on the history of the Piscataway
Indians.
Soon after missionary efforts began farmers and merchants moved into the area and divided the land into plats. Plantation owner Job Chandler divided his land in the 1720s, and the buyers of some of these lots formed Chandler’s Town. In 1727 Charles County purchased the town as the future home of its county seat, renaming it Charles Town. In 1730 the courthouse was officially opened, and the town was laid out with streets, alleys, lots, and a main square (Quantock et al. 2010). While the town initially prospered because of the shipping opportunities made available by the river, erosion due to farming on the surrounding hillsides quickly caused the Port Tobacco Creek to silt in, possibly as early as the 1770s (Gottschalk 1945). The loss of a shipping industry only minimally affected the town, which was able to continue thriving as a result of its position as a commercial and judicial center.

The construction of a new courthouse in 1818 suggests that Port Tobacco flourished at the beginning and middle of the 19th century. At the onset of the Civil War the town was caught between rival factions as a northern town full of southern sympathizers. Union troops occupied the town at one point, and there are various personal connections between the town and the Civil War including its status as the birthplace of George Atzerodt who was a coconspirator of John Wilkes Booth. The town was also home to a great number of free African-Americans during this period (Gibb et al. 2010).
The town began to decline at the end of the 19th century. There were numerous factors contributing to this downfall, but the final blow was dealt when the county seat was moved to nearby La Plata. This move followed a fire that ravaged the courthouse in 1892, destroying many of the town’s records. The loss of the courthouse at Port Tobacco and the construction of the railroad in nearby La Plata made it an easy decision for the county to change the location of its seat of government. Following this event most of the population left the town and its buildings fell into disrepair. The area was not completely deserted, but by the mid-20th century most of Port Tobacco had been returned to cultivated field (Gibb et al 2010).

At present the town consists of three 18th-century buildings, the late 19th-century schoolhouse, a reconstructed courthouse dating to 1970, and several scattered houses and barns (Figure 2). Much of the area is open field, rich in archaeological deposits. The same is not true of the documentary record, which was damaged and scattered due to a courthouse fire, pillaging of records by a Union solider in 1863, and possible hording of documents by current residents unsure about the intentions of archaeologists and other community members. The surviving maps and archival material, as well as the archaeological investigations, have begun to reveal Port Tobacco’s past.

FIGURE 2: Extant conditions at Port Tobacco.
Vision

Port Tobacco’s rich history of diverse populations including Native Americans, European immigrants, and free African-Americans makes it a site with the potential to inform numerous research topics. In this setting PTAP has attempted to conduct quality research with a commitment to public involvement. Once the project was conceived and the necessary permissions obtained PTAP began excavations in 2008. At this time PTAP drafted a vision statement and business plan for a Port Tobacco museum and visitor center. The project’s objectives include creating a center for historical, archaeological, and ecological research and education, promoting heritage tourism, building partnerships with communities and agencies, creating interactive exhibits, obtaining funding, and working with schools and universities. The Vision Statement and Business Plan outlines the details of funding and agencies for establishing a Port Tobacco Museum and Visitor Center in addition to highlighting the potential to engage various communities as part of a larger effort to draw interest to Charles County’s historical resources (Gibb 2008).

Another component of the project is collaboration with the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco (SRPT) Incorporated, a non-profit organization. The Society was established in 1948 by residents of the town “dedicated to increasing public interest in the heritage of Port Tobacco.” (Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco 2010). As part of the SRPT’s mission “Early buildings and sections of the town will be restored or reconstructed for appropriate uses including: exhibiting materials, educational use and appropriate civic events,” similar to the set-up at Colonial Williamsburg (Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco 2010). The time period chosen for reconstruction was the late 19th century, prior to the destruction of the courthouse. This decision was made for two reasons: The Page County Survey, the only official surviving map of the town, dates to approximately this period, and the Barbour Map, drawn by a local resident, depicts this time as well (Gibb, Biesaw, and Walter 2010). Since its creation the SRPT has
undertaken extensive archival research and amateur archaeological investigations. Two buildings, the courthouse and the Quentzel Store, have been reconstructed, and a third building, The Burch House, has been restored. The SRPT still runs a museum out of the courthouse, though it is open sporadically. At its creation PTAP was intended to support the goals of the SRPT.

Potential Partners

At this time the project has produced mixed results concerning its goals of research and public outreach. While the aims discussed in PTAP’s vision statement are well-intentioned, in some ways the plan was unsuccessful from the beginning as it relies on a particular vision set forth by the archaeologists, not one formed by identifying and integrating the interests of Port Tobacco’s communities. The broad aims of PTAP include research, education, and citizenship; however, while the plan explicitly states the importance of “building consensus in the community to insure broad, enduring support” (Gibb 2008:3), and emphasizes creating partnerships, it is not clear if this has worked in practice. Engagement with some of the communities has been limited, and research has been stalled by lack of funding, even with the tremendous assistance from a dedicated volunteer core.

A community identified as a possible partner for research is the Piscataway Indian Nation. Given Port Tobacco’s construction on or in the vicinity of Potobac, as well as the wealth of Native American artifacts recovered from the site, collaboration could lead to further research and understanding about Native cultures in the Chesapeake prior to and after European arrival, as well as create opportunities to increase the visibility of the Native population currently residing in the state. Deposits at Port Tobacco have revealed materials dating from the Early Archaic through European arrival. The Piscataway have acknowledged an affiliation with these materials, but research at Port Tobacco is not a priority for this group as at present their efforts are focused on achieving state and federal recognition (Hughes and Henry 2006). The community remains skeptical about the potential for PTAP’s mission to be relevant to these current goals and
rightfully so: the proposal for research does not focus on topics that address native sovereignty. There is potential for archaeologists to be of assistance to this community, but greater dialogue is required to assess the potential for this type of collaboration.

The African-American community connected to the town through familial relations, interest, and/or location, offers another opportunity to increase the relevancy of research at Port Tobacco. Several sites have been identified as connected to African-American individuals, and the project has considered the use of these sites as teaching tools, particularly for local school children. One site in particular, the Burch House, was home to Washington Burch, an African-American who was very involved in the local church and aided in the establishment of a school for African-American children (Gibb 2008). Success in reaching out to local schools has been limited, though it is not certain if this is due to a lack of interest or difficulty with finding time in the curriculum for this material. It is unclear if the African-American descendant community has any interest in the site, and without increasing our efforts to engage in dialogue with this group its thoughts and aims will remains unknown.

The Resident Community

Port Tobacco residents comprise the public PTAP most frequently encounters. Their involvement in the project as members of the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco (SRPT), presence at the site, and ownership of portions of the land has resulted in increased interaction and, unfortunately, conflict. My experiences interviewing community members has resulted in a better understanding of why such conflicts occur, and illustrates the reasons behind some of the failures at Port Tobacco.

Since the creation of the SRPT its ambitions have changed considerably. This shift is partially due to internal family feuds and accusations of stolen material or property, but an aging population and questions of power have played a major part. One interviewee demanded progress reports and asserted that all we had uncovered was “found where it was supposed to be on the
map.” The same resident chastised us for working as though we were in a vacuum, for “the history has been written, and it is absolutely of scholarly quality,” (Interviews with Port Tobacco Residents 2009). PTAP’s research is viewed suspiciously, as though our intentions and methods are challenging the ability of the community to tell its own history. We must recognize that while our methods and aims are important, our perception of the landscape is very different from that of the local residents.

A factor influencing the motivations of the SRPT is the increasing age of Port Tobacco residents. The impact of age and experience on memory is explored by Maria G. Cattell (2002) in her research in a Philadelphia neighborhood. Her findings are particularly pertinent given the older age of the current residents at Port Tobacco, ranging from those aged in their mid-fifties to octogenarians. She focuses on the meanings associated not only with place, but with events, persons, and objects. These meanings are cumulative, so older individuals have imbued events or materials with a far greater amount of meaning (Cattell 2002). Excerpts from her interviews are exceedingly similar to my own, as residents recall childhood memories with heavy nostalgia for a past that was harmonious and orderly, even though Port Tobacco was in decline through much of the 20th century. This nostalgia is not only for the past Port Tobacco, but for a time when people were more interested in history (Interviews with Port Tobacco Residents 2009). This idealized era, not the archaeological resource, is how residents perceive Port Tobacco. Understanding a population’s history, relationship with other communities, and changing interests is especially important now that the future of Port Tobacco is under scrutiny. Apathetic comments made during interviews make it clear that initial visions of a reconstructed town have been lost, and are rejected by the very same who once supported them (or if not rejected, are at least viewed skeptically). This shift may have some connection to age and changing interests (Cattell 2002). “Little Williamsburg” has been traded in for a quiet, spacious area that only exists as a bustling town in sketches. When asked about what they would like to see in the future two residents
remarked that they would like to see Port Tobacco “the way it is now,” “a sleepy little country town.”

An additional aspect to consider is how the local community is connected to the site, and the implications of this connection for understanding discourse. Problems have arisen concerning the use of the Barbour Map, drawn by local resident Robert Guy Barbour (1885-1958) in 1942 to depict the 1894 town (Figure 3). This map is not often relied upon by the PTAP crew given its biases and inaccuracy, which has in turn led to conflict with some local residents as their understanding of Port Tobacco’s history is closely tied to this map. Our questioning of its value not only undermines the work of their ancestors, but threatens to disrupt the history of Port Tobacco as they know it. Reflecting on this conflict suggests that while this map may not be useful for an objective study of the town’s layout, it does offer clues as to how local residents consider space and history. Examining the bias of this map demonstrates that the document is situated within a larger narrative and discourse that in some respects conflicts with the activities of PTAP. These broad themes can be connected to theoretical considerations of how memory

affects depiction of place, the role of mapping as a non-neutral activity connected to power and control of knowledge, and conflicting discourses.

Map-making is a subjective activity, and it is generally accepted that the creation of most maps can be problematic (see Seasholes 1988, Cosgrove 1999, and others). Considering the map’s creator, audience, and purpose may help in determining accuracy, but it also reveals larger forces shaping bias, especially as maps have the ability to conjure up experiences, identity, possibilities, and memory (Gruenewald 2003, Guo 2003). A basic analysis of the Barbour Map reveals inaccuracies in scale and location of buildings, due in part to the methods for creating the map as it was drawn to depict the town in 1894, at which time R. Barbour was a nine-year-old boy. To draw the map he spoke with local residents about their memories of the late 19th-century town, creating more of a diachronic memory map than a depiction of the town in one particular year. Still, the locations of some of the buildings are correct, and the included notes about events, environment, and residents are valuable.

FIGURES 4 and 5: Port Tobacco Souvenir Book and sketch example (R. Barbour 1971).
The Barbour Map is accompanied by a series of sketches that was eventually printed as a souvenir book (Figures 4 and 5). The sketches in this book include drawings of the courthouse, stores, home, hotels, interior layouts, and in some instances, notes concerning their appearance or occupants. An introduction was added when the book was put together in 1971 by James L. Barbour, son of R. Barbour. In this introduction he gives a brief history of the town, emphasizing the grandeur of Port Tobacco’s past, describing it as “part of where it all began,” (Barbour 1971: ii). This importance is reinforced by connecting the town to historic personalities in United States History including John Hanson the President of the Continental Congress, Dr. Gustavus Brown the physician of George Washington, Thomas Stone a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and George Atzerodt a co-conspirator of John Wilkes Booth.

