Artifacts on Air: Cultural Coherence, Collaboration, and Remote Access in Indigenous Archaeological Collections

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Museum Studies

Faculty of Information
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Abstract

This thesis explores if and how radio can be used to promote remote access to Indigenous archaeological collections for descendant communities, with attention to how First Nations media techniques can inform museum interpretation. With increasing globalization, museums can now reach audiences who may never enter the museum’s physical space. This is especially important for First Nations with a strong cultural interest in museum collections they are often unable to visit. How then, can we interpret Indigenous objects in a culturally coherent manner without a physical encounter? Within this, how can competing expert narratives be navigated through collaborative practice? This thesis acknowledges the insufficiencies of visual media for remotely interpreting Indigenous material heritage. Audio is proposed as a supplementary medium, which offers alternative interpretive benefits and is more broadly accessible. The radio format is also used to consider tensions between the presence and absence of objects and people.
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Chapter 1
Remote Interpretation of Indigenous Archaeological Collections at the Intersection of Media, Museum, and Indigenous Studies

“... people need to understand that for about as long as humans have been walking this place, those are my ancestors. They created a relationship to place. They created a culture based on that, and that's what shapes my identity today. So to ignore that is almost to betray your inheritance. That's why we have to fight for this. At the same time, I kind of believe in this balance between archaeological inquiry and Indigenous reality. That if we bring these two things closer together, we will improve the field dramatically, and also the archaeologists will feel their work is having a productive impact on real live people today. It's not all about what happened a long time ago.”

– Rick Hill

Introduction

Historically, relations between First Nations groups and museums in Canada have been difficult, both because of unethical collecting practices and a lack of cultural coherence in the techniques used for their care and display (Doxtator, 1996; Phillips, 2011). Repatriation and collaboration efforts have strengthened these relationships and taken steps toward new forms of representation and interpretation (Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, 1992). Similarly, efforts to reclaim the representative authority of the mainstream media have produced a number of strong Indigenous media outlets with a focus on Indigenous authorship and self-representation (Buddle, 2005; Fairchild, 1998). While these changes have helped to reclaim representations of First Nations, there is still work to be done in terms of how the public engages with Indigenous collections and heritage.

The aim of this project is twofold: to explore how museums can approach the task of heritage interpretation in a way which provides the source communities with cultural agency; and to understand what aspects of collections are prioritized by cultural experts during interpretation. Within the context of Southwestern Ontario, and more specifically the Six Nations community, I have tried to understand both what stories should be told and how those stories should be delivered. My exploration of this matter has taken the form of a case study centered on the development of a radio program about a collection of archaeological material sourced from the

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1 Defined as the process through which connections are forged between the audience and the meanings inherent in the material (National Association for Interpretation, 2006), interpretation derives meaning from the way it is delivered (Isaac, 2011; McLuhan, 1964).
Six Nations community and held by Sustainable Archaeology McMaster. Informing this case study, I have drawn upon existing literature pertaining to Indigenous museology, remote access to Indigenous collections and cultural resources, and Indigenous media as well as scholarship pertaining more broadly to media studies and museum interpretation. This chapter will outline the theoretical background for the project, moving from a brief overview of the relationship between First Nations communities and museums in Canada to issues of access, communication, and First Nations media practices, finally concluding with an introduction to the execution of the case study itself.

Museums and Indigenous Relations in Canada

Deborah Doxtator (1996) addresses the relationship between First Nations and museums, arguing strongly in favour of transferring control of Indigenous collections to source communities. Although Doxtator is certainly a strong advocate for the repatriation of material artifacts, she suggests that the primary value of these collections is not their tangible presence, but rather their role as anchors in the construction of cultural identity (1996, 64). Throughout Doxtator’s argument, she asserts that “ownership” need not refer solely to the possession of property, but more importantly signifies an assumption of moral responsibility towards one’s own cultural identity (1996, 56). As such, access to and control over one’s own cultural heritage are crucial to the process of reconciliation in which Canada and the First Nations are engaged (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Further, as Shawna McRanor argues, the absence of cultural context severely hinders the interpretation of both tangible and intangible heritage (1997, 71). The storage of First Nations material heritage in contexts external to source communities not only deprives these communities of necessary access to cultural education, but also hinders the ways in which the artifacts themselves are understood by their stakeholders.

However, as Doxtator briefly discusses, the repatriation of artifacts and transfer of cultural representative agency are often impeded by a lack of resources and funding. The collecting practices of early European settlers meant that vast quantities of First Nations material heritage were transferred to Western academic institutions such as museums, libraries, and archives. The reversal of this transfer often implies added strain on the already limited resources of many First Nations communities, and is thus not prioritized in the face of other, more immediate social
problems (Doxtator, 1996, 66). Despite this, Doxtator argues that many of these problems stem from a lack of cultural identity, which is in turn due to the deprivation of material heritage. Concerning the construction of community and cultural identity, Doxtator writes,

You need to know what it is you are building, and you need to clarify where you have been and where you are going. If you don’t have the time or access to study these things, then you can’t do it. In the face of that need, there is an irony – the fact that most of the required cultural information about objects isn’t in the communities anymore, because it’s in museums in far-flung places. We have been experiencing a process of being continually dispossessed and disconnected from our past. (59)

Access to material heritage is not only an issue of cultural education, but indeed of cultural survival for individuals and communities alike (Bell and Napoleon, 2008; Doxtator, 1996; Thornton, 2002; Weasel Head, 2010; Weasel Head, 2015). Until the repatriation of material heritage can be accomplished in a sustainable manner, there will be a need for culturally comprehensive and cost-effective means of accessing these materials remotely.

Beyond the practical obstacles of remote access, Doxtator holds that the act of interpreting Indigenous objects through a primarily Western academic lens acts to further distance source communities from their material cultural heritage, articulating that “it is no coincidence that this intellectual separation of living aboriginal people from the objects of the past has coincided with a relative ease in assuming authority over aboriginal cultural interpretation” (1996, 63). Although the recommendations made by the Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association Task Force (1992) have set a precedent for collaborative interpretive practices, it is important to continue to assert Indigenous expert voices in the interpretation of Indigenous objects.

Miranda Brady (2011) examines a selection of collaborative practices aimed at heightening the inclusion of Indigenous voices in large-scale museums exhibitions. Taking the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) and the Chicago Field Museum as case studies, Brady observes that while the prominent inclusion of Indigenous voices can work to transcend social barriers and promote multicultural dialogue, it is a task that must be approached carefully and earnestly. Brady reflects that in cases where Indigenous voices are not given sufficient authority, ostensible collaborations can work to legitimize the institution without benefitting the community partners involved to the same extent (2011, 205). Augmenting this
potential inequality is the disparity in professional identities and distribution of labour that is sometimes evident in such collaborations. During the execution of the case study for the present investigation, heritage professional Heather George pointed out that often, Indigenous partners in collaborations are otherwise employed and are asked to contribute personal time and expertise for free, whereas institutional partners are paid for their work and have the established support of the organization they represent (George, personal communication, February 2016).

Describing the development of two collaborative exhibitions at the University of British Columbia’s Museum of Anthropology (MOA), Michael Ames (1999) acknowledges many of the challenges presented by collaboration with First Nations communities. While the model of complete inclusion he presents is offered as an ideal practice of collaboration, Ames also recognizes that “it takes time to build the trust a partnership requires, and joint projects require flexibility to develop successfully (1999, 49). Though the model presented by Ames is a good one, and worth working towards, the demands on time and resources it represents are not always possible to satisfy. In lieu of achieving Ames’ ideal of collaboration, alternative models for the inclusion of Indigenous voices should be considered.

**Indigenous material heritage and remote access**

The current primary means of providing remote access to museum collections comes through digital media such as museum blogs and online catalogues. I draw upon these as models of remote interpretation to inform this project, but raise theoretical and logistical issues surrounding digital remote access media and cultural coherence. I offer radio as another tool for remote access and equally explore its capacity for cultural coherence. Though digital visual media offer a range of opportunities in terms of remote access and crowdsourcing, I argue that radio can be used to complement areas of weakness inherent to digital media. Though radio is at the heart of
this thesis, I do not hold it to be superior to digital media\(^2\), but rather worth exploring as a medium that can be used to meet specific needs of descendant communities that cannot be met sufficiently using digital media.

Alex Byrne (2008), writing from an Australian perspective, discusses some of the central issues concerning the interpretation and digitization of Indigenous cultural resources. Building on Doxtator’s argument, Byrne asserts that objects “include many layers of intangible cultural expression and interpretation” (2008, 3) which are at risk of being overshadowed or omitted by the imposition of museological practices, and recommends that museums employ digital access platforms which permit users to express their own interpretations of and knowledge about objects. Further Byrne agrees that access to one’s own cultural heritage assists in the construction of identity and in promoting a process of social healing. In the face of these considerations, Byrne suggests that the digitization of Indigenous cultural resources is a vital step in enabling agency over and access to collections.

While the interpretive potential of digital resources is exciting, much museum studies scholarship on the subject does not consider the practical accessibility of digital museum resources. There is an implicit assumption in Byrne’s work that, having created these resources, the targeted audiences will be able to use them. However, digital access in remote rural communities is often constrained by a lack of access to reliable internet connections (Alexander et al., 2009; Hughes and Dallwitz, 2006). In addition to this, if the aim of these resources is to generate active involvement in the interpretation and description of objects it is important that they be accessible to older and younger generations alike. Often, online catalogues can be confusing to navigate and require a degree of digital and museological literacy which may not be universally present amongst community members. The ideological aspects of such projects frequently overshadow the logistics of access that not only determine the success or failure of a

\(^2\) Like any communication technology, radio has been the subject of as much criticism as it has praise, with significant concerns being raised by a number of scholars about the use of radio as tool for disseminating propaganda (see King, 2014 for an exploration of the dynamic between radio as propaganda and radio as activism). The present study acknowledges this criticism as a part of the broader history of the medium, but focuses more specifically on the use of radio within First Nations communities as a form of cultural activism and community building as per the scholarship presented by Buddle (2005) addressed later in this chapter. See also scholarship offered by Fairchild (1998).
project, but may also afford museum professionals greater insight into the community the project is aimed at.

