

# Translating Campus Archaeology Research into Public Outreach

[Slide 1] Title Slide

[Slide 2] Intro CAP

Michigan State University (MSU) Campus Archaeology is a program that works to mitigate and protect the archaeological resources on MSU's beautiful and historic campus. As MSU is the premier Land-Grant College, it has a rich cultural heritage that exists not only in the university's traditions and academic values, but also under the feet of the thousands of students, faculty, and staff that walk campus everyday. The MSU Campus Archaeology Program was founded in 2007, following an archaeological field school that took place several years previously as a part of the sesquicentennial celebration (150 years) of the University.

[Slide 3] Intro CAP Continued

CAP works with multiple departments across the University to make sure that the cultural heritage is protected and information about our research is disseminated to a wide audience. Each construction project on campus that disturbs the earth is properly mitigated by CAP. Almost the entire process of completing an excavation project, from design to historical research and excavations, to reporting through outreach, is completed by MSU undergraduate and graduate students.

A main pillar of CAP's program is to contribute to the public understanding of MSU's cultural heritage through contributions to academic journals, giving talks and presentations, and developing outreach opportunities throughout campus. This paper will

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focus on how we have translated our most recent research projects into outreach and new outreach strategies we have employed over the past year.

[Slide 4] Overall Outreach

CAP runs and participates in numerous outreach events and activities throughout the year. This includes: Michigan Archaeology Day, Michigan State University Science Festival, Apparitions and Archaeology: A Haunted Campus Tour, Elementary School Science Nights, Michigan State University Grandparents University, Michigan Girl Scout badge, MSU Food Truck events, MSU dormitory cafeteria meal events, Community Sustained Agriculture (CSA) outreach, all alongside various social media strategies. We will highlight several of these outreach activities in detail.

[Slide 5]: Michigan Archaeology Day

Michigan Archaeology Day is an all-day event hosted by the Michigan History Center, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, and the Michigan Economic Development Cooperation in Lansing, Michigan every October. It is a free event that allows visitors to explore the Michigan History Center while pursuing artifact displays, demonstrations like flint-knapping, presentations, hands-on activities including a mock excavation and ceramic pinch-pot making workshops, and a scavenger hunt.

CAP has participated in this event for over 8 years, taking this opportunity to test new outreach activities. As this event includes around 800-1000+ visitors between 10 am - 4 pm, we tailor our display and activities to allow visitors to interact for two to five minutes.

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Over the past two years, we have introduced two new outreach games to help teach visitors how to think like an archaeologist.

[Slide 6]: Game Photos

The first game is focused on understanding the importance of stratigraphy - made relevant to CAP by choosing to include artifacts found on MSU's campus and using a stratigraphic profile reflective of what we typically encounter on campus. Most participants are able to place 3-5 artifacts in under a minute, preventing long lines and allowing many people to participate. We also designed the stratigraphic profile to fit on a standard tabletop, allowing us to have two or more stations going at once, depending on the amount of space we are provided at an event. As we wanted to use this for as long as possible, we considered durability during its creation, choosing to make it out of felt as it is less easily ripped than paper and can be folded for storage. We also used laminated photos of real artifacts so that everyone - cap volunteers and participants alike - can enjoy the activity without fear of breaking physical objects. A large variety of artifacts were selected to include to allow us to provide participants with an age-appropriate challenge.

The second game emphasises the importance of laboratory work in archaeology. This game allows visitors to reconstruct ceramic vessels out of broken sherds, allowing us to discuss how most artifacts uncovered in archaeology are fragmented, how difficult the process of artifact analysis can be, and why it can be helpful to re-fit matching sherds. This game was accomplished by the breaking of (new to us) purchased ceramic, sanding down the edges, drilling holes into the smoothed matching edges, and inserting small disk

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magnets with glue to hold the sherds together. This game was highly successful and we are currently in the process of creating new ceramic refitting games to expand options for visitors at our outreach events.

[Slide 7]: MSU Grandparent's University

Grandparent's University is an annual event hosted by the MSU Alumni Association that allows grandparents and their grandchildren to stay on campus for 3 days in the dorms and attend unique classes and programming. CAP has hosted a class for this event for the past 10 years! In the past, we have had classes come out to ongoing field schools, receive a historic tour of campus, and listen an introductory lecture on the basics of archaeology, including a dramatic example of how a whole pot becomes a broken pot! This past year we saved artifacts uncovered during the field school to provide an opportunity for the participants to learn about how and why we wash artifacts. This allows the participants to have a hands-on experience directly linked to ongoing research. In addition to assisting with the washing of artifacts, the participants also were asked to fill out individual survey cards about places of memory on campus and pin them to an oversized map. This allows visitors to link their memories of their time on campus to places that may or may not still exist (as MSU is constantly under construction), and understand how quickly space can change throughout time.