The Barbour map is a reflection of the personal histories of the community in the town: their past, present, and future, revealing how its members have formed narratives of the past. Memory is created and recreated in response to pressures and contingencies of experience, family, education, and other forces. Lynn Meskell points out that “…memory can no longer be viewed as a set of ossified things or practices, which is the tendency of archaeologists, given the static nature of perceived archaeological traces,” (Meskell 2007:221). At Port Tobacco the residents’ interests are in the late 19th century, and an evaluation of the census records shows that it was during this time that the ancestors of the families currently residing in Port Tobacco moved to the area and put their roots down. If memory is connected to experience of a place, then it makes sense that the residents of Port Tobacco are not concerned with the earlier colonial history of which there are considerable material remains that interest archaeologists—they want to focus on the town as lived by their families. By emphasizing a particular point in time, one that resonates with experience of a place, people can achieve a positive sense of belonging, even ownership, of the place in which they are living. Integral to these feelings is a sense of nostalgia that arises when a certain value is placed on the past (Lowenthal 1975). Nostalgia for a more
Prosperous Port Tobacco is visible in the sketches that accompany the Barbour Map, depicting and describing the grandeur of many of the buildings that were in the town. The map itself reminds residents of the past, conjuring up and organizing memories both real and imagined, as in his introduction to the map and sketches J. Barbour writes:

“The writer can recall the aroma of a freshly lit pipe, the long winter evenings beside a comfortable and well stoked wood stove, and many very interesting discussions with old timers who could contribute any information concerning the village in earlier times, while his father attempted to piece together as much of the lost Port Tobacco past as possible,” (J. Barbour, 1971:viii).

Considering the role of discourse is also useful for understanding why collaboration with Port Tobacco residents has been unsuccessful. PTAP archaeologists have entered the town frustrated with the poorly documented research and improper storage of finds (Gibb, Biesaw, and Walter 2010). Our work is influenced by an archaeological science discourse that promotes a particular way of dissecting and explaining landscape, and these methods have run head-first into the discourse in which the residents of Port Tobacco operate, one that is influenced by memories, experience, family, and nostalgia. The archaeologists have walked into the midst of an existing means of producing knowledge that is based in a discourse framed by experience and family connections of a particular time period, leading residents to demand to know how we can understand a place known to them through lived experience. Without recognizing the local community’s connection to Port Tobacco and the unique roles family, nostalgia, local politics, and experience have played in influencing their goals it will only be increasingly difficult to engage this group.

Recognizing a Need for Change

Archaeology at Port Tobacco has encountered numerous shortcomings when it comes to serving PTAP’s visions, but the project has not been without significant success. The amount of quality scientific excavation that has occurred at the site is vital for understanding the development of Chesapeake towns and the interactions that occurred between their populations.
Additionally, the activity at Port Tobacco has not occurred without notice: local newspapers (McConaty 2007, 2009) have taken an interest in the work and a dedicated community of volunteers has formed. This volunteer core bound by the project, as many of the volunteers come from other parts of the county and state purely because of an interest in research (Gibb, Biesaw, and Walter 2010). This group has provided machinery, reference material, labor, and some members have conducted significant archival research on the project’s behalf. PTAP’s experience working with this community has been very different from its interaction with others, and demonstrates that while it has been successful in engaging some publics, changes are necessary to accommodate others.

The problems with our efforts at Port Tobacco revolve around a need for PTAP to further acknowledge of the interests of different publics and work in partnership with them to determine how research can be made more relevant. For the Piscataway we have not expanded our efforts to exploring how evidence of a Native presence at Port Tobacco can influence recognition efforts. In the case of the African American community we are not even certain if there is tangible interest in the site and what these interests may entail. Furthermore, PTAP has not fully explored the complexity of the local residents’ connection to Port Tobacco as well as their changing agenda. Finally, taking a stance that privileges PTAP in deciding the future of Port Tobacco without additional input from the affected communities will likely do little to gain cooperation or improve our relevance. Without further support and interest from these communities the future development of the site is obscured, even without consideration of other problematic issues such as funding. Examining and experiencing these deficiencies made it apparent to me that a new framework was necessary to reverse this trend. Pragmatism, properly contextualized and defined in the field of archaeology, offers a potential solution for Port Tobacco and other archaeological endeavors.
CHAPTER III: CURRENT APPROACHES TO PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

I. Current Practices

The increase in archaeological research that incorporates the interests of the public suggests that archaeologists are addressing accusations of being too specialized or localized in the ivory-tower, and are striving to find ways to make the discipline relevant to more people. The difficulty with characterizing this shift is that there is no single set of guidelines for how to choose and engage with publics. Rather, numerous approaches have sprung up over the past several decades that are driven by different motives. In this chapter I will untangle some of the most prominent approaches by highlighting the major tenets of each and their publics. After this brief analysis, I suggest that the similarities and differences between these practices can be easily accommodated by grounding archaeological practice in pragmatist theory.

This section addresses many of the public and collaborative archaeological approaches currently at the forefront of the discipline (see Silliman 2008, LaRoche and Blakey 1997, Nassaney 2009, Meskell 2009, Saitta 2007, Little 2007, and others). I have selected a sampling of both broad practices and those associated with the work of a few individuals and clients to illustrate the diversity of these efforts. The approaches I examine include Indigenous Archaeologies, African Diaspora Archaeology, Community-Service Learning, Cosmopolitan Archaeology, general public outreach, the Archaeology of Collective Action, and Civic Engagement. I realize that this is not a comprehensive account of all the types of outreach or collaboration, nor do I fully analyze each practice discussed; however, I assert that these methods are a suitable sampling of the trend of incorporating the public into research and are sufficient for comparing and contrasting aims and methods. A pragmatist framework can incorporate these practices, as well as others that are not presented in this discussion.

Indigenous Archaeologies
Indigenous Archaeology is one of the most developed and rapidly growing fields of archaeological practice. This practice has many definitions, and is often portrayed as a reaction to archaeology’s shameful past rooted in appropriation of material and colonialism (Silliman 2010). Archaeologists are seeking to form new relationships with native communities that do not necessarily privilege archaeologists as authorities of the past and controllers of archaeological data (Bendremer and Richman 2006). A sampling of the archaeologists publishing in this field includes Stephen S. Silliman, T.J. Ferguson, Kurt Jordan, Jeffrey Hantman, Jordan Kerber, Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Kent Lightfoot, Joe Watkins, and Sonya Atalay. Prior to examining the particular aspects of this approach it must be recognized that Indigenous Archaeologies, is a more suitable term, as there is a wealth of approaches that have been successfully implemented (Silliman 2008, Lightfoot 2008, Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al 2010). Broadly, Indigenous Archaeologies incorporate themes of connecting the past and present, emphasis on process not product, diversity and flexibility, sustainability, and pedagogy (Silliman 2008). Other topics in Indigenous Archaeologies include questions of sovereignty and authority, control of knowledge, legal requirements, community needs, and activism. These are complicated issues that will not be pursued within this work, but still should be recognized.

Claims of ownership of the past are complicated and involve explaining the past using conceptions of time, space, and knowledge as defined by individual communities. This has the potential to challenge to Western science, which holds that there is a definable, testable, and reproducible Truth (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Ferguson, and Anyon 2008, Atalay 2008). Indigenous Archaeologies seek to bring these different ways of understanding closer to, or at least acknowledge that there are models outside of, Western scientific discourse. Additionally, many indigenous claims to control heritage are now protected by law as, for example, in the United States where the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act requires federal agencies to return Native American human remains and important cultural items to respective
native populations. In addition to legal requirements many native groups are taking more active roles in owning and curating archaeological materials, sometimes with the aid of a Tribal Historical Preservation Office (Herbster and Cherau 2006). These efforts are significant, but still severely limited by requirements of federal recognition and funding.

In this setting sovereignty has become an increasingly important issue, as groups claim the “right to be stewards of our own culture,” (Two Bears 2008). In some cases native groups such as the White Mountain Apache have engaged in long-term field schools in which they control research design, site database, publishing, materials, and other aspects of archaeological research (Mills et al 2008). Other projects do not have as much native control, such as a summer program run by Jordan E. Kerber (2002, 2006, 2008) for Oneida youth and archaeologists. This project strengthened relationships, provided hands-on experience, protected archaeological resources, and for some participants helped reaffirm a beneficial connection to the land. In a different type of collaborative project, field school participants working with the Eastern Pequot in Connecticut left an offering of tobacco at each shovel test and returned all non-worked lithics to the land. These practices adhered to required standards for testing and were able to accommodate indigenous interests and beliefs (Silliman and Dring 2008). These projects illustrate how collaborative projects can include the interests of communities without necessarily abandoning scientific methods. Other approaches emphasize advocacy, teaching, and training native people in the discipline. As Joe Watkins (2000a) suggests Indigenous Archaeologies must focus on practices that are of, by, and for the community. They require researchers to consider aboriginal worldviews and ways of knowing as part of the research process and work with communities to find ways to make the outcomes of a project beneficial to all involved.

**African Diaspora Archaeology**

Archaeology of sites related to African-American communities and the African Diaspora are not necessarily subsumed under an approach distinctly labeled “African Diaspora
Archeology," but I am employing the term as working with this public generally includes special considerations of the complex and often difficult history of African-American communities. Efforts to engage with African-Americans have increased as researchers and publics reason that archaeology should be useful for African-American populations as a practice that is connected to power, equality, and control (see McDavid 1997, Cuddy and Leone 2008). Possible routes include encouraging African-Americans to use archaeology as a source of information about their past (Edwards-Ingram 1997), focusing on how specific types of archaeology such as plantation archaeology can be made more relevant (Gibb 1997), and generally being open to entertain other possibilities. Importantly, these practices extend beyond benefiting communities directly to increasing the visibility of the richness and diversity of African-American culture and the important contributions of African-Americans throughout history.

Possibly the most visible case of African Diaspora Archaeology is the African Burial Ground Project in New York City. This project remains in the public eye because of the controversy that arose when the initial researchers did not consult the public after uncovering an 18th-century burial ground for Africans, as well as the subsequent care in handling the project following public outcry. The public, including descendants of the individuals buried at the site, became aware of these actions and demanded accountability and consultation, resulting in a reconceptualization of the project by a team from Howard University led by Michael L. Blakey. This team sought out the descendant community as the clients for their work, asking what use researchers could be to the local community of descendants who had been previously overlooked in discussions, debate, and dialogue surrounding the site (LaRoche and Blakey 1997). A sampling of the communities affected by this research included scholars, religious leaders, the African Diaspora community, school children, and activists. In this case project leaders were able to research questions related to population origins and physical quality of life while first and foremost adhering to guidelines put forth by representatives of the descendant community.
(LaRoche and Blakey 1997). This public interaction was only part of the team’s approach which consisted of four elements. The first was the use of critical theory in an effort to socially empower the community through research. Second, while researched had an obligation to both a research and ethical client, ethics require that the voices of the descendant group were privileged when it came to research design, terminology, and plans for the site. Third was a commitment to the use of multidisciplinary data sets, enhancing the project through the use of biological, cultural, and historic data. Importantly, this requires that the archaeologists maintained a commitment to standards of evidential proof, but acknowledges that communities have a right to reject scholarly involvement. Finally, the project implemented an African diasporic frame of reference that not only incorporated an international context for understanding the site, but also enhanced the human understanding of the individuals that is often lost in the homogenizing term “slaves.” (Blakey 2008). This project can be connected to larger objectives of confronting and changing preconceived notions about African-American history, biology, and culture. Increasing the involvement of the public and maintaining dialogue and collaboration when it comes to a project’s design and aims is part of how African Diaspora Archaeology, like Indigenous Archaeologies, addresses questions of power and ownership in the context of unique African-American histories.

Community Service Learning

Community Service Learning, an approach discussed by Michael Nassaney and Mary Anne Levine in an edited volume, emphasizes the context of knowledge claims, providing a service to communities, and the promotion of learning by engaging in real world settings (Nassaney 2009). Nassaney (2009) acknowledges that the field must change in order to be relevant, and he suggests that this is possible with a shift from compliance to engagement and recognition of the power and control associated with archaeology. His work is focused on the site
of Fort Saint Joseph in Niles, Michigan which served as a Jesuit mission and French trading post in the 17th and 18th centuries.