**Reclaiming the absence of material heritage through remote access media**

One area of concern addressed by Byrne is the unwillingness of heritage professionals to proceed with digitization projects for fear of violating Indigenous values of intellectual property and access. This concern for the display of sensitive materials is rightly a common component of discussions surrounding Indigenous digitization projects (see also Brown, 1998; Curtis, 2006; Nakata et al., 2008). However, like the assumptions addressed above, this concern is expressed from the point of view of the institution, not the source community. Concerns expressed by institutions regarding the dissemination of culturally sensitive material are certainly valid and show an appropriate respect for the needs of source communities. However, such concerns often inadvertently paralyze efforts at virtual repatriation. By exploring more diverse and culturally coherent approaches to remote access, museums can improve both the quantity and quality of remote access projects.

It is true that digital resources that allow users to comment on and edit object descriptions give community members a heightened degree of agency, but users are nonetheless constrained by the format and medium chosen by the institution (Brady, 2011, 444). In spite of a growing movement towards collaboration and increased access, museum documentation often remains distinctly Western in language and format – a fact which limits objects to acting as illustrations of standardized, preconceived functions rather than allowing them to be interpreted in a dynamic manner (Srinivasan et al., 2009). The democratic approach to knowledge sharing demonstrated by movements towards crowd sourcing and open-access presents further concerns with regards to sharing Indigenous cultural heritage. Kimberly Christen (2015) notes that open access to cultural information and heritage is not appropriate within all knowledge systems and further argues that remote access projects should not only be preoccupied with making collections accessible, but also with making them culturally knowable to community members.
Reflecting and expanding upon the criticism of open-access offered by Christen, my own experiences have revealed that the media and style of interpretation can influence not only the manner in which stories are told, but in fact which stories are presented and how they are selected. In exploring means of remote access to Indigenous archaeological collections, I have found that the participants in my research were interested in artifacts not only in their own right, but also as tools for anchoring a broader narrative (cf. Clifford, 1997, 188-191). This has led me to consider the ways in which participants engage with heritage and the interweaving relationships between objects, stories, audience, voice, and context. Because I am specifically concerned with remote access, storytelling and representation must play a significant role in the interaction between user and artifact, and as a result, questions of voice and cultural location are central to my investigation. These themes have led me to draw upon scholarship examining remote engagement, Western and Indigenous narratives, and the role of heritage in the production of identity.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) introduces the notion of research as a site of struggle between the “interests and ways of knowing of the West” and those of the Other. While L.T. Smith is outspoken about the negative role Western style research has played in the self-determination of Indigenous communities, she also recognizes that as colonialism continues to define Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in contemporary culture, Indigenous narratives of identity are forced to engage with traditionally Western ways of knowing. As she discusses, in order to reclaim their own identities, histories, and knowledge systems, Indigenous peoples must identify colonialism as “wrong,” and are thus forced into a classically Western dichotomy (1999, 34). Aaron Glass terms the demand for Indigenous peoples to operate within this dichotomy the “colonial paradox,” resisting the notion that Indigenous identity and culture must be exclusive of modern technologies (2011, 30).

Laurajane Smith identifies another occurrence of struggle with her understanding of heritage as a process of negotiation between received and contested identities (2006, 7). The sites of struggle observed by L. Smith are numerous and include the struggles between material and intangible, individual and nation, and received and contested identity. Although L. Smith’s notion of heritage as negotiation seems to rely upon restrictive dichotomies, her sites of struggle prove to be subversive and productive. As we learned from L.T. Smith, although the Western logic of dichotomies is the default playing field, the heart of the struggle is far more complex. Laurajane
Smith expands on this complexity by offering what one might understand as “nested” dichotomies. For Smith, although there are material objects associated with heritage, all heritage is in fact intangible and material heritage is therefore part of intangible heritage. Similarly, while received and contested identities may stand in opposition to each other, they can also occupy the same space, and an individual may feel simultaneously included in each.

At the heart of the arguments of both Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Laurajane Smith is the concept of multivocality. Just as with objects (Byrne, 2008, 3), heritage and identity are composed of layers of stories and processes rooted in the past, yet active in the present. For Laurajane Smith these stories and processes can be added to and maintained through acts of visitation and contemporary engagement. An example L. Smith uses in her writing is that of Waanyi women fishing in culturally significant places. Simply by spending productive time in a place of heritage the women acted to create new memories and thus maintain a connection with the past. The past is understood to be virtual, as it does not have any physical counterpart, and yet through our engagement with heritage, we are able to feel its presence, and are even able to actively interact with it, allowing it to influence us and changing it in return. Turning to the issue of remote access and interpretation, the question is then how to facilitate this intimate intangible interaction with a heritage object in the absence of that object.

Digital media scholars are acutely familiar with the challenge of creating an experience which is perceived by the user or visitor as being authentic (Lee, 2004; McLuhan, 1964). Kwan Min Lee uses the term “presence” when discussing the perceived authenticity of the virtual object experienced by the user (Lee, 2004, 36). As Lee discusses, the degree of presence experienced by the user, or the perceived authenticity of the virtual object, relies on the user’s trust in the proximity of the virtual object to its physical counterpart. A similar concept is offered by Miranda Brady (2011, 443) by way of Andy Clark (2007, 416) with the term “telepresence.” Whereas Lee’s primary focus in defining presence is the ability to produce a seemingly authentic object, Clark and Brady identify telepresence as the ability to participate in a remote social environment. The notion of presence or successful engagement with remote elements thus bears connections to the material, social, and spatial realms of experience. For the sake of simplicity, in the present study I will follow Lee’s example in using “presence” as an umbrella term encompassing diverse experiences of remote engagement.
In order for presence to be achieved, the user (or visitor) must be able to draw a plausible connection between reality and their imagined experiences. But what happens when the user is unable to do so? Within the realm of virtual simulation, this simply results in a less satisfying experience. Within the realm of heritage production, this can signify a disjuncture between the visitor/user and the cultural network represented by the heritage object, and thus a hindrance of the ability to form identity. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith discusses, this kind of disjuncture and resulting hindrance to self-determination is a major obstacle to Indigenous processes of reclamation. How can heritage that has been subjected to oppression be reclaimed? If, as Laurajane Smith argues, heritage is produced through the stories we tell and the contexts surrounding heritage objects, are culturally dissociated artifacts still heritage? If so, what kind of heritage are they? Whose identity do they inform? For whom do they produce a sense of presence?

Building off of an understanding of heritage objects as “discursive” entities (Silverman, 2015, 3), Raymond Silverman (2015) casts the movement of objects between contexts as a form of translation. Like the translation of language, this is a process which simultaneously involves loss and creation. Objects are changed in translation. Regarding the dissociation of heritage objects from Indigenous contexts, the question of whether that change is permanent bears significance. It is true that the translation of heritage objects can and does also happen within source communities themselves; yet, to extend Silverman’s language metaphor, this kind of translation could be compared to changing dialects within the same language – different, but likely still accessible. The translation from community to museum, on the other hand could be as drastic as a complete change in alphabet. Having been translated from the community to the museum, what happens to Indigenous heritage objects when they are translated back into the community? How can this be done in such a way as to restore a sense of presence? Given the nature of translation and Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s assertion that Western and Indigenous ways of knowing are now inextricably intertwined, it seems impossible and perhaps unproductive to try and fully reverse this translation process. More useful perhaps, is the “common signifying space” described by Silverman (2015, 4). Rather than attempting to restore a pristine and probably false version of the past, perhaps as Laurajane Smith suggests, a fruitful sense of presence can be produced by forming and engaging in new heritage processes.
Listening to objects

Objects, materials, and meaning making

Where do people end and objects begin? In his argument against the polarization of mind and matter, Tim Ingold (2007) exposes an uncertainty that such a boundary exists. Rather, he suggests that material objects are the solidified end products of mental processes. Just as humans are alive and ever changing, so are materials and Ingold writes “as the underbelly of things, materials may lie low, but are never entirely subdued. Despite the best efforts of curators and conservationists, no object lasts forever. Materials always and inevitably win out over materiality in the long term” (2007, 10).

Sandra Dudley (2012) picks up this theme of the life and death of materials in her introduction to The Thing About Museums. Although objects in museums are often perceived as “dead” and removed from “real life”, Dudley argues that as the materials continue to change and people continue to encounter the objects in new ways, they are truly alive. In Dudley’s understanding of the life of objects, both material change and social engagement are essential. This thought is echoed by Mouliou and Kalesopoulou who observe that “wonder may derive” (2012, 59) not only from the physicality of an object, but from its meaning. I wonder if, in the absence of either social engagement or material change the object retains its ability to evoke presence? Further, to what realms of experience does this sense of presence offer access? If, as Laurajane Smith (2006) argues, heritage is a process that takes place in the present, then heritage objects may hold the ability to establish presence both vertically through time and horizontally across physical and social distance.

Julia Petrov (2012) writes of the conjuring power of historic clothing, observing that objects can “mediate the space between memory of the past and the imagination of the self” (2012, 230). Because most visitors have a strong formal understanding of clothing and how it is meant to be used, the personal nature of garments allows visitors to imaginatively connect with the original wearer. The viewer can imagine themselves wearing the garment – inhabiting the same space and feeling the same textures as the person to whom it belonged. In explaining this connection, Petrov (2012, 238) draws upon Jeffrey Feldman, who writes of objects as contact points
“result[ing] from physical contact with the body and then the subsequent removal or destruction of the body” (2006, 245), allowing the senses to become “historical links between histories and representation” (Feldman, 2006, 255). According to Ingold’s interpretation of materials, the human body is no less material than the tools it wields. In Petrov’s description of the power of clothing, it is the connection with the human body which allows us to imaginatively engage with past wearers. If the body is just another kind of material, it is then the intangible connection between body and object that evokes a sense of presence. Allowing the viewer to access personal experience beyond themselves, the connection between viewer and object is personal and intimate, as it affords insight into otherwise inaccessible realms. In the case of Indigenous heritage, it may not always be desirable to allow such access to non-Indigenous audiences.

Although presence is intangible and can be evoked without contact, the typical isolation of the viewer from the object in a museum context can detract from the depth of engagement (Saunderson, 2012). When limited to visual engagement, Saunderson finds that visitors often spend more time reading interpretive material in search of context than they spend actually looking at the object. The urge to read interpretive material demonstrates a desire to know how the object came into contact with bodies of the past. Yet doing so creates a disjuncture between the object and its materiality – a separation which Ingold fervently warns us against making. Even in the physical presence of the objects, the viewer is denied a sense of connection when confronted with a physical barrier between their body and the object, such as the glass cases or railings often seen in museum displays. While interpretive strategies such as text panels offer an alternative means of connecting with the object, the visible separation from the object and rendering of the text upon a panel (another kind of object) stand as reminders to the visitor of the secondhand nature of their connection.