[Slide 8]: Food Truck/Dorm Cafeteria

In 2015, a brick-lined privy was discovered near the MSU Museum. CAP excavated the privy that summer, finding that it contained a variety of interesting items, from dolls to

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broken dishes and various bottles. The privy, which dates to the 1860s, also contained preserved food remains such as fish bones and raspberry seeds. This prompted former Campus Archaeologist, Lisa Bright, to come up with the idea to recreate a historic MSU meal based off of these food remains. This project uses food remains excavated from this historic privy at MSU to explore and recreate the food environment of the campus during its Early Period (1855-1870). Archaeological analysis and archival research were used together to investigate historic food production, acquisition, processing/preparation, and consumption, culminating in the recreation of a meal that may have been served on campus in the 1860s.

Understanding the foods prepared, served, and consumed by nineteenth-century students and faculty at MSU will help us recreate what life was like during the earliest years of MSU. Archaeology is all about connecting the present to the past, and what better way to make these connections than through our stomachs?

In 2017, Campus Archaeology worked closely with Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and Chef Jay Makowski of MSU Culinary Services and Cindy Baswell of MSU Bakers to create a historic menu that was served in a meal recreation event. Following the success of this project, we continued our collaboration with MSU Culinary Services to provide #ThrowbackThursday and #FlashbackFriday menu items through the MSU ON-THE-GO Food Truck throughout the year. To expand our audience for this research we are now in the process of creating a themed dinner at the largest MSU dormitory cafeteria in the Spring.

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[Slide 9]: Salsify CSA

Following the theme of researching MSU foodways, in 2017, CAP approached the MSU Student Organic Farm, a student-run farm that provides student training in sustainable agriculture, to engage in a collaborative project distributing a product deeply rooted in campus history. Through archival research, many different types of produce was grown in the MSU Gardens, harvested, and then 'sold' back to MSU to be served in the boarding (dorm) halls. One of these foodstuffs was salsify, a root vegetable also known as the oyster plant. We worked with the MSU SOF to grow and harvest salsify in summer/fall 2018 right on campus. The salsify was then distributed to about 100 people through the MSU SOF Community Sustained Agriculture (CSA) package with outreach material. The handout provided alongside the root vegetable included three different historical recipes for cooking salsify and background information about CAP and the MSU SOF, as well as distributed through a digital newsletter.

We received permission from the MSU SOF and IRB approval to send out an anonymous survey to the CSA participants. Our goals for the survey were to evaluate: the effectiveness of the salsify outreach initiative for engaging the community in thinking about the past; the level of enjoyment participants felt in reenacting and consuming the past through food-based projects; and the project's success in raising awareness of the Campus Archaeology Program. The results of this outreach project are currently being written up as a publication.

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[Slide 10]: Social Media - Blog

In addition to outreach events with face-to-face interaction with the public, we also place an emphasis on social media outreach. Our website, [campusarch.msu.edu](http://campusarch.msu.edu) has a blog that has run for over 10 years. Blogs are written by our CAP graduate fellows, undergraduate interns, and field school students with topics that include research projects, artifact highlights, and alumni interviews, among others.

[Slide 11]: #ArchaeologyofMSUin20

This past year, we launched a social media campaign and virtual exhibit: #ArchaeologyofMSUin20. While we had begun documenting artifacts uncovered on MSU's campus through photogrammetry to create 3D models, we wanted to find a thematic way of sharing these with a broad audience. Twenty artifacts were selected that fit within the four stages of MSU's history that CAP has developed, to show changes of MSU through time. Each week, a new 3D model was shared on each of our social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) explaining the significance of the artifact to MSU's history. In addition to sharing this information each week on social media, we also created a virtual exhibit on our website.

[Slide 12]: Artifacts 3 Ways

Now at outreach events, we are able to allow visitors to engage with the same object in 3 different ways: the artifact itself, tablets with several 3D models pre-loaded, and 3D

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prints of the object. This allows us to make our research and the artifacts we uncover on MSU's campus more accessible.

[Slide 13]: Conclusion

Overall, our various types of outreach has been successful, however, there is always room to learn. At each outreach event or social media post, we look at how the public is interacting and try to find ways to improve the visitors experience. Looking to the future, we are going to continue to look for new, innovative, interactive means to communicate our research with the public and integrate a systematic way of assessing our outreach.