One of the facets of Community Service Learning that sets it apart from other approaches is its commitment to teaching and engaging students in service projects (Nassaney 2009). This emphasis is visible in Ruben Mendoya’s (2009) piece on collaborative archaeology at the San Juan Bautista Mission where students tracked what they learned in online journals and participated in follow-up projects. Another important component of this approach is the assertion of collaboration, not charity. This is the case even in projects that fall short of their goals, such as the excavations of Happy Hill, an African-American schoolhouse in North Carolina (Thacker 2009). Archaeologists worked with an African-American community concerned with finding the schoolhouse during a period of redevelopment. The project was not fruitful in this matter, but was overwhelmingly successful in forming a community partnership (Thacker 2009). Community Service Learning aims to increase the relevance of archaeological research by contextualizing knowledge, recognizing power relations, and emphasizing pedagogy.

**Cosmopolitan Archaeology**

Cosmopolitan Archaeology, as defined by Lynn Meskell, extends the obligations of archaeologists to serving communities and increasing awareness of our role in larger discussions about heritage. The basis for this approach is cosmopolitan theory that emphasizes a respect for cultural difference. Meskell (2009) draws from her work in South Africa’s Kruger National Park, where her examination reveals how the park’s interest in biodiversity and nature neglects the culture and history of the indigenous people in the area. She suggests that a Cosmopolitan Archaeology incorporates the interests those South Africans that have been overlooked or ignored, particularly the indigenous population.

The broad approach of Cosmopolitan Archaeology is seen in the diversity of topics addressed in Meskell’s edited volume *Cosmopolitan Archaeologies* (2009). For instance, Alfredo
González-Ruibal’s (2009) work in the Southwest challenges “biased conceptions of world heritage,” while Chip Caldwell-Chathaphonh (2009) addresses ownership of cultural property. Cosmopolitan theory delves farther into ethical considerations of ownership and stewardship obligations, verging on the edge of arguments about duties to aid others discussed by Peter Singer (1972) and Richard Miller (2004). Other scholars highlight cosmopolitan values in their work, including Ian Hodder’s (2008) emphasis on multivocality. Practitioners of this approach are most concerned with ethical issues of culture ownership and the ways in which archaeologists must be prepared to use their expertise to respond to the global heritage concerns.

**General Outreach**

It is important that this discussion include the numerous projects that emphasize public outreach that may not involve collaboration but still focus on making the discipline more relevant to the public. A survey of Canadian and American archaeologists conducted in 1994 and 1995 suggested that most archaeologists saw the necessity of public involvement, and the sheer rise of public outreach suggests that much has changed since the beginnings of the discipline (Edwards-Ingram 1997). Addressing the interests and concerns of the public not only can increase the relevance of the discipline, but has the ability to shape how the public perceives archaeologists. Granted, most public outreach projects address concerns of the interested public, but this faction should not be overlooked for the sake of more neglected groups (Bartoy 1999).

The methods used for reaching out to the general public have been as diverse as those used in collaborative projects. One approach is publishing for the public, which may include writing in newsletters, smaller journals, community bulletins, and other local print sources (Gibb 1997). Other types of public outreach include museum displays, archaeological site visits, interpretive signs, and traveling exhibits. In many areas these are available year round, such as projects hosted by the Florida Public Archaeology Network, and most states amp up the visibility of archaeology during an “Archaeology Month.” Other projects emphasize education, such as the
programs run by David Bush at the Johnson’s Island Civil War Military Prison site (see Bush and George 2010).

In addition to public outreach projects there are many opportunities for the interested public to be involved in archaeology on national, state, and local levels. Most states have archaeological societies that advertise volunteer activities and technician certification programs, as well as interact with professional archaeologists. At the national level, the Passport in Time Program is an example of a program that takes volunteers to conduct archaeological survey and historic preservation projects in conjunction with the National Forestry Department. These types of opportunities are educational, but also serve to increase the amount of archaeological research conducted. General outreach can take many different forms, but generally focuses on making archaeological discoveries more accessible and interesting to the public.

Archaeology of Collective Action

Dean Saitta’s “Archaeology of Collective Action” is an approach that adheres to some of the same tenets as Civic Engagement and Community Service Learning. Saitta (2007) coined this phrase based on his work at the Ludlow Massacre Site. This site was the location of a tent colony where in 1914 fourteen people were killed when the Colorado National Guard came to the aid of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company that was attempting to end a strike by the United Mine Workers of America. Saitta (2007) suggests that examining instances of collective action, such as those at Ludlow, confronts historical metanarratives and the inequalities they produce. For this approach, Saitta recognizes the construction of knowledge, archaeology as a process, and pragmatism in research concerning identity, race, gender, class, and the role of elite.

The union community at Ludlow has played an active role in determining how the site should be memorialized, and has also been involved with teaching children about worker’s rights, inequality, and union history (Saitta 2010). This collaboration accommodated the research questions of archaeologists, including how pluralistic immigrant communities interacted with one
another, interests which were not separate from those of descendants and the public. An Archaeology of Collective Action critically examines vernacular histories in light of pervasive metanarratives. This process includes forming connections with publics connected to a site based on experience and working with them to establish a project’s goals.

**Civic Engagement**

Civic Engagement, an approach discussed by Barbara Little (2007) and Paul Shackel, calls for an archaeology that brings about restorative justice by considering how present injustices are rooted in the past. To encourage engagement and effect positive change archaeologists must seek to build social capital, defined as relationships and connections to a community. More specifically, Little (2007) applies Caryn McTighe Musil’s (2003) framework for Civic Engagement to archaeology which is based on six phases of citizenship, knowledge, community, and benefits. At the fifth phase, labeled Civic Engagement, a community is viewed as a resource to empower as well as a source of empowerment (Little 2007). This view encourages projects that result in long-term relevance (Little and Amdur-Clark 2008).

Civic Engagement, as laid out in Little and Shackel’s edited volume, has the ability to accommodate efforts that fall under other approaches, granted that they incorporate major tenets of a civic engagement framework such as community and empowerment. This makes it possible to see this approach as capable of unifying various methods of public archaeology. For instance a community-service learning project that encourages student interaction with the community may also include the aims of empowering that public by giving them a say in the research design process. Connecting all these works together are major themes including working together, creating dialogue, considerations of knowledge creation, and incorporating community desires.

**II. Analysis**

The approaches discussed above make it clear that “public archaeology” does not consist of a specific set of guidelines but of different practices and aims that frequently overlap. These
crossovers and loose definitions make it difficult to effectively implement a public archaeology project in any given situation. This is not to say that these approaches are inadequate—on the contrary, many of them are quite forward thinking in terms of how the discipline can remain relevant to those outside the world of academia. Nevertheless, in order to avoid having to choose between approaches I suggest that pragmatism is a useful philosophy for combining these practices. Prior to applying and discussing the benefits of a pragmatist approach it is necessary to examine the similarities and differences between existing practices.

### Similarities

The above summary of the varied approaches to public archaeology reveals numerous intellectual similarities. Archaeologists concern themselves with questions of identity, ownership, and the privilege to create and control knowledge across community lines. These issues may be more apparent in Indigenous Archaeologies, where in many cases native groups have asserted a sovereign right to tell their histories without interference, though the same concerns appear in other contexts, such as the African Burial Ground. In some cases there are also similarities in how communities perceive place and connect to a site, making this an important consideration in public archaeology.

The role of the archaeologist is also similar between these different approaches as it is necessary for him or her to recognize the histories of stakeholders involved and be prepared to mediate the diverse interests in designing a research plan. Prior to implementing a project it is crucial that the context of a community’s existence be understood—what is its history and origins? Relations with other communities? These aspects cannot necessarily be studied, and much like the ensuing archaeological research require trust, patience, and commonsense (Nicholas 2008) which may necessitate researchers stepping outside of their traditional roles to act as an oral historians, advocates, coordinators, teachers, and so on.
Another unifying thread is the ability of these practices to take into account the complexity of identity. Some of these approaches may address a specific group, such as the indigenous population or African Diaspora community, but within each approach there is a wealth of methods as these broad populations are diverse themselves. This complexity gives archaeologists all the more reason to approach each community differently rather than with a preconceived notion of how archaeology may serve to benefit it.

A final similarity is the flexibility of these approaches. For instance, any one practice may focus on collaboration with descendant communities while also accommodating those connected to a site in a different way whether it is spiritually, historically, spatially, or because of interest. Even amidst the differences between these approaches it is clear that in many cases the methods for including interests of the target communities are similar. These practices share much; however, there are some important differences that have resulted in the diverse approaches to public archaeology.

Differences

Many of the differences between these approaches reside in their publics. For instance, some methods such as Indigenous Archaeologies place great importance on collaboration with descendant communities. This is true for other approaches, but is not as heavily emphasized in, for example, Community Service Learning and Civic Engagement. These seemingly benign differences get at the larger question of to whom does the term “public” refer. Unfortunately there is no easy answer to this question, as it will clearly vary by case and questions will undoubtedly arise as to whom is permitted to influence the direction of research. In some cases it may not even be clear which community has the deepest historical connections to a site, as apparent in Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, T.J. Ferguson, and Roger Anyen’s (2008) work on a site in the San Pedro Valley where three native groups—Hopi, Zuni, and Apache—claimed connections to a site.
Another difference can be found in comparing the priorities of these approaches. Again, Indigenous Archaeologies seek to correct the wrongs of past archaeologists and forge a partnership with indigenous peoples that accords them greater rights to control their cultural material. These goals do not conflict with the goals of say, Community Service Learning, though the latter places a particular emphasis on the pedagogical value of archaeology. A comparison of the main tenets of approaches to public archaeology does not reveal inconsistent aims though they may be prioritized differently, especially when a community’s history and desires are taken into account.

The final difference can be found in comparing methods, most significantly those used in outreach projects and collaborative projects. In the former the archaeologist still maintains considerable control over the goals of an archaeological project, deciding on how to report the progress and findings to the public in a way that is interesting and educational. The latter incorporated the voice(s) of the public(s) throughout the research process, which is especially important during the first phase of defining a project’s purpose and goals. Outreach and collaboration are not necessarily independent of one another, but often are implemented at different phases of the same project. Other methodological differences that arise are primarily due to the differences between communities themselves. It may not always be reasonable to expect a community to take on a strong planning and leadership role, especially if it is concerned with other projects that take precedence. Additionally, some groups may not want to be engaged, at which point an archaeologist much ask him or herself if the project is really worth doing, and to whom is it or will it be relevant. Also, differences could occur due to levels of sovereignty, cohesiveness of a group, or other factors arising by nature of dealing with different communities.

**Pragmatist Framework**

The two approaches to public archaeology that come closest to accommodating diverse practices and publics are Civic Engagement and Saitta’s pragmatist philosophy employed in his
“Archaeology of Collective Action,” but each falls short of creating a comprehensive practice. Civic Engagement’s emphasis on analyzing the stakeholders, defining a project’s purpose, and creating relationships are broad considerations suitable for all types of public involvement, but the use of a Civic Engagement framework is too restrictive. Communities may not want to be engaged in this manner and it is idealistic to presume that all archaeological projects will be connected to a community interested in the research and outcomes. Civic Engagement is readily applicable when there is an interested or willing public, but offers few guidelines for working with disinterested groups.

Saitta’s use of pragmatist philosophy moves the relevance of archaeology in a positive direction; however, he does not take the steps of extending it beyond his work at Ludlow and considering some of the broader implications for the archaeological research methods. The use of Richard Rorty’s pragmatist idea of an antifoundational notion of truth worked well in this setting, but Saitta does not consider what the outcome would have been if the archaeological findings and methods were contested. Saitta’s approach may be unprepared for situations where there is disagreement that challenges a researcher’s conclusions, as these may be dismissed in favor of narrative more suited to the community’s aims, rather than allowing space for both interpretations. To address these concerns and move towards a more appropriate Pragmatist Archaeology the theory must be contextualized and carefully defined.