Although not intended to replace interaction with material objects, perhaps there is value to offering forms of interpretation which deliberately absent both the object and its accompanying text panel. For example, the use of a strictly audio-based interpretation would result in the user’s version of the object existing exclusively in their own mind. In considering the social role of voice, Nick Couldry (2010) identifies a connection between voice and matter. Couldry writes that “Because sound permeates and penetrates the person who is listening, the act of listening makes no sense at all except as an experience of a body that is itself extended in space […] sound extends as much in time as in space […] Voice must therefore be understood as a process
extended in time” (2010, 91-92). The object would be *integral* to both the listener and the historical context that produced it. In the listener’s mind, the object would exist both in the context of the cultural network constituting its past and present and in the context of the listener’s own experience, making it easier to understand as the contact point described by Feldman and facilitating the ongoing negotiation of both the object’s and the listener’s cultural networks. However, to fully remove the object in this way presents a risk of neglecting the materials that Ingold and Dudley so arduously defend. In further support of materials, Schwarzer (2007) writes that words “evoke different reactions than the visual or tactile exposure to a concrete object” (2007, 230). For this reason, although she is a strong advocate for the application of radio to museums, Schwarzer suggests using the museum space as a radio studio, so that the resulting programs and discussions might benefit from the physical presence of the artifacts. Thus while the listener would still have the imaginative luxury of constructing the object in their own mind, the material form of the object would still actively influence the listener’s reception of information. Even when physically removed from the listener, the object is still present.

Beyond the process of meaning making through the interaction of material and verbal mediums, Schwarzer argues for a similar process of meaning making through public dialogue between diverse viewpoints. She suggests applying techniques pioneered by citizen journalism movements in order to incorporate a more diverse range of perspectives. Nick Merriman (2004) supports such an approach, acknowledging that archaeology museums often end up excluding the perspectives of minority groups in attempting to serve the general public interest. Similar to Ingold’s argument, Merriman emphasizes the benefits of prioritizing the object, suggesting that focusing on the aura of the object leads to diverse “creative, poetic, and anti-rational” understandings of the object (2004, 101). While Merriman writes in favour of a more pluralistic and diverse approach to interpretation, he is also wary of undermining historical understanding by welcoming and celebrating all perspectives. Rather than allowing for a completely democratic representation of interpretations, Merriman proposes an “informed imagination” approach, which combines historical contextualization with affective engagement, thus helping to reinforce the object’s role as contact point (2004, 101-102). In the context of Indigenous material heritage, the “information” portion of this approach must come from an Indigenous perspective. Expanding on this idea, Christen writes,
Instead of assuming that a level playing field is either desirable or even achievable in the digital or analogue museum, Indigenous curatorial practices deny both the old expert authority and the newer crowd-sourced authority, opting instead for a middle ground where source communities’ knowledge is privileged even while other knowledge is acknowledged and maintained. (2015, 380)

As museums and the interpretive strategies they employ are indigenized, it is not a complete elimination of the institutional voice that is called for – this voice is a part of the identity and culture of the objects and communities in question. Rather, the prominence of that voice needs to be adjusted in order to privilege the cultural expertise of those communities.

**Tuning in to the multivocality of heritage objects**

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill argues that because museums have traditionally taken a linear approach to preserving and interpreting history, it is difficult to accommodate a “plurality of histories” and sameness is often favoured over difference (1992, 8). Museums, collections, and artifacts have all been perceived as having a singular objective identity. However, citing Foucault, Hooper-Greenhill observes that the rational world is in fact subjective. Foucault rejects the idea of a singular linear history and proposes instead an “effective” history – one which is discontinuous and pluralistic (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 10).

This is a notion which is supported by my own research. Although my sample group is defined by people who share a similar cultural background and expertise, they nonetheless bring diverse experiences to their equally diverse interpretations of the material in question. The stories surrounding heritage collections are linked in some ways, but they are also varied and personal. At times, they are even contradictory. When it comes to the stories attributed to archaeological artifacts by Indigenous communities and archaeologists, the discrepancies of interpretation are especially difficult to reconcile. Yet all of these stories are united by the fact of the material object. Is there a way to tell the many stories of an object in a non-hierarchical manner? At what point does the story of an object become the story of a person? Hooper-Greenhill begins to touch on this when she asks “How can organic relationships, histories, and links to people be shown in display cases?” (1992, 204). However, Hooper-Greenhill’s concern is mainly with addressing the
plurality of interpretations over time. To address the horizontal plurality of interpretation I ask instead “what does the multivocality of objects sound like?”

To begin to answer this question, it is necessary to understand the relationship between objects and their voices. For Michelle Henning (2006), this is achieved by thinking about museums as a form of media. In drawing this connection, Henning explains that “objecthood, like textual meaning, results from multileveled acts of attention by individuals, social groups, and institutions” (2006, 7). As entities of material duration, objects persist, being formed and reformed over time. Through this process of continual formation, objects are able to communicate across time, and thus function as a type of media. Drawing upon media theory offered by Harold Innis (1951), Marshall McLuhan (1964), Raymond Williams (1977) and Friedrich Kittler (1999), Henning builds a framework of media as being dependent on the material world and influential of social relations. As McLuhan suggests, all media is rooted in the material world, and all artificial aspects of the material world may be understood as media. A useful note here is Kittler’s understanding of media as something which has the capacity not only to relay messages but to record and preserve them (Kittler, 1999, 13, cited in Henning, 2006, 74).

As the materials comprising heritage objects are altered over time, they too record messages about the object’s history, even as they change the way it relays other messages and stories. Thus, not only may the objects that populate museums be understood as media, they may be understood as being exemplary of the media described by these scholars.

Although they are forms of media in their own right, museum objects also act to form the broader media network of the museum around them. Having accepted the multivocality of objects, the question then is what kind of interpretive media is best suited to making these many voices heard? What can a museum do to tell the stories of its objects in a Foucauldian “effective” manner? Again, we encounter the difficulty of engaging with differing narratives.

The plurality of stories is something with which Thomas King (2003) is comfortable. Although in T. King’s world not all stories are good, and evil does exist, this is cast as something which must simply be accepted, “For once a story is told it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world” (2003, 10). In discussing N. Scott Momaday’s novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968) King highlights Momaday’s navigation of complex narratives which are characterized as neither good nor bad. “Strange moments in a strange world,” T. King observes, “But not good and evil”
Looking past Momaday to other authors who have worked to develop a contemporary Native literary universe, T. King observes that this is a common thread in their writing; the urge to dissect and assign value is resisted, allowing the audience to encounter all of these “strange moments” without having to choose one.

T. King addresses language as a tool of creation which can be either oral or written. While he emphasizes that the two can easily coexist and are not mutually exclusive, he does make a distinction in terms of his own perception of the two forms. “I think of oral stories as public stories and written stories as private stories,” T. King writes, “the act of reading is a private act… whereas oral stories generally have an audience in which there is a group dynamic” (2003, 154).

Like T. King, McLuhan is also concerned with the properties of stories in their various forms. Regarding radio, McLuhan largely agrees with T. King’s understanding of oral storytelling, arguing that radio inspires a sense of kinship and serves to “involve people in one another” (1964, 261). Although McLuhan initially characterizes radio as a private medium, the user’s internal engagement with a remote individual creates a dynamic environment which, unlike reading silently, is not completely solitary. Further, while reading involves the consumption of a singular linear narrative, McLuhan argues that radio shrinks the world, but does not homogenize it. Rather, as a decentralized form of media, radio has been able to diversify and attend more specifically to the needs of local communities. This has resulted in a great range of content and style being contained within a single form of media.

While radio’s ability to present a single message to a wide audience has often resulted in its being labeled a tool of propaganda, Edward King (2014) presents the medium as a method of resistance. The process of creating radio requires the broadcaster to devise a message for an imagined community connected by perceived relations of space, time, and culture. However, as E. King argues, the actual community and geography of the listening audience rarely matches this imagined community. Listeners not only actively choose to listen, but do so selectively, enacting listening tactics which allow them to shape the broadcast messages which fill their homes. For Edward King, the act of listening is one of cultural activism and personal identity construction. Radio is both a public and a private medium, and is multivocal in practice while remaining anchored to a central message. In this way, radio offers a means of enacting the kind of “informed imagination” approach to heritage interpretation recommended by Nick Merriman (2004).
Edward King’s understanding of listening as a form of activism is further bolstered by Nick Couldry’s (2010) assertion that voice is “socially grounded” (2010, 7) and that “voice as a social process involves, from the start, both speaking and listening” (2010, 9). Returning to Hooper-Greenhill’s idea of multivocality, it is clear that the presence and recognition of a plurality of voices is not only important for gaining a fuller understanding of heritage objects, but is also imperative for fully understanding the voices themselves. Further, in the context of collaborations between Indigenous communities and museums, it is not enough to simply feature Indigenous voices in museum spaces. Rather, in order to be effective, museums undertaking collaborative projects, must actively engage with such voices, “registering the uniqueness of the other’s narrative” (Couldry 2010, 9) in so doing.

Listening to people

Museum collections as media

As both Henning and Hooper-Greenhill observe, multivocality is not something which comes naturally to museums formed in the Western tradition. Accustomed to creating and following a single dominant narrative, the question of how to hear multivocality is difficult to answer within a solely Western academic framework. Although there are many well-established multivocal practices already at work in contemporary museums, sometimes not all of the voices heard are granted equal authority, with an overarching narrative shaping the meaning of the soundscape. Thus, while many of the tools necessary for hearing multivocality are already in place, it will be necessary to take an intersectional approach to the issue, drawing upon an intercultural range of narrative and meditative techniques. The preference for forming a single narrative is one which extends beyond the realm of museums and material culture. As John Durham Peters argues, this urge springs from the false dream of true communication (1999). Because human perceptions are inherently private and can never be fully known by another person, plurality is a fact of the human condition – a trait which is viewed as an asset by Peters, who writes that “the ultimate futility of our attempts to ‘communicate’ is not lamentable; it is a handsome condition… The

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3 For examples of the use of multisensory methods in museums see Classen (2007) and Levent and Pascual-Leone (2014).
task is to recognize the creature’s otherness, not to make it over in one’s own likeness” (1999, 31).