Pragmatism is able to accommodate all of the approaches discussed in this section, as well as projects that do not fit within these established categories as archaeologists can rarely be sure of what kind of community they will encounter. Importantly, many archaeologists already embrace the flexibility of pragmatism without explicitly calling it such. Grounding all of these approaches in a theory that identifies different types of relevance and means of producing knowledge serves to recognize existing pragmatic solutions while making it unnecessary for other solutions to be limited by a sub-field of public archaeology. The following section discusses how
pragmatism makes it possible to move towards a more pluralistic public archaeology once care is taken to define the theory in an archaeological context. This step is necessary in order to recognize the necessity of considering multiple interpretations of the past.
CHAPTER IV: TOWARDS PRAGMATIST ARCHAEOLOGY

Pragmatism provides a framework for increasing the relevance of archaeological research to pluralistic publics granted caution is exercised in translating the theory from its philosophical origins. I begin this section by reviewing the work of some of the original theorists behind pragmatism in order to make clear the different conceptions and applications of the theory. This section is followed by a discussion of the current use of pragmatist theory in the discipline of archaeology. I suggest that a careful interpretation of pragmatism is necessary for archaeology to avoid an extreme relativistic stance in which methods are not subject to scrutiny, while still recognizing the different desires of our publics. The application of pragmatism in archaeology has been inconsistent due to researchers choosing different sources and definitions of the theory, and frequently results in epistemological fallacies as a consequence of borrowing elements of a theory without a careful studying its original context. Pragmatism, when prudently applied, enables archaeologists to negotiate the goals of involved publics while ensuring their aims and obligations are also valued. In many instances the interests of communities and researchers are not at odds with one another, in which case pragmatism still provides a useful framework for encouraging dialogue about a project’s purpose. The ways in which pragmatism can account for difficulties that may arise in pluralistic settings will be considered in greater depth in Chapter V.

The Origins of Pragmatism

A complete history of pragmatism is beyond the scope of this work but a brief account of its origins and development is necessary. Pragmatist theory was first put forth by Charles Peirce in the second half of the 19th century. His interest in practical definitions and observable effects lead him to create a pragmatist theory of meaning that suggests objects are understood and defined according to their practical effects. (Peirce 1878). To illustrate this point Peirce used the example of defining “hardness.” To describe an object as hard is to say that it brings about certain effects, such as scratching a surface or being impervious. This defines a concept in relation to its
practical effects, not some preexisting notion of “Hardness” that exists outside the realm of experience. Importantly, Peirce did not advocate for a pragmatist theory of truth, and distinguished himself from later theorists that did by labeling his theory as “pragmaticism” (Harris 1992:146). Therefore, while he acknowledges that humans will err in their pursuit of knowledge, as an avid realist he suggests that there is a single reality or way the world is. For Peirce, scientific method and inference is the only method that can allow us to approach an accurate description of reality given it is open to public scrutiny (Harris 1992).

During Peirce’s lifetime his work was picked up by the philosopher William James who popularized pragmatism and extended its application beyond meaning to a theory of truth. James maintains that pragmatism is a milder form of empiricism, based on a method that suggests “truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events,” (James 2010a:94). Thus, real-world results determine how well an idea fits with pre-established truths, its value for life, and, more generally, the amount of good resulting from accepting an idea as true (James 2010a). James’ interpretation opens the door for more radical pragmatists, such as Richard Rorty, who promote an anti-foundational notion of truth, or the idea that there is no firm basis for knowledge formation. It is unclear if James endorsed such a subjective understanding, as he was still very much concerned with a correspondence theory of truth that evaluated ideas based on how well they matched other truths in the world. Combining this understanding with a further evaluation based on how well ideas and actions fit together may create a compromise between objective and subjective theories of truth (Preucel and Mrozowski 2010).

Richard Rorty is part of a revival of pragmatist theory beginning in the 1970s associated with a hyper-relativist approach. Rorty’s idea of truth is not far from Thomas Kuhn’s assertion that all paradigms are subjective and every culture or group of people will formulate their own way of understanding the world. This leads to the problem of incommensurability, meaning that there is no way for one group’s conception of truth to be judged against another’s as there are no
overarching criteria, only those that exist within each paradigm (Kuhn 1962). Kuhn may have rejected accusations of being a relativist (see Kuhn 1970), but the implications of his arguments have been accepted as leading to such results. This relativism is problematic on a practical as well as a logical level, and extensive work has been done to uncover the flaws in Kuhn’s work (Harris 1992, also see Scheffler 1967). An analysis of Kuhn’s theory is beyond the subject of this paper, but its relativist consequences offer some context for Rorty’s neo-pragmatism. Rorty (2001) calls for a theoretical approach that gets away from “The One Way The World Is.” He understands “knowledge as a matter of conversation and of social practice,” rather than something associated with a single truth (Rorty 1979:171). In this interpretation of pragmatism the scientific method is viewed as one possible paradigm through which to understand the world. This rejection of the scientific model as paramount permits a flourishing of human creativity in which truth is made, not something to be discovered. In his later writings Rorty (2001) attempts to ease his critics by stressing that objectivity and truth are ideas we can keep so long as they are left to academics to figure out while the majority of the population is better served by creating truth from agreed upon beliefs, focusing on practical applications as opposed to abstract philosophical notions.

I have only briefly covered the work of some of the main theorists behind pragmatism. There are many others including notables like John Dewey, and it should be pointed out that these theories possess greater complexity than I have discussed. It also should be recognized that this theory has been extended into numerous realms by people such as Jane Addams, Hilary Putnam, and Cornel West.

Pragmatism in Archaeology

The rising popularity of pragmatism in archaeology is apparent in the recent inclusion of a session dedicated to pragmatism at the 32nd Annual Theoretical Archaeology Group Conference in 2010. Pragmatism also appears in current practice, though what this theory entails is not always complete (Dawdy 2009). Prior to formulating a pragmatist framework suitable for
archaeological practice I will discuss the current implementation of pragmatism in the field as researchers employ the concept differently. I propose that a successful Pragmatist Archaeology builds on these approaches.

The importance of archaeology and its real-world consequences are topics considered in Robert Preucel’s and Stephen Mrozowski’s (2010) edited volume on archaeological theory entitled *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism*. In their introduction the editors raise concerns that are similar to the issue of relevancy addressed in this paper, and to address them the authors rely on pragmatism as part of a postprocessural approach. The authors present a Peircian understanding of pragmatism that defines the meaning of ideas based on the actions they generate. Their analysis includes coverage of early uses of pragmatism in archaeology, particularly within the work of Christopher Gaffney, Vincent Gaffney, and Ron Yorston (1987), to draw attention to an increased interest in humanism and recognition of the influence of researchers’ experiences on their interpretations of archaeological deposits. By using the writings of Peirce the authors focus on semiotics and meaning as a way to gain insight to how different cultures understand the world, avoiding the problems of more relativist interpretations of pragmatism. By focusing on the works of Peirce, the authors do not include the strengths of pragmatist theory as understood by other philosophers. Examination of these works can help to enhance the efforts of Preucel and Mrozowski.

The application of pragmatism in the social sciences is not limited to archaeology. In his book *Philosophy of the Social Sciences: Towards Pragmatism* (2005), Patrick Baert sets about the task of formulating principles, in terms of pragmatism, to guide social research. He adopts neo-pragmatist theory, commonly associated with Rorty, to serve as a basis for a self-referential type of knowledge that emphasizes the importance of reflexivity in light of different cultural beliefs and practices (Baert 2005). These methods stress a hermeneutical approach, much like postprocessural archaeologists (see Earle and Preucel 1987, Hodder 1985, Trigger 1991, and
many others), and consider how culture is constructed in connection to power (Baert 2005). Baert’s philosophy, much like Rorty’s, call for control over truth-making, enters the realms of a relativist theory of truth, the implications of which are discussed in Chapter V.

Another example of pragmatism in archaeology is in Carol McDavid’s plantation archaeology research in Texas. To promote community collaboration at the Levi Jordan Plantation McDavid (2002) employed a pragmatist framework based on an anti-foundational, anti-essentialist, and pluralistic perspective of truth. Her emphasis that all truth is created, an idea taken from Rorty, again raises the risk of adopting an extreme relativistic understanding of the world, but in practice her work has revealed some of pragmatism’s benefits. For instance, she emphasizes Rorty’s conversational element of truth that requires inclusion of the voices of all stakeholders. Additionally, McDavid (2002) does selectively apply the theory to guard against relativism and skepticism while still urging archaeologists to explore different ways of discovering the truth. She especially focuses on the democratic attitude that pragmatism encourages, rejecting the critical theory approach put forth by Mark Leone, Paul Shackel, and Parker Potter Jr. (1987) as being top-down in that it involves privileging the theorist as more aware of the “hidden coercion” of social agents, suggesting that archaeologists are more capable of doing the enlightening than publics themselves (McDavid 2010). McDavid’s efforts also include creation of a website for the Levi Jordan plantation project that incorporated different ways of knowing by presenting archaeological research findings as well as oral histories. While the project may not have stimulated the dialogue that researchers hoped it would, pragmatically it was successful in beginning to increase the relevance of the project (McDavid 2002).

Pragmatism is also a defining factor in Dean Saitta’s work, specifically at the Ludlow Massacre site where he defines his research as the Archeology of Collective Action. Saitta (2007) applies a pragmatist framework consistent with Rorty’s teachings that focuses on three commitments: adoption of an anti-foundational notion of truth, evaluation of truth-claims based
upon their consequences for life, and testing ideas of different cultures by weaving them together. He rejects Lewis Binford’s claim of an operational objectivity, the idea that there is one reality for which there may be alternative accounts, replacing it with the notion that all knowledge and truth is constructed. To arrive at this perception all parties must engage in dialogue, evaluate truths based on their contributions to human need, and respect pluralism (Saitta 2007). The idea of being able to create truth sounds like an appealing method for working with pluralistic communities, but it may be idealistic to think consensus is always possible. As McDavid (2010) points out taking this perspective on pragmatism is only fruitful if every interested party is on board with engaging in discussion and finding solutions. Assuming that this will always be feasible is problematic; however, there is still value in Saitta’s work. For example, his inclusion of the interests of the local worker’s unions in the final presentation of the Ludlow memorial shows respect for a community connected to a site through experience rather than descent (Saitta 2010). In this particular situation the interests of the community were incorporated without sacrificing an empirical approach, ensuring that the project was relevant to researchers as well.

I am not suggesting that these scholars, a sample of those employing pragmatism, are ignorant in their application of this theory. The opposite is actually the case, as they have taken some of the strengths of pragmatist theory and adapted them to the field. This healthy beginning provides a solid foundation for redefining a Pragmatist Archaeology. Great care must be taken to define how pragmatism is being employed as its definitions vary considerably depending on their source, and the theory often undergoes subsequent modifications in an archaeological setting. The broader implications could result in archaeologists losing a voice in the interpretation of the past, comprising our interests as well as leaving out our potential for contribution based on our specialized skills. Archaeologists currently using pragmatism have in some cases selectively applied its strengths while leaving aside its weaknesses, and I suggest that this is a good starting point for moving towards a suitable definition of a Pragmatist Archaeology. Similar efforts have
arisen in the application of other theories, one example being Binford’s adoption of middle-range theory from sociology (see Binford 1983, Raab and Goodyear 1984, and Shott 1998). Another example is the study of “memory,” a notion that has come to be defined so broadly that there is risk of losing its usefulness (see Berliner 2005). Sharing ideas across disciplines is unquestionably a beneficial practice, but caution must be exercised to define their application to avoid unintended results.

**Defining Pragmatist Archaeology**

A Pragmatist Archaeology that balances the benefits and pitfalls of pragmatist theory is made possible by pulling particular characteristics from its theorists while taking care to avoid a contradictory mix of ideas. As pragmatist theory’s foremost concern is with the practical consequences of adopting a particular belief or truth, it connects action to theory without the need for a linking argument (Johnson 2010). Navigating theories of pragmatism, pluralism, knowledge, as well as considering pragmatism’s place in an archaeological theoretical context, leads to a working definition of Pragmatist Archaeology.

The work of early pragmatist theorists offers important ideas that provide a backdrop for conducting archaeology. I suggest Pragmatist Archaeology can draw from Peirce’s commitment to realism, the idea that the world is a particular way, which can be approximated through observation. As mentioned, Peircian theory also values reflexivity and community scrutiny of research methods, both of which should be kept as valuable components in a pragmatist framework. On another level his semiotics are helpful as he suggests all knowledge claims are equally valid for producing explanations, an acknowledgement of the importance of allowing multivocality in research. From James’ (2010b) work I take an emphasis on the importance of allowing method and recognizing pluralism. Both of these philosophers value a more democratic approach to determining truth, which is also to be included in Pragmatist Archaeology.
Rorty’s further emphasis on a democratic approach and dialogue can help pragmatic archaeologists guide the process of designing research, even if his support of a relativistic theory of truth is rejected. I do not deny that there is validity to the point that people see and experience the world differently, and that these views should be taken into account when conducting research; it is moving from this respect to a theory that allows groups to define truth as they see fit that has the potential to become problematic if we are prohibited from discussing and deliberating different understandings. Similarly, in his more radical approach Baert offers useful notions, specifically that the scientific method can be applied in different ways, but I do not endorse Baert’s complete rejection of naturalism; past and present biases in this approach should not lead to complete dismissal of its value. Instead, we may need to reevaluate how we use scientific methods and contextualize them, recognizing that these are some of many different ways of interpreting and understanding the world. Accepting that different methods exist is important; however, taking a relativist stance that does not allow claims to be evaluated against one another is not conducive for dialogue and collaboration. This is particularly critical when dealing with a subject like archaeology, in which our understanding is limited due to the incomplete nature of the material record. Events in the past may have occurred in a particular way, but there are many different ways of describing those events.

By adopting some of the tenets of these scholars, including Peirce’s realism, reflexivity, and multivocality; James’ stressing of the importance of method and pluralism; Rorty’s emphasis on dialogue and a democratic approach; and Baert’s recognition of the flexibility of method, Pragmatist Archaeology begins to take shape, but greater case must be taken with addressing pluralism. Many of the issues involved in negotiating pragmatist theory are related to the “epistemic dilemma of pluralism,” the idea that there is an indefinite number of perspectives that stem from varying social contexts of inquiry (Bohman 2001). Many of the discussions of this issue focus on how to negotiate pluralism in multicultural societies and systems of governance,
but some of the conclusions drawn are equally applicable to archaeology. For instance some scholars call for a presupposition of a single right answer (see McCarthy 1998, Habermas 1998) that is pragmatic because of the dialogue and deliberation the idea brings about, not because everyone will necessarily agree that there is a single truth. Adhering to this interpretation implies that the practice of pragmatism is important for allowing all perspectives to be voiced in the search for that most consistent with reality, without going so far as to bring about a solution satisfying to all parties (Bohman 2001). This is well-suited to the Pragmatist Archaeology I am suggesting, where multivocality and discussion are valued, but not to the point where differing theories of knowledge cannot be evaluated against one another.

A commitment to plural truths may seem to conflict with some archaeologists’ use of the scientific method, especially when research is not subject to proper scrutiny. Nevertheless, when implemented correctly, a scientific claim “answers...the potential relevance and contextualizability of that claim in a range of scientific and extra-scientific contexts,” (Rehg 2001:133), while it does not necessarily need to be seen as stifling other truth claims. There is considerable value to implementing the scientific method for investigating the world, but only within a framework that requires all methods and results to be open to consideration and critique. In this sense each interpretation can be qualified according to a particular set of evidence. This approach is consistent with philosophical fallibilism, the recognition that any claim to knowledge can potentially be mistaken. I do not think pragmatist theory, especially understood by its early adherents, was ever intended to be a total rejection of the scientific paradigm, a stance later espoused by neopragmatists such as Rorty. Rather, science itself is a human avenue of inquiry that contributes to the understanding of the world, challenging the idea that the truth is floating beyond the reach of human discovery. Take for instance the current reevaluation of the Clovis First model to explain the population of the Americas. The idea that a single cultural group, evidenced by a particular projectile point style, spread out across North and South America has
increasingly been scrutinized, but for a long period of time the model was not questioned despite evidence questioning its assumptions. At present the Clovis First model is slowly being replaced by new theories that explain these findings (Rincon and Amos 2011). Pragmatism encourages critique of even our longest standing models, forcing us to reexamine the evidence and improve our understanding of the past. We cannot allow our conclusions to become entrenched, but must remain reflexive about the possibility of being wrong.

The critique of the scientific method held to by some pragmatists is reminiscent of postprocessural approaches to correcting a perceived overly-empiricist trend in archaeology. Laurajane Smith (2004) highlights this concern of postprocessuralism, as its followers criticized the idea that science could be carried out in a value free setting, preferring an approach that valued multiple interpretations of the past. It is mistaken to consider this to be the onset of a more relativistic anthropology, as that notion began with the work of Franz Boas and his students in the first half of the 20th century. Of course many archaeologists now draw on processural and postprocessural theories, valuing various means of producing knowledge in addition to the scientific method (See Leoni, Potter, and Shackel 1987, Kosso 1991), an approach I value in formulating a Pragmatist Archaeology.

Pragmatism's inclusion of different ways of knowing provides a place at the table for a reflexive scientific method. This is important for archaeologists who adhere to ethical guidelines outlined by professional societies such as the American Anthropological Association, the Register of Professional Archaeologists, the Society for American Archaeology, and others. Admittedly these codes can be problematic given the unique ethical quandaries that arise on a case-by-case basis and broadly defined concepts like stewardship, preservation, and looting (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006, Groarke and Warrick 2006, and Layton and Wallace 2006), but this is the reason for their implementation as suggested practices, not imperatives written in stone. Archaeologists engage on ongoing discussions of ethics and revisions to these standards. It
is this commitment to ethics and dialogue that places archaeologists in a position to make informed decisions about methods and interpretations of materials in any given project. Our role should be to encourage discussion of evidence of past lifeways and consider how this past is interpreted by different publics. Our own interpretations are an important part of this process, but if archaeology is to be relevant to other communities their narratives must be discussed and deliberated as well.

Based on this discussion, I conclude that Pragmatist Archaeology must consist of three major considerations. The first is a valuation of an archaeological project based on the relevancy of its results to all interested parties. The second requires that archaeologists consider other perspectives and encourage discussion and debate on such issues. Third, the skills and knowledge of the archaeologists and their adherence to the scientific method and ethical guidelines are not to be stripped of their importance. This definition for Pragmatist Archaeology is similar to recent efforts to reformulate pragmatist theory in philosophy, such as Richard Bernstein’s (1997) identification of five major themes in pragmatism: careful consideration of how to account for a rejection of foundationalism, a reliance on fallibilism, the need for a community that will critically scrutinize perspectives, awareness of chance, and acknowledgment of pluralism. Bernstein (1997) formulates a pragmatic approach defined as an “engaged fallibilistic pluralism” that requires serious consideration of all viewpoints and a willingness to critically reflect on one’s own approach. This definition of pragmatism is the most consistent with tenets of a Pragmatist Archaeology.

**Pragmatist Archaeology in Practice**

Many archaeologists already implicitly embrace elements of a pragmatist framework in their projects. For instance, numerous archaeologists recognize that indigenous groups have different concepts of the landscape, holding it to be sacred. This can lead to problems when traditional archaeological techniques are used, as excavation can be viewed as destroying the
earth. Thinking pragmatically about this situation brings one to realize that the scientific method can be implemented in a variety of ways, some of which are respectful of the beliefs of the people with which we work. A prime case of this is Kent Lightfoot’s argument for a “low-impact archaeology” that seeks to employ the scientific method without leaving a significant trace on the landscape. This practice will vary, but may include studying a site without intensive excavation, or employing practices like artifact “catch-and-release” where artifacts are documented and returned to the land (Lightfoot 2008). These techniques may not be applicable to all research, especially when the potential for future research is a concern, but they are an alternative means of employing the scientific method.

Another project that was successful in making research relevant to pluralistic communities was the excavation of Doukhober Pit houses in Saskatchewan, Canada. Researchers were able to conduct significant investigations to determine if and how the archaeological record matched perceived Doukhober practices and beliefs. Descendants of the community were heavily involved in the research, and reported frequently on their experiences. Some of the findings at these sites proved to be problematic as, for example, the discovery of chicken bones was inconsistent with Doukhober vegetarian practices (Brooks 2007). Rather than leading to disagreements between archaeologists and descendants these peculiarities prompted discussion of the past that entertained different notions of how the record was formed (the people living at these sites could have been eating meat, or perhaps were preparing it for others to eat). The project resulted in quality research in addition to a community’s renewed interest in heritage and discussion of the past (Brooks 2007). This is only one way in which our practices can be made to be relevant—other means may include education, publication, and so on. There are many additional projects that follow a pragmatist framework (many of those mentioned Chapter III) and enveloping all practice in this flexible methodology allows for even more success.
The incorporation of pragmatism into the field of archaeology has thus far shown its merit. If its origins are carefully considered and its application defined to incorporate its benefits but avoid its pitfalls, pragmatism offers a valuable framework for all archaeological practice, making it relevant both in and outside of academia. The ways in which pragmatism can address public archaeology concerns are applicable in my own research and involvement at the site of Port Tobacco, a topic on which I will elaborate in my conclusions. At this point I will further analyze the role of archaeologists in pluralistic settings in light of some troublesome examples of public outreach and suggest that Pragmatist Archaeology offers some positive alternatives.
CHAPTER V: POTENTIALS OF PLURALISM

Including the interests of the increasingly pluralistic cultures of the 21st century raises alarm about undermining the authority and aims of archaeologists. These are legitimate concerns that are taken into account in Pragmatist Archaeology as archaeologists are considered as another community with an interest in archeological research and relevance. Professional archaeologists adhere to guidelines for ethical research, and some situations compromise these obligations. The investigation of some particular cases suggests that archaeologists should consider the place of their conclusions alongside those of others, and how they can exist alongside one another. While these cases are not necessarily problematic, they raise questions of how archaeologists should handle potential problems. While these are just a few examples, I suggest that the infrequency of problems should not prevent archaeologists from thinking seriously about their position and the best framework for addressing a multitude of situations, especially as the discipline is increasingly oriented towards the needs of the public. Trying to serve our publics requires that we be reflexive and open to alternative interpretations, but it does not leave us speechless when it comes to responding to unreasonable demands that challenge the ethics of the archaeological discipline. In this section I will bring these concerns to light by briefly reviewing the problems and potentials of pluralism and considerations of determining the success of a particular project. I will then consider the potentials of discounting the voice of the archaeologist: an awareness and critique of our practices need not lead the field to a rejection of our methods and interests. An additional concern that I will briefly address is the connection between pluralism and essentialist assumptions. Pragmatist Archaeology avoids these difficulties and ensures that the archaeological community maintains a role in guiding research.

Pluralism and Relativism

There are many ways to understand and describe the world, but a line must be drawn between pluralistic interpretations and pluralistic truths. For instance, a site like Jamestown has
pluralistic meanings: Europeans experienced this site in a significantly different manner than Native Americans, and the historic site today still has a different meaning for these groups (see Hantman 2009). The sharing of these different perspectives broaden our understandings of sites and the past, but allowing for different publics to claim their interpretations as absolute truth immune to critique has the potential to incite conflict. Archaeological practice must balance different ways of knowing in describing past peoples and events. There is no requirement to choose amongst different means of producing knowledge (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2010). Rather, the sharing of types of knowledge should serve as a valuable and enriching learning experience that broadens our understanding of the past while more effectively engaging communities. It is reasonable to expect a multitude of explanations when addressing questions for which there are no definite answers or evidence (see Deloria 1997 for some considerations), but this does not permit a denial of existing evidence.