Documenting one such futile quest for communication, Jennifer Shannon (2014) observes in the processes leading up to the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) how otherness can be acutely felt and even exaggerated within an institution. As Shannon observes, in spite of frequent face-to-face meetings and discussions, perceptions of the same events typically varied drastically. Peters offers two explanations for such a phenomenon. Firstly, he suggests that in striving too strongly for communication, it is possible to create greater distance between the speaker and the listener. In attempting to eliminate the “spectral element” (or perceptive difference) between people, the result is often that the focus on successful communication “inhibits the hard work of connecting” (1999, 30), thus creating “more ample breeding grounds for the ghosts” (1999, 30). Secondly, Peters critiques the popular notion that dialogue holds the moral high ground over dissemination as a style of communication. Although dialogue is certainly more democratic in theory, it demands that both speakers have equal access to their discursive arsenal at all times, thus failing when this is not the case. In assuming that the ideal of communion through dialogue is always possible, we risk demonizing those who are incapable of achieving this impossible ideal. In striving for closeness, we create distance. By contrast, dissemination allows for time and space to exist between the speaker and the listener. Dissemination, while easy to abuse, does not inherently exclude dialogue and does not necessarily forbid the content of its message from being altered after its arrival in the listener’s ear (Peters, 1999, 34).

First Nations radio in Ontario

Contrary to the common mainstream perception of Indigenous cultures as being rooted in tradition and dichotomous to modernized Western culture (Glass, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), Kathleen Buddle (2005) observes that Indigenous mediators are engaged in a highly modern and intercultural effort to indigenize media expressions of Indigenous cultures. Building on this, Buddle notes that Indigenous media outlets – and particularly radio – serve to re-establish “the connections that colonial projects disrupted – the communications corridors – between Aboriginal individuals, communities, and nations, Aboriginal media activists are labouring to
create a new social order” (2005, 8). Similar to the arguments made about material heritage by Doxtator (1996) and Byrne (2008), Buddle suggests that First Nations radio endeavors should be viewed as the active building of cultural identity, rather than as passive representations “that can be abstracted and analyzed apart from their authors” (2005, 8).

Recalling Doxtator’s definition of the term, Ontario’s First Nations communities have claimed “ownership” of the media they use, with a particular focus on radio. As Buddle discusses, radio presents the opportunity to build culture across space and time and allows mediators to develop their own terminology and social frameworks surrounding cultural dialogues. Given this ownership of media, I argue that projects aimed at improving access to Indigenous cultural resources should be executed in close consultation with First Nations mediators and hosted on existing First Nations media platforms as well as those of the museum involved.

Further, given the resistance of First Nations mediators to the idea of a cultural dichotomy between First Nations and mainstream Western culture, museum professionals must take a great deal of care in discerning whether an object or collection should be considered Indigenous. On this, Buddle writes “In conversations among the initiated […] Aboriginal mediators tend to be willing to accept both Indigenous and exogenous elements as constituting their traditions” (2005, 15). The aim of much Indigenous media is not to preserve a static notion of Indigenous culture, but rather to promote First Nations authorship and the active construction of culture. In the interests of indigenization then, remote access resources that consist solely of traditionally defined Indigenous objects and interpretations may not be the most useful or culturally sound approach. As Buddle argues, media texts (like objects) are given meanings by their audiences (2005, 11), but these interpretations are nonetheless “socioculturally embedded, conceived, and enacted in specific locales” (2005, 8). Thus, the medium and driving agents of cultural interpretation are important, and need to be chosen with specific cultures and communities in mind.
Building connections, building stories: Exploring collaborative radio as an interpretive strategy

In addressing the problems of access to and ownership of collections, Doxtator provides a number of criteria useful in the evaluation of access methods. First, it is confirmed that access to collections is a matter of community intellectual and cultural health for First Nations and as such, must be tailored to the needs and resources of specific communities. Second, the manner and voice of interpretation are almost equal in importance to the accessibility of the collections – ownership extends beyond the practical definition into Doxtator’s moral interpretation of the term. Finally, access to collections needs to be enabled without putting excessive strain on community resources.

Given the persistently Westernized format of many digital museum resources and the difficulties of negotiating intellectual property concerns, I believe it is necessary to supplement the existing means of remote access with programming that is more easily adaptable to a variety of ways of knowing. Although broadcast radio is no longer cutting edge technology, it may be well suited to this purpose, given its established place in contemporary Indigenous cultures and the fact that it circumvents the problems posed by the creation of digital replicas while still allowing community members to engage with objects in a culturally significant manner. In discussing podcasts, Christine Tulley writes that aural media “offer immediacy of communication and reinscribe human physicality, through the performer’s voice, in a way that previous ITexts [digital media texts] did not” (2011, 259). Thus, in addition to offering greater coherence with non-linear oral cultures, radio may also be more effective than digital media in inspiring meaningful personal engagement with collections.

Beyond consulting First Nations experts in the production of remote access resources, Buddle asserts the importance of engaging Indigenous people directly when conducting research about such topics (2005, 8). Given the many arguments in favour of collaboration and consultation listed above, it would be hypocritical to conduct research in this area without engaging the communities implicated by that research. Thus, consultation and community engagement have played a significant role in shaping my research methods. In exploring the application of public broadcast radio as a medium of remote access to museum collections, I have adopted a collaborative approach aimed at minimizing the gap between researcher and subject and
affording the subject authorial agency over the research design. As per the concerns expressed by Doxtator regarding the cultural importance and practical difficulty of improving First Nations access to Indigenous collections, I endeavor to understand the logistical obstacles presented by the production of a museum radio resource and the ways in which these influence the content, authorship, and audience of the resource.

**The case study: Artifacts on Air**

With the intent of studying methods of remote interpretation of Indigenous archaeology collections, I selected Sustainable Archaeology McMaster (SA: McMaster) as an appropriate setting for my case study. Part of a collaboration between Western and McMaster Universities, SA: McMaster is a collections and research facility that aims to offer a secure and accessible space for the care and storage of Ontario’s archaeology collections. Although SA: McMaster’s partner facility at Western University is affiliated with the Museum of Ontario Archaeology and is thus equipped with access to exhibition space, SA: McMaster has no permanent exhibition space, meaning that the only way to access the collection is to visit the facility in person or view images of a small selection of artifacts which have been made available on the facility’s website. Because the collections held by SA: McMaster are highly relevant to local First Nations communities, yet relatively inaccessible, the facility seemed an ideal setting for studying methods of remote access.

In undertaking the development of a radio program as a case study for my research, I was presented with an ethical dilemma. As a non-Indigenous museum professional and researcher, I lacked the specific expertise and cultural knowledge necessary to take on the task of creating a radio program from a First Nations perspective. This meant that the case study would need to be collaborative. However, it would be unfair and likely impossible to enlist experts to execute the case study without compensation while I documented their efforts. In order to acknowledge this ethical issue as well as to gain a more in depth understanding of the process, I employed a participatory action research (PAR) approach (Somekh, 1995) wherein I was directly involved in the development of the radio program and all of the participants were considered co-researchers and had an active say in the format and structure of the program. While I could not offer cultural expertise, I was able to act as the coordinator of the program and attend to the technical aspects
of organizing, recording, and editing the program while the participants provided the content and input on the format of the program. My role as an active participant in the project enabled me to gain a more intricate understanding of the collaboration and development process of the radio program. More significantly, however, I believe it helped to build trust between the other participants and myself. During one of the preliminary interviews for the project, Allan Loft, the host of *The Aboriginal Component* on CFMU McMaster Campus Radio, noted that First Nations people “have been studied to death.” Apart from my concerns about not being able to provide adequate compensation for the participants in the project, the researcher-subject dynamic presented a possibly counterproductive and ethically problematic situation. By acknowledging myself as one of the participants in the research, I was better able to confront my own role and biases in the project while also creating a more collaborative and evenly balanced relationship amongst the participants.

The data collection process took place over two distinct phases. The first phase consisted of a series of interviews with experts in First Nations radio practices in Ontario: Anong Beam of Gimaa Radio in M’Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island; Vincent Chechock of Rez91 radio in Wasauksing; and Allan Loft of The Aboriginal Component on McMaster Campus Radio. In addition to these experts, I also interviewed the SA: McMaster Operations Manager, Catherine Paterson. These interviews served to guide the decision making process in terms of what should be included in a radio program about an archaeological collection, whose voices should be heard, and how the program should be formatted. They also helped me to develop an understanding of perceptions of archaeology and museums in First Nations communities as well as identify the range of approaches to radio and interpretation of archaeological collections.

The second phase consisted of developing a radio program about a selection of artifacts held by SA: McMaster. Drawing from the information gathered during the first phase of the project, I invited a number of cultural experts to speak about a collection of artifacts uncovered at the Sealey Site, located near the Six Nations reserve. The program was recorded as a live workshop, open to the public, hosted at the Westdale branch of the Hamilton Public Library on March 15, 2016. The data collected during this phase consists of the artifact of the radio program itself as well as information collected through informal conversations with my co-participants and participant observation undertaken during the process of planning and recording the radio program. The following chapters document my experiences in undertaking this kind of project.
and offer insight into logistical, cultural, and social difficulties that may be encountered when attempting a collaborative interpretation initiative such as this case study.

**Thesis overview**

Building on the theoretical foundation outlined above, the rest of the thesis will be devoted to the description and analysis of the work involved in developing the radio program (*Artifacts on Air*) as well as the expert consultations by which it was informed. As noted, the data collection process for this study was broken into two main stages: the consultation of expert practitioners and the development and implementation of the radio program. Chapter 2 will begin by offering an introduction to the parties consulted in the first stage of data collection and introducing my approach to PAR. Following this introduction, Chapter 3 will relate the findings of the preliminary interviews, drawing particular attention to a selection of recurring themes found to be common amongst each of the advisors. The findings outlined in Chapter 3 were used to inform the second phase of the study, which consisted of recruiting expert speakers for the radio program and working with them to establish the content and form of the program. This process is addressed in Chapter 4, which also describes challenges encountered through the PAR methodology and collaborative model. Chapter 4 concludes by engaging with the major findings established during the production of the radio program. Lastly, Chapter 5 synthesizes the ideas encountered throughout the entire study, offering suggestions for future studies and considering the broader implications for museums and relations between First Nations communities and archaeological collections facilities.
Chapter 2
Enacting Collaboration Through Participatory Action Research at Sustainable Archaeology McMaster

Introduction

This chapter introduces my experiences with PAR, exploring some of the early challenges faced in the execution of the project and how my methodological approach to the research informed my navigation of these obstacles. Because the nature of PAR is intensely collaborative and requires all parties to be actively involved in the research process as well as building upon their own skills, the contexts and background represented by each participant played an important role in shaping the project. As such, this chapter includes an introduction to each of the parties involved in the project, explaining why each was invited to participate and examining the varying interests and concerns each brought to the process. The execution of the case study took place over two distinct phases: the collection of preliminary interviews and the production of the radio program. This chapter refers only to those participants involved in the first phase of the case study as Chapter 4 addresses the production of the radio program in depth.