To illustrate the difficulties of a pluralistic archaeology I suggest that Robert McGhee offers an interesting perspective. His discussions focus on a critique of Indigenous Archaeologies, addressing the efforts of its practitioners to incorporate native views without fully explaining the basis for this practice (McGhee 2008, 2010). While his assessment of the field makes some broad assumptions and generalizations that discount the successful efforts of many archaeologists, he does make a point: archaeologists are not often careful to articulate how indigenous perspectives will be incorporated when they conflict with the findings of archaeologists (McGhee 2009). I do not support his position that the scientific method is privileged over other means of producing knowledge, and often archaeological and indigenous perspectives compliment or parallel one another. In the few cases where narratives produced according to the scientific method do differ from those produced by Indigenous Archaeologies it is possible to present them alongside one another. This approach requires caution to avoid valuing one means of knowing over another and the realization that different methods may be suitable for different situations and communities.
The use of the scientific method should not (and for many it does not) prevent archaeologists from engaging with different narratives and means of knowledge production in order to build community involvement and broaden our knowledge base.

Another issue that arises from pluralism is the adoption of multivocality, and I suggest that this can be addressed in the same manner as pluralistic accounts of truth. Allowing the voices of all communities may seem to preclude relativism (see Atalay 2008), and raises serious questions about what it means to determine which group has the greatest say in describing and controlling the past (see Hodder 2008). Rather than privileging one narrative over another, Pragmatist Archaeology allows room for multiple accounts that have an equal say in presenting the past, making multivocality a central part of the practice. These narratives can then be evaluated and discussed by researchers and the public to determine which are suitable for a project. The voices and interests of the public must be incorporated, as well as those of researchers, to promote relevance; however, determining relevance is in itself a subjective measure.

Determining Success

Different communities will engage with archaeology on different levels given their own priorities and interests, making it difficult to determine the best way to make a project relevant. For example, in some successful projects collaboration with the public does not result in visible participation, such as at the proposed Happy Hill Schoolhouse site in North Carolina. The African-American community formed a relationship with researchers in hopes of finding the schoolhouse, but given the demands of work and family was unable to volunteer with the project as excavations were often during the week (Thacker 2009). These priorities are not unique to the Happy Hill community, as I have seen them in my own experience working at Port Tobacco where it is often the case that volunteers are retirees and children. In some cases there is no interest at all, and in a critique of public archaeology Shannon Dawdy (2009) asks the question if
it is possible for no archaeology to be community archaeology in this type of situation. This is a critical point for archaeologists to consider, as community involvement cannot be forced, and projects with no relevance outside of academia may not be a productive pursuit. Given the spectrum from uninterested to highly engaged publics it is impossible to develop a foolproof method for increasing a project’s relevance. The best way to achieve success is involvement with a site’s public to learn about their interests, as proposed in Pragmatist Archaeology.

**Potentially Problematic Practices**

Different methods of balancing the interests of various publics with those of the researchers have resulted in some theories and practices that bring to light questions surrounding the role of the archaeologist in investigations. At the broadest application Lynn Meskell’s use of Cosmopolitan Theory often places the needs of a community before those of the researchers. She states that we must “expect to spend more of our time in conversation and negotiation with various constituencies and be prepared to increasingly relinquish some of our archaeological goals,” (Meskell 2009:7). For example, Claire Smith and Gary Jackson’s (2009) work with Australian Aboriginal communities is laudable given their seventeen-year commitment to the project and flexible practices to address the public’s concerns. Yet, these researchers have embraced one particular view of archaeologists’ responsibilities, including obligations to obtain funding for the community, escort members of the public to conferences around the world, and commit significant amounts of time and money to meeting a community’s demands. I respect the need to work with communities and insist that collaboration and compromise is necessary for increasing relevance, but this model may not be appropriate for all projects, even if it was highly successful in this setting. It is entirely possible that a different set of community dynamics and social priorities will frame other projects. Pragmatism helps to navigate through these particular circumstances. Sites and publics are different, and each pragmatic solution may be as well.
Another interesting case is Jack Rossen’s (2008) work with the Cayuga Nation in Central New York. He suggests that archaeologists must take on greater responsibilities as activists, especially when dealing with communities such as the Cayuga which is struggling with land-claims and local politics. In this project he agreed to the reburial of human remains that an elder deemed inappropriate to reveal due to their disjunction with the community’s oral history (Rossen 2008). This is an isolated case where it appears acceptable to adhere to the community’s wishes, and archaeologists should always consider the risk of obscuring or revealing evidence and how the resulting decision impacts a public’s values and priorities. In this particular example Rossen is not really obscuring the findings—he clearly reports the presence of human remains—but he is pragmatic by also allowing the Cayuga, or at least a portion of the community, to determine the course of research in response to culturally-sensitive information. In rare circumstances where an archaeologist perceives that a community’s aims call into question the integrity of the discipline it is permissible that he or she simply walk away from the project. Rossen avoids a potential problem by maintaining a dialogue with a community and respecting their wishes, while still reporting the archaeological findings, demonstrating that an archaeologist’s interpretation can be presented along with that of a community’s even when they appear to conflict.

**Archaeologists as a Public**

Presenting the discipline as inclusive while insisting on the importance of archaeological interpretations appears contradictory, but in some cases we could go too far in discounting our interests, training, and ethical obligations. Ulrike Sommer (2009) asks if everyone’s opinion really is as good as our own, and suggests that due to post-colonial guilt and an emphasis on postprocessural interpretation we are selling ourselves short. The opposite stance is offered by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and T.J. Ferguson who suggest that “Archaeology’s colonial legacy is like a persistent gene, whether wanted or not, transmitted to each successive generation,” (2008:6). The latter statement importantly reminds us that moral and ethical considerations must
be a part of archaeology. Archaeologists must not hold our conclusions above other narratives, though we should be prepared to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of archaeological methods for recovering evidence of the past.

There are archaeological tasks that are accessible to most people. For instance it does not require someone with a doctorate to screen and wash artifacts, but many archaeological methods are more complicated and require specialized training. Much of this comes with experience, but the years of schooling required speak to the necessity of comprehensive knowledge of theory, practice, and ethics, as pointed out in the previous chapter. This does not imply that archaeologists must write off the work of “amateur archaeologists.” I have worked with many individuals outside of the field that contribute refreshing perspectives to research, and the studies of non-professionals, such as the tremendous work of Roland Robbins on industrial sites in the Northeast, have made lasting contributions to the discipline (Linebaugh 2004). Alison Kehoe is right to point out that “a good scientist should not automatically assume all non-professionals are fools,” (Kehoe 2005:14). Adopting a pragmatist framework for conducting archaeology allows for researchers to be included as another interested public.

**Pluralism and Essentialism**

Terms like Native American, African American, European descendant, and others are sometimes necessary for having conversations and understanding culture, but we must be careful to not overlook the vast diversity that exists within each of these groups. As Joe Watkins points out, “It is extremely difficult to offer a single Native American perspective on anything,” (Watkins 2000b:91). In other situations archaeologists may be confronted by groups that choose to embrace a common identity. For instance some Native American groups have formed a collective identity as a political strategy based on their experiences of colonialism (Wilcox 2010).

A further concern of essentialism is the idea that the archaeology of a particular culture should only be done by members of that culture, such as concluding that indigenous peoples are
most suited to doing Indigenous Archaeologies. This is a common critique of essentialism, but the majority of serious scholars do not think that only indigenous groups can do Indigenous Archaeologies, and the same is true for other communities (Caldwell-Chanthaphonh et al 2010). The importance of considering essentialism is that archaeologists must be aware that there are often pluralistic communities within broader categories that define themselves according to their own experiences and interests. Again, these motives should not compromise archaeological research, but tact is required to ensure that the publication of findings does not harm a community by, for instance, sharing sacred knowledge or presenting information detrimental to a group’s well-being (see Keitumetse 2003). This caution is outlined in many of the ethical guidelines put forth by professional archaeological organizations, but it must be emphasized in a discussion of what it means to conduct successful, relevant research. Determining the aims of a community is possible in a pragmatist framework that incorporates outreach, collaboration, and dialogue.

**Pragmatist Archaeology and Research**

A Pragmatist Archaeology ensures that the researcher’s interests and methods are included in a project’s research design along with different methods communities employ to make sense of the past. Ideally publics will freely debate the merits of different interpretations and seek ways in which these approaches are synergetic rather than antagonistic. These points help guard against problematic research that conflicts with the goals of archaeologists. Upholding a scientific method in practice does not mean our interpretations are not open to critique: on the contrary, this is all the more important in Pragmatist Archaeology. While we cannot claim to possess infallible objective knowledge, revealing our biases may allow us to get as close to an objective understanding as possible (Trigger 2008). Pragmatism allows for communities to critique evidence and conclusions, but they cannot interpret the past to suit particular agendas and claim these accounts to be uncontestable truth. Their interpretations and knowledge production
ideas, however, are important for building collaboration and recognizing how research can be made to be more relevant, and in many cases, more productive.

We should not abandon our methods of inquiry just because they do not fit with the stories of a community, but provokes the question of how to handle situations where archaeological standards of practice are inconsistent with the values and priorities of a community. Unfortunately, it is not possible to offer a single set of procedures for handling this type of disagreement as the decision on how to handle conflicting narratives will vary on a case-by-case basis. Fortunately, pragmatism is equipped to handle this variation. Dialogue and discussion are required to determine what harm is done by withholding, obscuring, or releasing certain pieces of information. Archaeology is framed by ethical guidelines, not set-in-stone principles, and these will flex depending upon the situation. Situations where archaeological practices and community requirements cannot be reconciled will require decisions on the part of the archaeologist concerning how, if at all, proposed techniques and conclusions affect guidelines of the discipline. If the challenge is too great there is potential for an archaeologist to walk away from a project. This decision process returns to the three aspects of a Pragmatist Archaeology—understanding the relevance, if there is any, of a project, respecting that there are different ways of knowing the past, and maintaining a place for archaeological methods in presenting the past. Even if these conclusions pose a challenge to community interpretations the public is free to reject the interpretation. Collaboration and dialogue with communities, I think, is one of the best means to invite people to learn about archaeological methods which vary significantly in scope.
CHAPTER VI: PRAGMATISM AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

At present the term “public archaeology” is often used to refer to sustained collaborative projects between researchers and the public. The term predates this usage, originating as a way of describing Cultural Resource Management (CRM). CRM projects refer to archaeological testing conducted prior to construction or ground disturbance in compliance with the law, a practice that seems distant from public archaeology as it is currently understood. This discrepancy leads to questions about the role of CRM within the discipline of archaeology.

CRM, part of the historic and preservation industry, exists at the intersection of academic, private, and government sectors. The bulk of research and excavation is in the field of CRM, a field that employs roughly 80% of all archaeologists (Neumann and Sanford 2001). Legislation that requires archaeological testing exists worldwide, but for this analysis I will focus on practices in the United States. After a brief overview of the laws guiding CRM I analyze some of the difficulties CRM is facing: confusing legislation, variability in quality, lack of publication, disconnect with academia, neglect of the public, and questions about determining significance. Pragmatist Archaeology offers a framework that is well-suited to address these concerns and improve the relevance of CRM to a broader audience.

History and Legislation Overview

Beginning in the 1800s the United States government made efforts to purchase historic sites for preservation, but it was not until the early 1900s that legislation for the protection of cultural resources began to take form. The development of these laws both reflected national sentiments and discourses in the disciplines of archaeology such as the sanctity of the record and the perception of archaeologists as noble stewards of the past (McGuire and Walker 1999). This section will not detail the passage and content of all laws pertaining to CRM but will follow the general trajectory of legislation and consider critiques of present CRM practices.
In 1906 The U.S. government passed the Antiquities Act that required anyone wanting to remove antiquities from federal land to have a permit to do so. This law would set the stage for all subsequent legislation that viewed cultural resources as valuable (McGimsey and Davis 1984). The next important act was the creation of the National Park Service (NPS), a management body of historic places, in 1916. Other government organizations that came to play a role in preservation include the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the U.S. Forest Service since many of their actions significantly impact archaeological sites. The NPS would be involved in many of the “make-work” projects for civilians that were created during the Great Depression through programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), during which time the discipline saw a boom in excavations culminating under the 1935 Historic Sites Act that authorized the continuation of this work as important for national history and commemoration (King 2008). Also in this time period many local governments began to acknowledge their own historic landmarks and districts.

Legislation and development of CRM-related agencies accelerated after World War II, a phase when the government increasingly created public welfare laws (McGimsey and Davis 1984). These efforts included the creation of additional NPS programs such as chartering of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949 to salvage sites at risk of being destroyed by construction and the 1960 Reservoir Salvage Act. One of the most influential laws was the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) passed in 1966 that defined the functions of many of the institutions involved in CRM in the present day including granting the NPS authority to maintain the National Register of Historic Places, creating the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), establishing guidelines for grants, and importantly, the drafting the Section 106 requirement to consider the effects of development on sites listed in the National Register. Later amendments to Section 106 have added a
requirement for consultation with affected publics, and expanded consideration to those properties eligible for the National Register, not only those already listed (King 2008).

After the passage of the NHPA the NPS created a new Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. CRM had entered the 1960s and 1970s, a time when environmental concerns were also at their peak. As such new laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act would include cultural resources in their legal mandates. In addition to new legislation, old laws were amended including the passage of the Moss-Bennett Bill addition to the 1960 Reservoir Salvage Act that requires federal agencies to identify sites threatened by their actions and to be responsible for their excavation or preservation (King 2008). Also created was the 1979 Archaeological Resources Protection Act that required a permit to remove artifacts from public lands with penalties for individuals without one, further clarifying the 1906 Antiquities Law. Additional amendments and laws were passed in the next few decades adjusting the scope and requirements of CRM. Some of these amendments were meant to address an increasingly active Native American population including amendments to Section 106 to allow Tribal Historic Preservation Offices to take on the roles of SHPOs, increased consultation with affected indigenous groups, and recognition of traditional properties (Ferguson 2009). The passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in particular has redefined this relationship. The proliferation of laws addressing cultural resources has resulted in numerous federal, state, and local agencies that are involved in CRM.

At the present time CRM is conducted predominantly by private firms that operate according to a for-profit framework. This approach has resulted in numerous critiques of the field as being overly focused on profit, efficiency, and archaeological resources as commodities, issues that may stem from the ‘excavate now, analyze later’ attitude dominating WPA and CCC research (King 2008). In response to these concerns, which extend decades into the past, there have been efforts to regulate practices and ethics in the field, including the creation of the Society
of Professional Archaeologists in 1976 (now the Register of Professional Archaeologists),
beginning an ongoing dialogue about the professional standards and ethics of archaeology
(McGimsey 1981). Importantly, many CRM practitioners, public and private, do adhere to these
standards and produced high-quality research published in journals such as the NPS’ Cultural
Resource Management and the Journal of Cultural Heritage. Nevertheless the field is not without
its flaws, but pragmatism may offer some solutions.

Problems in the Field

Legislation

The overview of legislation I have presented is by no means complete, and books have
been written to explain all relevant laws and amendments (see King 2008, Neumann and Sanford
2001), but it is clear that many laws pertaining to CRM overlap and understanding their nuances
can be difficult (Schiffer and Gumerman 1977). The applicability of legislation is also impacted
by jurisdiction. Most CRM laws pertain to federal land which is overwhelmingly located in
eleven western states, making many mandates irrelevant for archaeology in the east unless
SHPOs have chosen to adopt similar legislation, or if a federal project is being undertaken (Davis
2009). Private property restrictions are also a factor in CRM. One way to address some
discrepancies would be to lobby for more comprehensive law, but without the support of
academia and the public this is a difficult process, making it crucial that shortcomings related to
these groups are addressed. Pragmatism provides the framework for an analysis that emphasizes
increasing the relevance of CRM practices for all stakeholders.

Quality

As mentioned, the WPA legacy has been a factor in many critiques of the quality of CRM
archaeology. This position overlooks many adjustments to the field, as beginning in 1961 at the
25th Annual Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Meeting recommendations were made for
standardizing training and there have been subsequent efforts to regulate research and certify
archaeologists (see Lipe and Lindsay 1974). The Airlie House meetings also included recommendations for professionalizing the field including the creation of the Society of Professional Archaeologists, a body committed to ethical standards of research.

Admittedly, even with these guidelines there is significant variability in CRM practice, often in technological capabilities (see Mackey 2009). Without some level of standardization it is easy to understand why the public and academics are wary of the quality of research. In some cases it does appear that archaeologists are so focused on bottom line costs rather than doing the best quality archaeology, but this delves into deeper issues of pay rates, bidding for contracts, and the role of CRM in a capitalist society, a position that the field must be reflexive about, but is beyond a detailed analysis in this discussion. A more systematic approach, outlined in legislation, may help address inconsistent practices, especially again given the disparity between State and Federal laws. A pragmatist solution may lie in improving publication and training within the field.

**Publication**

Publication and dissemination of reports has been problematic in CRM. The SAA Code of Ethics states that “within a reasonable time, the knowledge archaeologists gain from investigations of the archaeological record must be presented in accessible form,” (Society for American Archaeology 1995). Still, full reports are often not completed, and many that are remain preserved in scattered archives and SHPOs. This “gray literature” has the potential to contribute vast amounts of information to the discipline, but remains inaccessible (Drennan 2001). Wider distribution would not only ensure accessibility to those that wanted it, but would prevent the loss of information and encourage quality-control. A possible solution that has already been implemented by some agencies is creating online databases for reports. The National Archaeological Database run through the NPS is a collection of reports, maps, and special
information for NAGPRA and other laws. There are problems with this database, but it is a starting point (see King 2008 for additional discussion).

Implementing more stringent requirements may be a reasonable approach for encouraging report completion but this problem is also connected to the privileging, particularly within academia, of publications in peer-reviewed journals over those aimed toward the public or categorized as technical reports (Drennan and Mora 2001). This speaks to deeper problems between contract archaeology and the academy that must be addressed if the field of CRM is to be more relevant.

The CRM/Academia Divide

Many practitioners have realized that CRM is now an extra-academic field, but it is not clear what this means for the theoretical and practical basis of the discipline (Neumann and Sanford 2001). CRM is not often taught in university, so it unclear as to how its employees are expected to learn aside from gaining experience through employment (see McGuire and Walker 1999 for a critique of the guild model of CRM). Many entering the CRM field are faced with the realization that university did not adequately prepare them for methods and knowledge of legislation. Other neglected skills include proposal and report writing, negotiation skills, and management. Some schools such as the State University of New York and Binghamton University realize a need for CRM knowledge and run archaeology programs (Mackey 2009, also see Davis 1990). Other schools still view CRM as second rate to academic research.

This is not a new concern. In the 1970s discussions about including CRM instruction in the academy began even if the possibility of training professional technicians outside of the university was recognized (Lipe and Lindsay 1974). Well-rounded professionals are knowledgeable of the discipline as a whole and are capable of moving between method, law, and theory. Unfortunately this is often not the case. Many theoretical developments that have occurred in the academy have not reached CRM, including a shift to postprocessual theories and
methods that could encourage its practitioners to be more reflexive about the role they play within the structure of government and heritage industry, questions of site preservation, and the ultimate aims of archaeological research (see Smith 2004, McGimsey 1976, Goodby 1994). Other changes in academia that can improve the relevance of CRM include increasing the availability of report documents to students as well as other disciplines that may find archaeological data useful such as studies for flood control, soil genesis, sedimentation, floodplains, climate, zoographic information, and other topics (Dixon 1977).

**The Public**

In addition to pragmatically increasing the relevance of CRM by examining internal problems, the practice must address its direct relationship with the public. There are two approaches to working with publics in CRM: collaboration with stakeholders through the Section 106 process, and general outreach to inform the public about archaeological practices and methods, combat stereotypes, and cultivate support for the discipline (see Moe 1999).

The first approach to working with the public is guided by legislation. Mandatory consultation with affected parties is written into Section 106 of the NHPA as:

> “The section 106 process seeks to accommodate historic preservation concerns with the needs of Federal undertakings through consultation among the agency official and other parties with an interest in the effects of the undertaking on historic properties, commencing at the early stage of project planning,” (36 CFR 800.1(a))

These guidelines exist; however, there are not explicit details as to what this consultation requires and who should be consulted aside from the SHPO. Thinking through this process and ensuring that ample time is dedicated to collaboration, rather than simply consultation, can improve relationships between CRM and the affected publics, a pragmatic solution for increasing relevancy (see Dorochoff 2007 for a model). Increased consultation and collaboration is a two-way street: archaeologists gain substantial benefits by being exposed to new questions and
interpretations, and affected parties are given a forum to voice their concerns and aims (Ferguson 2009, also see King 2008 for a more complete discussion of the Section 106 process).

The second approach to the public focuses on outreach activities. Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s practitioners in the field of CRM made efforts to inform the public about their work and the importance of preserving the archaeological record, emphasizing the role of the public in caring for these resources. An educated public, reached through news articles, television, lectures, and other means, is more likely to engage with archaeology (McGimsey and Davis 1968). All of these outlets are options for increasing awareness of the field, but they do require some changes in CRM practice. For instance archaeological reports are often too dense to interest much of the public, hindering efforts to promote interest in the discipline. One pragmatic solution may be to restructure reports so they present information on different levels, one of which a layperson would understand (MacLeod 1977). Another skill is the ability to use different languages for different publics: academics, descendant individuals, government officials, and other communities. Aware and responsible publics are a critical resource as MacLeod points out “Without their support we might as well crawl back to the ivory tower and write the obituary of our discipline” (MacLeod 1977:70). David Crass (2009) offers reasonable suggestions for cultivating public support within an existing academic framework. In addition to methods and theory students should learn public interaction skills including public speaking, basic journalism, media, broadcasting, web design, and public policy. It is important to grasp difficult postprocessural theoretical issues, but equally vital to be able to offer simple, easily understood answers as to why archaeological deposits are important.

I recognize that the aims of these changes may appear idealistic, but they are not unreasonable and there are instances of the public taking action to protect archaeological sites. One such example was a citizen protest to proposed amendments to the NHPA that would have weakened the power of the Section 106 process to protect cultural resources. An informed and
passionate public flooded the House of Representatives and the Senate with concerned and angry letters, and the amendments were not passed (Davis 2010). This is not an isolated case, and in other arenas practices consistent with Pragmatist Archaeology are already changing the field.

**Successful Cases**

Some specialized firms have been considerably successful in working with communities. One example is the Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL) CRM Firm in New England that encourages collaboration with and participation of the public in research, including Wampanoag tribal members, students, and other publics. This group has produced numerous technical and popular reports and has assisted in the development of tribal preservation plans to take over some of the roles of state agencies (Herbster and Cherau 2006). The PAL has also successfully hosted excavation projects for school children, including one at a site in the Blackstone River Valley in Rhode Island (Leveillee and Waller 2003). This example inspires more relevant CRM practices.

The United States’ Department of Agriculture Forest Service’s Passport in Time program has also been successful in engaging interested volunteers. The program caters to an interested public, and provides this group with an excellent opportunity to see the field of CRM in action, from survey to more intensive excavation and restoration. Many local and state archaeological societies offer similar opportunities, and organize fieldtrips and lectures related to archaeology.