Consulting experts and finding balance in collaboration

*Using and adapting participatory action research (PAR) methods in a collaborative setting*

My use of PAR methodologies underwent a process of renegotiation and adjustment throughout the project according to the needs of those involved. While I believe the approach to PAR described at the end of the previous chapter (compiling expertise from a range of advisors in order to inform the production of a radio program) was the most effective methodological structure for the project, it was not the first one we tried. At the outset of the project, my plan for conducting the case study was to initiate a partnership between SA: McMaster and a local Indigenous radio station, with each playing an active role in developing a radio program about a selection of materials from SA: McMaster’s collections. My own role in this proposed
collaboration would have been largely administrative, acting primarily as a coordinator of the project, forming connections between the organizations and overseeing the project as a whole to ensure that everyone’s needs were being met. My hope was that, by initiating such a partnership, the project would help to seed stronger collaborative relationships between SA: McMaster and the local Indigenous community, as well as reaching the remote audiences targeted by the radio program. Perhaps the spirit of collaboration formed during the case study could serve as a precedent for future projects taken on in partnership with the local radio station.

However, after several months of attempting to find a radio station partner without any luck, I was forced to re-examine the structure of the case study. My original model, while optimistic, did not fully foresee the strain participation in the project would place on the participants. While taking part in such a project would not diverge drastically from SA: McMaster’s day-to-day operations, it would require the radio station involved to devote at least one staff member to contribute the time, expertise, and equipment necessary for the development of the radio program – demands which were neither attractive nor feasible for most local radio stations. This is an important insight not only for institutions seeking to create partnerships with local radio stations but also for those seeking to establish collaborative relationships more broadly. While the possibilities offered by radio had initially inspired the project, it became evident that more careful consideration was needed of the burden the project would place on the partner radio station. As an exploration of the application of First Nations radio methodologies to museological interpretation, this research indicates not only the range of possibilities offered by radio, but also the resources required to successfully execute such a project.

Because it proved unfeasible to ask a local radio station to contribute the time and effort necessary to create a radio program, I recognized that I would have to assume the primary responsibility for creating the program and sought input from radio stations by interviewing a selection of experts who were directly involved in First Nations radio programming. I spoke with about ten different radio stations and conducted in depth interviews at three of them: CHYF Gima Radio on Manitoulin Island; The Aboriginal Component at CFMU McMaster Campus Radio in Hamilton; and CHRZ Rez91 radio in Wasauksing (see Figure 1 for a map of locations).
Although the process of finding Indigenous radio practitioners who felt able to and were interested in contributing to the project still took time, I noticed an increase in favourable responses to my invitations to participate almost immediately after revising the structure of the project. Rather than attempting to initiate a partnership which would require time, effort, and resources on the part of the radio station, I was now placed in the position of seeking advice on how to go about creating a radio program. This modified request both demanded less from the radio stations and was more relatable to the knowledge-sharing practices commonly used by the radio practitioners I consulted, each of whom described finding their way to radio by learning technical and narrative skills from friends, relatives, and colleagues, asking questions and pursuing personal curiosity. Although initiating a partnership between SA: McMaster and a designated radio station had the potential to create a fruitful relationship (though not guaranteed), it would have placed much of the onus of maintaining such a relationship on the radio station, which would in turn have undermined the collaborative spirit of the collaboration. Because the prominent inclusion of Indigenous voices can be perceived as a means of legitimization (Brady
2011) and thus holds a clear benefit for the institution without much guarantee of equal benefit to the community, it is doubly important to ensure that the labour of establishing and maintaining such a partnership is equally divided. By assuming responsibility for the production of the radio program and instead drawing upon the expertise of a number of Indigenous radio practitioners, I was able to relieve some of the strain on the participants while also gaining a broader and more diverse understanding of Indigenous radio practices in Ontario.

What I did not fully understand at the outset of the project, and what I suspect is a pitfall for many attempts at collaboration, was the degree to which I unconsciously located myself and the project within the organization of SA: McMaster. I intended to develop a collaborative relationship between SA: McMaster and local First Nations radio practitioners, yet my initial approach to doing so was, albeit unintentionally, markedly one-sided. I was familiar with the organization, the collections it held, and the staff who took care of them. As a result, my efforts at recruiting a First Nations radio station as a partner – had they been successful – may not have resulted in such a dynamic understanding of First Nations radio methodologies as the modified methods I ended up using. This is a risk of collaboration which has also been observed by Michael Ames (1999), who notes that attempts at collaboration are very often initiated by the institution and thus may not fully consider the needs of the community partners. By assuming responsibility for the production of the radio program and consulting a variety of First Nations radio experts, I was able to learn (and re-learn) from numerous sources not only what is valued in Indigenous radio, but also how knowledge about broadcasting is shared within these communities.

I formally interviewed three radio experts, and spoke to many more about the project, developing an understanding of Ontario’s Indigenous radio landscape along the way and confirming observations made about First Nations radio practices made by Buddle (2005) and Fairchild (1998). More often than not, I found the roles of interviewer and informant reversed as the people I spoke to asked detailed questions about the project, SA: McMaster, and my own background, helping me through their questions to understand what was important to them and

4 As Krmpotich and Peers (2011) explain, expertise is specific and arises from experience. Expertise in one area does not guarantee expertise in all areas. The term “expert” is used here to indicate the expertise regarding First Nations radio practices developed by the practitioners in question through their involvement in and contribution to innovative radio programming in their respective communities.
what I needed to investigate more carefully. Twice, I was invited to discuss the project live on air – an experience that allowed me to observe practiced hands at work in the studio and demonstrated the roles of the radio stations in question not only as sources of entertainment and information sharing, but as community hubs dedicated to the specific needs and interests of their respective audiences and the geographic region to which those audiences are anchored. In the absence of a clearly defined collaborative partner, I needed to learn about First Nations radio practices in greater depth in order to apply them to the project to the best of my ability. Although best practices typically recommend working in direct collaboration with the community in question (Ames, 1999; Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association Task Force, 1992) in this and many other cases, these “best practices” may be too narrow or ill-fitting; rather, there may be an opportunity for more in depth learning on the part of the institution regarding culturally coherent methods of knowledge-sharing and production. In compensating for and negotiating a lack of an ideal model of collaboration, institutions can incorporate Indigenous perspectives by learning from and adopting the methodologies employed by Indigenous practitioners (Krmpotich and Peers, 2011), leading to a greater internalization of these ideas and a more active process of listening (Couldry, 2010).

My experience of having to modify my project’s structure in order to create a successful and balanced atmosphere of collaboration suited to the needs of all participants is exemplary of the challenge presented by collaboration on the whole. While collaboration is a strong model for ensuring that the right voices are heard and prioritized in the care and interpretation of Indigenous material heritage, it is also imperfect and must be tailored to the needs of parties involved, to avoid placing additional strain on communities that are already stretched thin. Just as Doxtator (1996) identifies challenges to repatriation posed by limited resources, attempts at collaboration often imply a similar burden on community and individual resources. This would certainly have been the case had I tried to proceed with the original plan for the radio program case study and often happens to some degree even in collaborations which are generally considered to have been successful. While it still relies upon the generosity of expertise shared by community members, my modified plan of consulting experts from a variety of sources allowed for reduced strain upon the community and could serve as a model for cultural heritage institutions that don’t have a standing relationship with First Nations communities, but would still like to work in a culturally accessible manner. While part of the appeal of this model is that
it places reduced strain upon community members, it could serve as the basis for developing a more permanent and extensive partnership should this be desired.

Choosing a collection: Sustainable Archaeology McMaster (SA: McMaster)

Founded in 2009, Sustainable Archaeology is a joint initiative between the University of Western Ontario and McMaster University. With facilities at each of these institutions, the mission of the organization is to promote the preservation and accessibility of Ontario’s archaeological collections. As per the Ontario Heritage Act\(^5\), the licensed archaeologist in charge of an excavation is required to keep all excavated materials of archaeological significance, and the minister may require that these materials be kept in a public collection. There are, however, no firm guidelines or standards about how archaeological materials in Ontario should be kept (Ontario Heritage Act, Part VI, Conservation of Resources of Archaeological Value). Further, there are no systems in place to support Ontario archaeologists in the management and preservation of these collections. While they are required by law to keep them, they must do so at their own cost, and there is no legislation detailing what should be done with the collections following the death of their caretaker. As a result, many collections are kept in unsuitable storage conditions, and fall victim to dissociation\(^6\) and environmental hazards. Although archaeologists are required to report their findings about the archaeological material in their care to the ministry, the collections themselves are rarely easily accessible to stakeholders.

It is in the context of this legislative environment that Sustainable Archaeology strives to act as an accessible repository for Ontario’s archaeological collections. As of 2016, individuals or organizations in possession of collections may arrange to have these collections transferred to and stored by Sustainable Archaeology for a set fee per box. Once transferred to Sustainable

\(^5\) Created in 1975, the purpose of the Ontario Heritage Act is “to give municipalities and the provincial government powers to preserve the heritage of Ontario” [http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/heritage/heritage_act.shtml].

\(^6\) Within a museum context, dissociation (the separation of an object from its contextual information) is considered to be an agent of deterioration and poses a risk to the object in that it inhibits its caretakers from fully understanding it. See [http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1444924574622](http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1444924574622).
Archaeology the collections are then made accessible to researchers and members of descendant communities.\(^7\) Both the Western and McMaster facilities feature extensive storage space, of which only a very small percent is full (see Figure 2). Beyond the storage of collections, each facility is also equipped with a range of analytical capabilities. At the McMaster facility, which is located at McMaster Innovation Park, these consist of a dry and wet laboratory with the equipment necessary to produce and analyze thin sections and produce z-stacked microscopic images (“Research Facilities” 2016). While Sustainable Archaeology McMaster welcomes research visits and often hosts open houses and tours, they do not currently have access to a permanent physical space dedicated solely to the visitation and interpretation of collections (see Figure 3). Instead the facility’s lab space (Figure 4) is used to receive visitors and staff rely

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\(^7\) Although Sustainable Archaeology welcomes and encourages visits from relevant researchers and members of descendant communities, it does not actively seek to make contact with these parties. The task of identifying collections of interest and requesting a visit to the collections facility is left up to the individual.
Figure 3: Through McMaster Innovation Park's Art in the Workplace program, SA: McMaster periodically has access to one or two plinths for the displays in the building’s atrium. This is the only public display space to which the organization has access. (Sustainable Archaeology McMaster 2016)

Figure 4: The lab space devoted to the care and analysis of collections also doubles as a space in which to receive visitors. (Emily Meikle 2015)
primarily on digital media such as the organization’s website and social media accounts to communicate publicly about the institution and the collections it holds.