Another example of the possible success of CRM in public collaboration is visible in groups such as the Wayland Archaeology Group (see Ritchie and Gardescu 1994). This organization has been tremendously effective in preserving sites that are beyond areas protected by legislation. These communities know the local populace and government, and are invaluable partners for professionals. Additionally, many of these communities are also committed to public education. Encouraging improved perceptions of the practice can result in more grassroots groups that share a concern for the past and commitment to caring for archaeological resources.
Increasing consultation and collaboration in CRM does not come without concerns, and the interests of researchers need to be taken into account just as they are in non-CRM projects. The main concern of is that increased collaboration will jeopardize researchers’ access to sites and materials. The classic example of this issue is the case of Kennewick Man, a Paleo-Indian skeleton that became the center of controversy and legal battles between archaeologists and the Umatilla tribe that claimed ancestry to the remains (see Thomas 2001 for a more intensive discussion). The media fueled a battle for access to the remains which was ultimately won by a group of anthropologists when the court system determined that the tribe had insufficient evidence of kinship. Had greater care been taken by each group to understand the motives of one another, and more respect exercised in the use of the remains, this incident may have ended differently, but this conflict between researchers and indigenous groups should not overshadow the potential successes of working together. One significant success where consultation in NAGPRA did not mean a ban on scientific inquiry is in the work of James Dixon, Timothy Heaton, Terry Fifield, and others at On Your Knees Cave in Alaska. Researchers, in an action consistent with Pragmatist Archaeology, disclosed the project and its findings to the Tlingit community, specifically asking about how to handle skeletal remains that were over 10,000 years old. The community appreciated this consideration and agreed to allow scientific research of the remains (Kemp et al 2007). Consultation and collaboration may not always result in a positive outcome for all groups involved, but we must be aware of the potential for success as we continue to engage others.

Since CRM dominates archaeological research it is a prime area for changing the public’s perceptions of the discipline. Archaeological resources are not valuable intrinsically, but for their ability to connect past and present and answer important questions about the nature of humanity (Lipe 2009). Demonstrating this value to the public must be an integral part of a relevant CRM as the field was conceived to benefit the public.
Significance

Another issue that will likely remain unanswered but heavily debated is determining which sites are significant and deciding whether or not they should be preserved. As pointed out, archaeological resources have no inherent value: it is how they are used in the present and future (Lipe 1984). This value may be economic, connected to symbols of historical event, aesthetic, or can be a resource for scholarly research (see Hardesty and Little 2000, Moshenska 2009 for additional discussion). In addition to esoteric questions about determining significance and exactly what is a cultural resource (i.e. culture knowledge and practice), there are more practical concerns of storage, labeling, and organization that continue to drive discourse in the field (see Sullivan 2001, King 2008). As for other preservation issues it is still un-clear as to how to define the limits of excavation and artifact collecting (see Butler 1979) as well as handle problematic ethical issues like navigating the line between subsistence digging and looting (Hollowell 2006). These ethical concerns have no easy answers, but do not preclude the field from increasing its relevance and outreach, granted caution is taken.

Conclusion

Cultural Resource Management has serious shortcomings to consider when examining how to increase its relevance and significance. A disconnect with academia, problems with publishing, and inaccessibility to the public, save for select firms, have resulted in a field with questionable quality standards and support. Importantly all of these elements are connected: cooperation between CRM and academia can produced well-rounded professionals willing to make efforts to uphold CRM standards but also allow for increased interpretation and postprocessural studies. Standards require that problems with publishing and consistency be addressed, interpretation is strengthened through collaboration, and public outreach bolsters support for better legislation. Whether it is government or private sector CRM, the survival of
both will be better guaranteed by increased reflexivity and commitment to change, concerns that a Pragmatist Archaeology takes into account when applied to any project.

Pragmatist Archaeology acknowledges that CRM project will affect different publics that are defined by their own experiences, beliefs, and perceptions. Working with these publics, especially within the flexible guidelines of Section 106, not only can make the research more relevant to them, but also can broaden the scope and research of archaeologists. Increasing relevance should also be a concern of how CRM interacts with the academy and other disciplines as we seek ways to make archaeological findings more accessible to a larger audience. Most importantly, CRM is a valuable venue for reaching out to communities with the hopes of changing how they perceive archaeological research. Learning how to do this ensures the relevancy and survival of the discipline.
CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS

The discipline of archaeology is at a point in its history where it must consider its relevance, and do so with great care. The diverse public of the 21st century are our largest audience and yet remains one of our most poorly addressed. In many cases researchers have neglected to see the value of opening our practices to greater collaboration and outreach, and in others efforts to do have been stumped by the problems of pluralism.

As discussed, some of these problems plague PTAP’s efforts at Port Tobacco. After being critically reflective about our practices and humbly acknowledging our mistakes of neglecting the interests of the town’s various communities a Pragmatist Archaeology requires that we make an effort to understand what these communities want now. Applying a Pragmatist Archaeology framework can help the project move forward in this regard. This requires evaluating the project based on the relevancy of its results for all publics and their narratives while still including a scientific approach.

To determine the relevancy of the outcomes of research at Port Tobacco we must engage more readily with its communities. Our vision for the site’s future may be supported by some, but it only caters to PTAP’s interpretation of what is important. Acknowledging the voice of our publics may lead to better understandings of the outcomes we should aim for in making research more relevant. For the Piscataway this may involve a more comprehensive understanding of the state and federal recognition process as a prerequisite to determining if our investigations can be of help to their cause. Alternatively more effort could be spent working with the community to make suggestions for how our findings offer a unique means of learning about the past, which may be able to be incorporated into an educational outreach effort for youth. The same is the case for the African American community. For this public Pragmatist Archaeology demands a more intensive effort to engage in conversation to determine how, if at all, archaeology at Port Tobacco can address their interests. This may require a more active role on our part to demonstrate the
application of archaeological findings in the classroom and other settings, though we must be cautious to avoid assuming that we know what is best. As for the local residents, careful study of their experiences of place, as begun in this thesis, reveals a more complicated relationship and agenda than PTAP initially encountered. Maintaining continuous dialogue with this group can alert us to their changing concerns and plans. This process requires that we must present ourselves as open for discussion, criticism, and change. For the scholarly community the potential value of the research may be limitless, but there must be greater analysis and publishing of our findings. Finally, by beginning with these identified communities we can hope to be prepared to work with new groups that view Port Tobacco as important.

We must be willing to revise our agendas to incorporate the interests of the public. It may be possible that our interests are not always the most relevant to a community, and if we are not willing to at least begin a conversation about the matter we will end up with Port Tobaccos everywhere: unhappy residents, apathetic publics, and lack of funding. If we exercise reflexivity in our practices and keep them open to critique, our methods and expertise remain valuable for examining the history of Port Tobacco even if we must be prepared for the possibility that the site’s publics are not interested in continued research. The pragmatic solution at this time may be to cease PTAP’s efforts at the site.

This is not to say that change has not occurred. Many researchers have created their own frameworks for addressing the public generally or for working with specific groups such as African Americans and Native Americans. I am sanguine about this shift to demonstrating a genuine concern for how archaeologists interact with their publics, and am glad to see tough issues like epistemological foundations of the discipline and ethical dilemmas brought out into the light. Still, I am not certain that the field has yet to critically engage with this plethora of approaches, weighing their strengths and weaknesses against one another, much less actually broadly implementing them in the field. The trend seems to be that while there is an increase in
collaboration and involvement with the public, it is largely defined according to the practices on a
single site or by a general thread found in different projects. The papers and edited volumes
defining public archaeology approaches independently of one another speak to this dilemma.

My aim is to advocate for a Pragmatist Archaeology that offers relief from having to
weigh and choose between these approaches. Many of the case examples provided for public
archaeology already fit within this framework, making one of its strengths the ability to pull
together different practices. Pragmatist Archaeology, I argue, must consist of three things:
valuing an archaeological project based upon its relevance to its publics including researchers, the
consideration of other beliefs and interpretations offered by the publics. I cannot claim to have
introduced pragmatism to the field of archaeology as Carol McDavid, Dean Saitta, Stephen
Preucel, Robert Mrozowski and others have preceded me; however, this use of pragmatism, like
the various frameworks for public archaeology, has not been subject to critical scrutiny.

A close examination of the use of pragmatism in archaeology reveals a lack of
contextualization and consistency in its applications. This is particularly serious for a theory like
pragmatism that includes ideas ranging from Charles Peirce’s semiotics to Richard Rorty’s
extreme relativism. Certainly each particular theory can inform the field to a degree, but greater
caution is necessary to define our use of pragmatism in its own right, rather than drawing theories
from other disciplines without examination of their context. Given that much of the support of the
discipline comes from the public, it is reasonable that Pragmatist Archaeology should extend
beyond projects that are conceived with the public in mind. These communities offer their own
interpretations and perspectives and are entitled to some of the benefits of research. Taking
seriously other perspectives and recognizing a history of patronizing top-down approaches to
public engagement can only broaden our research as local communities may offer histories that
contain valuable information or a different framework of understanding that provokes additional
questions about a site.
My inclusion of the interests and methodology of researchers is one that may seem opposite of recent postprocessural trends in archaeology, but I maintain that our role in the discipline and capabilities cannot be understated. Other ways of knowing and perspectives can be presented alongside scientific interpretations and a good scientist will entertain those notions with the same rigor he or she would his or her own idea, being willing to revise conclusions when the evidence demands such. In certain situations I also do not think it necessary to incorporate or choose between two interpretations, the most classic example being the contradiction between scientific evidence of human origins in North America and indigenous oral histories, nor are the realm of science and that of oral history/tradition separate (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2010). Science and oral history do not need to be pitted against one another, and often can both be presented in tandem, especially in cases where the evidence is scant or the question does not have a definitive answer. Science is not meant to offer a fool-proof truth, but an interpretation that is open to dialogue and debate. Allowing for the use of the scientific method as one means for producing knowledge does not imply that it will override other approaches, but it is important to note that various approaches are not immune to critical examination, important for problematic situations when evidence is inconsistent with a particular “truth.”

As a specially trained and well-read group archaeologists are knowledgeable about the value of certain deposits that may not plainly visible to others, and often are capable of contextualizing findings in the broader importance of archaeological resources. As well, our methods are meticulous, standardized, and deal with many different topics: a good archaeologist does not just identify artifacts, but knows soils, features, the lay of the land, which tool to use, broader regional patterns, and so on. In addition, our commitment to ethical guidelines enhances our privilege to navigate pluralistic publics, though it is important to realize that a Pragmatist Archaeology demands a unique application of ethics for each project. It is the case that some standards put forth by professional organizations are in need of updates, suggesting that scrutiny
and dialogue about the ethical obligations of archaeologists must continue. In reformulating these principles the pragmatic concerns of relevance and recognition of complexities of different publics may be able to offer some insight.

The addition of CRM in this paper is necessary given that the overwhelming majority of archaeological research occurs in this setting. The role of CRM often is unacknowledged in the academic sphere, and there exists a real dichotomy between these two fields that I was unaware of until I worked within both settings. Better crossover and discussion could significantly improve CRM’s collaboration efforts and increase the data available to students and researchers. The primary concern of Pragmatist Archaeology is relevance, a problem in many CRM projects.

My own experiences at the site of Port Tobacco were the reason why I entered the field and also the reason why I became so frustrated with it. I struggled to communicate with the public as to why the archaeology of the site was so important, and came to realize that sites will be important to different groups for different reasons based upon their experiences, memories, and interests. Realizing this has been my inspiration for continuing work at the site with a focus on collaborating with the site’s publics. There is no need to continue to spend so much money on research unless the results are more widely disseminated and there appears to be a public interest. The positive news is that it is not too late, and there is much work to be done.

Underlying this argument and discussion of relevance is the need for archaeologists to share their passion and values with its diverse publics. Pragmatist Archaeology allows for the incorporation of public interests but also increases the exposure of the discipline, giving people a more accurate understanding of what it is that archaeologists actually do and just why small sherds of pottery are so important. The public generally pays for our work in one way or another, and we need to justify it to them. A more knowledgeable and involved public can help guide long-term projects to be more relevant, as well as alter the understandings of CRM. If people understand the need for the process they are less likely to see it as a waste of money and a
roadblock to development. This benefit necessitates the increase in time spent working with the
public and knowledge of how to write for, present to, and collaborate with diverse populations.

There is potential for further research to address how to best go about engaging the
public. This is important, but a Pragmatist Framework demands that we continue to act. It may
not be possible to learn what works and what does not for communities unless we begin to engage
them. There is no excuse for delaying this process: the public is entitled to understand the
importance of archaeological deposits and have a say in how they are managed. Even for those
less interested in public outreach it is vital if the discipline is going to survive. Otherwise, our
publics may decide that they do not need us anymore.
36 CFR 800.1(a). Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

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