As a general archaeological repository, the collections held by SA: McMaster can consist of archaeological material from sites anywhere in Ontario. The vast majority of the collections currently held by SA: McMaster are known as legacy collections and were transferred to the organization from McMaster’s anthropology department. These consist of materials collected by individuals associated with the university in some way who are now either deceased or retired, whose collections were left in the care of McMaster University and have since been transferred to Sustainable Archaeology. Legacy collections also include collections assembled by collectors active during the 19th and early 20th centuries who were not trained as archaeologists but rather pursued their collecting practices through looting or by purchasing or trading artifacts (Catherine Paterson, personal communication, July 2015).

Because much of the material held by SA: McMaster was collected in the early to mid twentieth century (some even as early as 1892), it serves as a good example of the critical issues facing the care and preservation of archaeological collections in Ontario. Due in part to changing standards in practices surrounding documentation and storage of archaeological artifacts, and in part to the lack of adequate collections management resources, these legacy collections are in varying conditions, and many of them have suffered severely from dissociation. While some sites came complete with the archaeologist’s (or collector’s) catalogue, field notes, and individual artifact labels, others are complete mysteries. One example of this is the Hicks Site, about which almost nothing is known. The material from this site was discovered tucked into the box for another site, and was labeled only as “Alex Hicks, 1971.” Regardless of the quality of their documentation, many of the sites are inadequately packaged in disintegrating plastic or paper bags (see Figures 5 and 6).
Figure 5: Original artifact bags used during excavations at the Guyatt Site in 1950 (Samantha Atkins, 2015)

Figure 6: Ammunition box used to package artifacts following their excavation in 1950 (Emily Meikle, 2015)
In June 2015, SA: McMaster received its first external collections transfer, marking its first foray into the kind of collections which will eventually make up the majority of the holdings. The intent behind the development of Sustainable Archaeology is not only to provide a sustainable means of caring for the existing collections of Ontario’s archaeological material, but also to develop its role as a central repository for current and future collections. Because of the poor condition of the legacy collections in SA: McMaster’s care, a large amount of labour, time, and funds are currently devoted to conducting provenance research and to repackaging the collections. Often, although collections may be labeled well (see Figure 7), it is impossible to understand what the labels mean without greater insight into the archaeologist’s process and the context of the excavation. In order to try and gain this insight, SA: McMaster often draws on local and provincial archives, as well as contacts active in both professional and academic archaeology. It is hoped that once more current collections begin to make their way into the care of the organization, less time will need to be spent identifying and conserving new accessions, and efforts will be focused on continuing to expand the facility’s reputation as an accessible repository for the province’s archaeological collections (Catherine Paterson, personal communication, July 2015).

Figure 7: A number of pot sherds from the same site exhibiting a variety of labeling techniques. Some are not labeled at all. (Emily Meikle, 2015)
Because it aims to fulfill the currently empty role of a central archaeological repository for Ontario, SA: McMaster is likely to eventually find itself responsible for the care of significant Indigenous archaeological collections. Part of SA: McMaster’s goal in consolidating Ontario’s archaeological collections is to make them more accessible to academic researchers and First Nations communities alike. In its manifestation as an analytical laboratory at a major Canadian academic institution, SA: McMaster is well on its way to becoming highly accessible to academic researchers. However, its presence has not been highly publicized outside of academic and archaeological circles, meaning that it still has room to grow regarding its accessibility to First Nations communities.

SA: McMaster also lacks a welcoming public space for accessing collections. Unlike Sustainable Archaeology Western, which has a means of displaying the collections through its partnership with the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, SA: McMaster is not particularly well suited to a visual in-person approach to interpretation and display due to its lack of public space. A tension exists between Sustainable Archaeology’s mission to improve access to Ontario’s archaeological collections for descendent communities (“Sustainable Archaeology’s Mission Statement and Aims” 2014) and the lack of facilities and means to adequately interpret the collections in a visual manner. As Doxtator (1996) writes, the experience of viewing one’s cultural heritage within a space that appears to be devoted to classification and analysis may not be well suited to the cultural needs of the collections or the community members. Given this lack of an inviting physical space combined with SA: McMaster’s need to improve their publicity amongst First Nations, the organization seemed a suitable setting for exploring the application of First Nations radio methodologies as a form of remote interpretation of archaeological collections. Former Operations Manager Catherine Paterson was open to the idea of a radio program when I approached her about the project.

The radio stations

The radio stations consulted during the project’s preliminary interview phase included Gimaat Radio, Rez 91, and the weekly program The Aboriginal Component on CFMU McMaster Campus Radio. Though Chapter 3 provides a detailed look at the information and personal insights shared during these interviews as well as the cultural landscape within which these
stations operate, the following section offers a brief introduction to each station, its style of programming and the audience it aims to reach. Buddle argues that Indigenous radio has many points of origin and is a heterogeneous medium (2005, 8). The stations included in this study are part of the various histories and identities of First Nations radio in Ontario. While Gimaa Radio and Rez 91 both represent community initiatives specifically tailored to a variety community needs and interests, *The Aboriginal Component* offers an example of the intersection between First Nations radio and broader radio practices at work in the province. As each station represents a different aspect of the culture of First Nations radio in Ontario, the consultation of each in combination with the others acts as a useful first step towards establishing a multivocal soundscape of the Indigenous archaeological collections housed at SA: McMaster.

The Aboriginal Component on CFMU McMaster Campus Radio

Aired live every Tuesday between 4 and 5pm, *The Aboriginal Component* is hosted by Allan Loft, who uses his hour of airtime to share Indigenous teachings, snippets of Ojibwe, Cree, Lakota, and Mohawk language, and current events, all of which are tied together by a careful selection of music. The program, which changes in content and structure from week to week, was created by Loft when he observed a lack of Indigenous content and presence while studying at McMaster University. Located as it is in Hamilton, Ontario with a radio signal that serves the Hamilton region and parts of the Six Nations territory, *The Aboriginal Component* operates at the geographic intersection of many different nations – a fact that Loft reflects through his reference to multiple languages, cultures and belief systems. All of this is tied together by his underlying belief that “we all have the same heart… and everything we do comes from the heart.” Though its audience is large and widespread (made more so thanks to its digital broadcast and archive of episodes on the CFMU website), *The Aboriginal Component* maintains a personal and welcoming atmosphere as Loft shares thoughts and teachings with his listeners, speaking as though each of them was an old friend. Though each episode is different, mixing humour, music, teachings and news, each begins with a recording of Chiefs Jake Swamp and Jake Thomas giving thanks to the Creator. By using this Haudenosaunee practice to frame the episodes of his program, Loft has established a sense of routine and familiarity in association with his sharing of
Haudenosuanee teachings, aiming to create a safe and welcoming space for his listeners to encounter or perhaps become reacquainted with the stories and ideas woven into his program.

**Gimaa Radio**

Founded by artist Carl Beam, Gimaa Radio is an Ojibwe language radio station broadcast from M’chigeeng First Nation in M’nidoo M’nising (Manitoulin Island), Ontario. Gimaa Radio initially began as a pirate radio station, broadcasting music and prayer in Ojibwe and was built through a sharing of skills and passion with Beam family friends Algis and Adona Tribinevicius, as well as resources and training offered by Free Radio Berkeley⁸. Following Carl Beam’s death in 2005, his daughter Anong Beam and her husband Mark Larochelle took over the station, choosing to seek a radio license through the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). The license was granted in 2010 and the station was officially launched on 88.9 CHYF FM in August 2015. Today, Gimaa Radio broadcasts a mix of programming, including music, community events, interviews with elders, and stories and aims to add news and weather to its broadcasting repertoire. In addition to being broadcast on air, Gimaa Radio is also available to listeners online, extending its audience beyond the range of its broadcast signal.

Although Gimaa Radio often draws upon archival recordings of elders telling stories about the past, the station’s focus is markedly on the present. By interspersing cultural and historical content with segments dedicated to news, weather and community events, Gimaa Radio aims to foster and reflect a sense of contemporary culture and community, not simply preserving the Ojibwe language and culture, but adding to it in new ways. The positive reception of this new endeavor can already be seen in the make-up of Gimaa Radio’s audience, which spans

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⁸ Free Radio Berkeley began as a pirate radio station in California in 1993. In addition to broadcasting community programming, Free Radio Berkeley also offers training, transmitter kits and technical support to those attempting to start their own pirate radio stations. As described on their website, Free Radio Berkeley “was instrumental in helping to to create an ever growing micropower broadcasting movement to liberate the airwaves and break the corporate broadcast media's stranglehold on the free flow of news, information, ideas, cultural and artistic creativity” (“About” 2016). Currently in the midst of an extensive legal battle with the Federal Communication Commission, the initial station established by Free Radio Berkeley has been silenced since 1998 (http://www.freeradio.org/index.php?pagename=frb/about.html).
generations as well as geographic distance (Anong Beam, personal communication, October 2015).

**CHRZ Rez91**

Described by its crew as a “labour of love,” (Vincent Chechock 2016) Rez91 is broadcast from Wasauksing First Nation near Parry Sound, Ontario and is largely volunteer-run. Like Gimaa Radio and *The Aboriginal Component*, Rez91 places a heavy focus on musical content, playing a range of rock and blues, as well as featuring Indigenous and local artists. In addition to music, the station has partnered with local media enterprises Anishinabek News and MUSKRAT Magazine to offer broadcasting pertaining to news and current events. The station is broadcast in both English and Anishinaabemowin and features a daily program dedicated to helping beginners learn to speak Anishinaabemowin.

Because of its location in the midst of popular cottage country in Ontario, Rez91 aims to appeal to listeners over the age of forty who support local businesses which provide necessary funding to the station through advertising. Through the stability offered by this audience, the station aims to reach a broader intergenerational audience and has received funding in the past from Heritage Canada’s Aboriginal Languages Initiative in order to support youth language programming. Moving forward, the station hopes to introduce more programming relevant to local contemporary issues such as educational content about health and more news broadcasting.

In the same vein as Gimaa Radio and *The Aboriginal Component*, Rez91 sprang from a perceived need for more Indigenous content in the local broadcasting landscape and was brought to life through a combination of passion and skill-sharing. Vincent Chechock, one of the station’s founders and Volunteer General Assistant, worked previously as a radio and transmitter technician for Global Television and, thanks to his technical expertise and social network, was able to launch the station with his wife, Anita Chechock, from the basement of their home in the mid- to late 1990’s. Since then the station has expanded significantly and now plays an important role in the local community as well as in the broader network of radio stations in the area (Vincent Chechock, personal communication, August 2015).
Conclusion

Although somewhat incongruous with the challenges of interpretation and access faced by most heritage institutions, SA: McMaster can be understood as a specific and useful case for studying practices surrounding access to collections. At the outset of this study, SA: McMaster was in need of more options for communicating with their publics (especially those with a cultural connection to the collections). While SA: McMaster is unique in Ontario as a facility dedicated strictly to collections, yet which aims to make itself accessible to stakeholders without access to a display space, most institutions have large collections which they are unable to display and which they would like to make more accessible. In this sense, SA: McMaster stands as a valuable point of comparison for the challenges and opportunities faced by institutions looking to improve the accessibility of their collections.

Having established through the use of PAR that consulting a range of radio practitioners would be more productive and more feasible that attempting to partner with a single radio station, a means of answering my initial question of how to hear the multivocality of objects began to emerge. As Buddle (2005) argues, First Nations radio in Ontario is characteristically heterogeneous, with each station and practitioner using the medium to express themselves and their community in their own way. The heterogeneity of First Nations radio is mirrored by Byrne’s (2008) and Hooper-Greenhill’s (1992) characterization of heritage objects as being multivocal and composed of many layers of intangible culture. A similar heterogeneity can also be seen in Peters’ (1999) assertion that plurality is a fact of the human condition. As Peters notes, “the task [of communication] is to recognize the creature’s otherness, not to make it over in one’s own likeness” (1999, 31). By adopting the fragmented model of community collaboration that I have outlined in this chapter, I may be perceived to have jeopardized the “authenticity” of the project as an undertaking of First Nations radio. However, in consulting a range of sources, I was better able to recognize (Peters, 1999, 31) and listen to (Couldry, 2010, 9) the plurality of voices at play in Ontario’s First Nations radio community.
The interviews

Throughout my conversations with Beam, Chechock, and Loft, I endeavoured to remain open about my ideas for the project, approaching the interviews primarily as a means for learning a craft from expert practitioners (each of whom represent a slightly different area of expertise). By placing the bulk of the labour involved in the coordination of the project on the institution (represented by me), the approach of consulting and learning from a range of sources served to lessen the burden of collaboration on community members and while also leading the institution to engage more thoroughly and intimately with the methodologies being employed by First Nations radio practitioners such as Beam, Chechock, and Loft. Because of the lack of necessary resources for a full partnership with a single radio station, I (on behalf of SA: McMaster) was required to learn about First Nations radio practices in greater depth in order to apply these methodologies to the project. As a result, my conversations with expert radio practitioners were informal and inquisitive with both parties asking questions of each other and working together to form a mutual understanding of what the project in question could and should entail. In Chapter 3 I detail the conclusions of these conversations, highlighting a selection of key themes that were apparent throughout each interview.
Chapter 3

Introduction

Following the selection of Sustainable Archaeology McMaster as the host cultural heritage institution for the project, the first stage in the development of the radio program consisted of conducting advisory interviews with currently active First Nations radio practitioners Anong Beam, Vincent Chechock, and Allan Loft as well as with SA: McMaster Operations Manager, Catherine Paterson. The interviews with Beam, Loft, and Chechock each followed a similar structure, addressing three main subject areas: the speaker’s personal experiences with Indigenous radio broadcasting, knowledge sharing and cultural heritage sharing practices within their community, and their thoughts and recommendations for a radio program about Indigenous archaeological collections. Similarly, the interview with Paterson addressed her experiences interacting with the public at SA: McMaster and her thoughts about what a radio program about archaeology could sound like. Though the interviews were conducted in a standard manner, the experiences and insights related by each expert speaker were highly individual and, in line with the project’s PAR methodology, were treated as individual expert sources of information rather than as a single body of representative data. This chapter begins by exploring the broad themes addressed by Beam, Chechock, and Loft continuing on to Paterson’s insights from the institutional perspective and concluding with a summary of the recommendations made by each advisor for the proposed radio program.

Although each interview was vastly different, there were a few recurring themes that were emphasized by each speaker. Here, I introduce each theme briefly and will move on to engage with each in greater depth later in this chapter. The first recurring theme was that voice matters; all four advisors asserted that the identity of a speaker and the language they use to communicate plays an important role not only in making the content culturally accessible to community members, but also in validating the ideas expressed through that content. The prevalence of this theme confirms Krmpotich and Peers’ (2011) explanation of expertise as being specific to
experience and further supports the arguments of Brady (2011), Christen (2015), and Doxtator (1996) who all assert the need to allow Indigenous voices to speak publicly about Indigenous heritage in their own way. As all three community radio practitioners observed, there are things that may be common knowledge to some members of a given community of which outsiders (and potentially even members of the community) may be unaware. Because of this, it is important to prioritize expert voices from descendant communities in order to ensure both the veracity of the content and its cultural relevance and accessibility to listeners.

The second recurring theme is that heritage is rooted in the present. Beam, Chechock and Loft all emphasized the importance of ensuring that this kind of program would hold value for contemporary communities, and Beam suggested that while it would be important to hear an elder’s interpretation of the objects, the program also needed to ensure a relevance to the present, perhaps by featuring the perspective of someone who had a contemporary connection to artifacts, such as an artist or craftsperson who had experience working with similar materials. This showed a diverse understanding of who might be considered an expert when it came to Indigenous material heritage and recalls Doxtator’s argument in favour of Indigenous cultural ownership of material heritage (1996, 56) as well as Smith’s conception of heritage as a process that takes place in the present (2006).

A third common thread that ran throughout my conversations with Beam, Chechock, and Loft is the adversity faced by First Nations community radio stations in terms of logistical obstacles such as access to funding and licensing. Although the experience of adversity was a common theme, the mobilization of diverse social networks in overcoming such challenges was also touched upon extensively by each of the community radio programmers I consulted. Though each radio station was dedicated to a specific local community, they were equally linked to a complex network of media and cultural organizations spanning cultures and nations. In drawing upon such networks in order to overcome adversity, the practice of knowledge-sharing and collaboration has been integral to development of a common media culture amongst Indigenous radio mediators (see Buddle, 2005 and Fairchild, 1998).

Finally, and somewhat unexpectedly, our conversations revealed a material and spatial aspect to radio which I had not previously considered. Radio audiences are determined by landscape, as radio waves can be intercepted by geographical features such as large hills. Because of this, radio
stations can act to anchor their audience to a specific geographically defined community. This was something that came up repeatedly, yet all of the radio stations I contacted also made their content available online through digital streaming. By combining digital and broadcast dissemination methods, these radio stations were able to include both a local and remote audience in their listeners, offering a means of remotely accessing the local community and creating a similar dynamic to the one between actual and imagined communities described by E. King (2014).

The role of voice and identity in knowledge sharing practices

Many of the radio stations I contacted feature language heavily in their programming; the sound of certain voices speaking certain languages plays a significant role in why radio is perceived as a valuable medium within their communities. Illustrating the significance of voice and language for Indigenous radio broadcasters, Anong Beam gave the following response when I asked her why she chose to work with radio:

For me, I thought radio would be really cathartic considering historically in this area we’ve had such opposition to Ojibwe language with children going to residential school. I felt that there was something almost shamanistic about broadcasting, bathing the whole landscape in the radio waves of the Ojibwe language. (Beam, personal communication, October 2015)

This concept of healing through language, voice, and sharing was prominent throughout all three interviews, with Allan Loft speaking at length about the role of song in the communication of cultural information and Vincent Chechock describing storytelling and language teaching programming his station has featured in the past. In this way, a connection with the past and with cultural heritage more broadly is fostered through an act of creation and sharing in the present. Christine Tulley identifies aural media as offering greater immediacy and connection to human physicality than text based media (2011, 259). As such, it is not simply the content of the programming offered by these stations, but also the sounds of the programming which helps to form a connection to community and cultural heritage.
Although our conversation was centered on the production of radio programming and cultural heritage, Allan Loft spoke extensively of the broader philosophies and teachings which guide him in his own work as a radio broadcaster, citing the importance of sharing knowledge while also ensuring that the information disseminated via radio programming is true in a cultural sense. Acknowledging the subjective nature and multiplicity of “truth,” Loft emphasized the need for Indigenous truths to be heard following their enforced silence through colonial processes such as the Indian residential school system.

We have different history and then there’s the academic side of our history […] But the idea is that most of the history written down is basically put into play by the conquerors and that’s what everybody’s supposed to believe. I think the idea would be coming from our point of view, it would come from all the elders. All the ones that still have that knowledge, right, before it’s all gone, because at some point, they say from my teachings that a lot of our knowledge is going back to the Creator’s land because the kids are not listening any more. Because of the idea of colonialism and everything like that, there is that idea, that stereotypical image of our people. Whether it be good or bad, the idea is that stereotypical image reaches our children too, and in a negative way… so that everybody’s still trying to pass. We weren’t taught our language at home when we moved to Hamilton because my mother and father thought we would never use it. My grandmother’s brother lived with us. They talked Mohawk with him, but they never taught us at home per se, but we understood what they were saying. But the idea is that the language had to come back for me through my [post-secondary] schooling and I’m the only one (and I’m the youngest in my family) who understands any part of the Mohawk language. (Loft, personal communication, August 2015)

Voice, both in terms of sound and authority, plays an important role in Loft’s vision of healing and knowledge sharing. In describing his own broadcasting practices, he noted that he begins each episode of The Aboriginal Component with a traditional thanks to the Creator recorded by the late Six Nations chief, Jacob Thomas, allocating space in which the sounds of culturally powerful words being repeated by a prominent community figure in the Mohawk language can be reliably heard by and made familiar to listeners. Within the body of each episode, Loft makes a point of including snippets of a range of Indigenous languages, including Ojibwe, Cree, and Lakota. Beyond his own speech, Loft uses music as a means of sharing his worldview, drawing upon a selection of tracks ranging from the work of local Indigenous artists to Christmas carols to classic rock. Loft spoke repeatedly about his personal and cultural connection to music, but
particularly emphasized its role when I began to ask questions more specifically related to archaeology and material heritage. As I was accustomed to approaching archaeology from an academic stance that focuses strongly on material culture, this connection puzzled me and I asked him to further explain the relationship between music and archaeology. In response to my question, Loft asked me to sing:

AL: I am of the understanding that aboriginal musical history should also be included as a part of the overall constant of archaeology as our aboriginal history was not written but orally passed down through pictographs and song, the song and the music lyrics or chants coming from various regions across the continent… I want you to sing this verse for me, okay? Falalalalalalalala

EM: Falalalalalalalala

AL: Now go look at yourself in the mirror and do it again. Got one there? Do it.

EM: Falalalalalalalala

AL: Do you have a smile on your face?

EM: Yeah

AL: It’s because it made you feel something. All of the singing and even just the chants from different nations that were shared, they helped us feel something, whether it was to be happy, whether it was to help comfort us through a condolence ceremony, for their nation as well as our own. We have our own social songs that are just to bring people together to be happy and then we have our songs that are more traditional that are only done in our own basic teachings. So even just those chants are music. Just like falalalalalalalala, right? Even that made you feel something, right? It made you feel happy.” (Loft, personal communication, August 2015)

For Loft, both the act of singing and of listening serve to inspire emotion and the connection between singer and listener is one that also affords the sharing of cultural information. Voicing and listening to the ideas that are shared through Loft’s programming are both active forms of engagement with a community centered on contemporary Haudenosaunee culture (cf. Couldry, 2010; King, 2014; Peters, 1999). Through the colonial processes Loft describes, important pieces of the Indigenous cultural landscape have been lost or misplaced. There is knowledge that may never be fully recovered. Yet by sharing emotion and knowledge through music and voice, these
gaps can be filled. In the absence of material artifacts, the intangible culture associated with those artifacts can be preserved or rebuilt through song and voice. As Laurajane Smith argues that all heritage is intangible, it is then possible to produce heritage through visitation even lacking a material anchor for the heritage in question (Smith, 2006). The sense of wonder (Mouliou and Kalessopoulou, 2012) or presence (Clark, 2007; Brady, 2011; Lee, 2004) initially associated with elements of the cultural landscape that are now missing may still be achieved through acts of aural sharing.

Loft’s preoccupation with music does not stem solely from a mindfulness of the past, but also from a concern for the future. Beyond simply acting as a means of forming a shared cultural identity, Loft notes that song and voice play a vital role in passing on crucial environmental and cultural information, without which a serious risk to the wellbeing of both the environment and its inhabitants may be posed. Loft offered the following explanation of this subject:

Here’s a way to put it: the songs that people sing are songs about our victories and our defeats and about our wise men and our elders and how they contributed to our well being a long time ago. Seven generations ago. What kind of songs will be sung about us? What will we have done to ensure that the life cycles will continue? …And then, will there be anybody left to sing the songs? Will there be anybody honouring all of the Earth? Because we believe that if we don’t continue to honour and acknowledge and give respect to all the things that help us to live as human beings – even the winds – those elements in the creation will start to go away. What will we leave for our coming generations? (Loft, personal communication, August 2015)

Knowledge of the past has the power to tangibly influence the reality of the future and, in Mohawk culture, song is one of the primary methods for passing on this knowledge. Song is a means of knowledge sharing which has historically been afforded little room or credibility within academic disciplines such as archaeology9 which are often perceived by publics and governments to hold the most authority over Indigenous pasts. Loft is keenly aware of this contradiction and acknowledged that, in his view, his approach to knowledge sharing differed from practices typically adopted by museums and archaeologists. Instead, by mobilizing a wide-reaching network of community-oriented radio stations and organizations dedicated to Indigenous arts and culture, Loft is acting as part of a movement to prioritize Indigenous voices,

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9 This is in part due to the fact that intangible culture such as song is difficult to access through material evidence.
creating spaces of song and listening that allow for personal and cultural connection within and between communities, fulfilling his philosophy of equality and connection.

The connection between heritage and voice is especially evident in the programming featured by Gimaa Radio. Initially created in part as a means to air archival recordings of oral histories and interviews with elders, a large part of the programming offered by Gimaa Radio is not only centered on heritage but also addresses the subject using the Ojibwe language. Aside from having the effect of making the language itself more accessible in this manner, the pairing of heritage and language also allows the staff at Gimaa Radio to enact other aspects of Ojibwe cultural practices. One example of this that Beam described is the seasonality of stories.

In the tradition of telling stories, certain stories were kept for the winter and certain stories were kept for the summer. So that’s something that we’re trying to be sensitive to because that’s part of the culture. There were certain stories that you just told in the wintertime. So seasonality is kind of an issue for us… I think the wisdom of that is that in the summertime it’s kind of a busy time. Everybody’s thoughts are kind of light and frivolous and there’s a lot of people visiting and vacations, so that’s a time for kind of lighthearted stories, and then when you go to a story that maybe has a lot of deep importance or something that you might want to consider or a lot of life impact – those kinds of stories with more morals or things to be learned – those would be more wintertime stories because that’s a more interior time, you know, more ponderous. There’s less sunlight and you’re inside more. It’s a more contemplative time. It’s nice to think about stories in that way and the effect of the kind of story in regard to the seasons. (Beam, personal communication, October 2015)

This practice is one way in which Gimaa Radio endeavours to offer culturally specific programming. It is also a way of adding meaning to and contextualizing the stories included in that programming. As Beam observed, it is a “pragmatic” practice, allowing the listeners to emotionally and mentally prepare themselves for the story they are about to hear in order to ensure that they understand it fully. Sorting stories by season and ensuring that this practice is widely recognized within the community, Gimaa Radio inherently offers context and additional meaning to each story for those in know about this practice. Without this cultural expertise, an element of meaning behind these stories would be missed. To those who are unaware of this Ojibwe practice, the stories can still hold meaning, yet by openly acknowledging the seasonality of stories, Gimaa Radio helps build expertise through both content and form. Beam argues that
the ability to offer such insights is one reason it is important for First Nations communities to be involved in the presentation and interpretation of their own cultural heritage.

Logistical constraints and the mobilization of social networks in First Nations radio

In spite of the clear benefits associated with Indigenous communities taking charge of the presentation of their own cultural heritage, logistical and systematic barriers often stand in the way. Acknowledging a demand for language programming, Rez 91 radio station not only offers material in Anishinaabemowin, but also offers educational programming about how to speak the language. However, in describing the process of developing this kind of material, Chechock spoke primarily of the station’s efforts to secure funding and resources in support of cultural programming and even the radio station as a whole. Like Gimaa Radio, Rez 91 was founded on personal expertise and vision, with very little financial or technical support. Relying upon his own knowledge of radio broadcasting and a collection of found equipment, Vincent Chechock and his wife, Anita Chechock, launched the earliest incarnation of Rez 91 radio from the basement of their home. Although the station has since grown significantly and is now a major node in the local Indigenous broadcasting and media community, it is still entirely volunteer-operated and relies upon a combination of government grants, local sponsors, and collaborations with other media organizations (such as MUSKRAT Magazine and Anishinabek News) to provide programming. In the case of the language learning program, Anishinaabemda Noongo (Let’s Speak Anishinaabemowin Today), funding was initially provided through Heritage Canada’s Aboriginal Languages Initiative. Following the expiration of the grant, the program was continued due to popular demand by airing reruns of existing episodes. Funding has since been renewed for Anishinaabemda Noongo, meaning that the station can continue to produce new episodes – however, without this funding, this may not have been possible.

Given the competition for funding available to First Nations broadcasters, the opportunities afforded through collaborations and partnerships are vital tools for developing rich programming. Describing his experiences with Rez 91 and future hopes and plans for the station, Chechock spoke extensively of the web of personal and professional relationships surrounding Rez 91.
We don’t have enough in the way of resources to go out and get news. Our news spot [Ezhu Waay Buk] started as basically a local bulletin board – a what is up and what is happening of the area. So that’s what it was and then it gradually grew. We tapped into Nation Talk and Newswire and we get interviews from there, and then also Jennifer Ashawasagai who used to work for the station in town [The Moose], then she went to CBC and then came back to the Moose as news director and then she had her own syndicated radio show on Rogers Radio. But now she’s freelancing. So since she left Rogers and since she left the Moose and CBC, we’ve gotten news stories. She’s been doing weekly news stories for us. So we just throw all of that in along with whatever else we can get. Since we partnered up with Anishinaabek News, the Grand Castle chief, who I’ve known for a long time... stops by here everyone once in a while. He stopped by here just the other day. And whenever we tape him it’s a segment that’s usually about ten minutes long and so we just throw that into [the program] DBaajmiiwaat [What They’re Saying]. We call it […] Chat With Pat. (Chechock, personal communication, August 2015)

Although constraints surrounding access to funding and resources pose a major barrier to Indigneous radio stations such as Rez 91 and Gimaa Radio, the mobilization of social networks in order to overcome this barrier is part of what makes these radio stations such remarkable social hubs in their communities. In part because logistical circumstances force the stations to rely heavily on social connections, they are in turn highly responsive to the needs and interests of the community. An example of this is the health program Chechock is hoping to launch on Rez 91. This program was inspired by an expression of interest from the audience and is something that Chechock feels would be well received within the community. Yet until someone steps forward to secure funding and develop the program, it will remain up in the air. In this way, the programming at Rez 91 is both responsive to and contingent upon community engagement and interest.

In addition to the constraints imposed by a lack of funding, the process of setting up a legal radio station in Canada is one which demands a great deal of time and effort. Gimaa Radio was initially founded as a pirate radio station meaning that it was not officially licensed. In discussing why the radio format is important to her, Beam described the lengthy process of licensing Gimaa Radio.

I didn’t feel like it was something that should be illegal. I just thought I should just get a radio license and do this the normal way. I had no idea it was going to be that hard to actually get a radio license. It took like seven years of paperwork... But the reason why is
that up here where we are, not everyone is just walking around with a computer at their fingertips and the democracy of a radio signal that you can just hear in your car while you’re driving around just seems so much more accessible and much more populistic so everyone could really, regardless of what kind of situation you’re in, you can just turn on the radio in your vehicle and it just made it way more accessible. Instead of something that you have to do – go to a computer and stream it online – a lot of people do that, but it’s also you know, if you get in your car and you just go buy groceries you can just flip on the radio and you’ll hear your language being spoken. (Beam, personal communication, October 2015)

For Beam, obtaining a license for the radio station did not simply represent a legal formality, but was a means of ensuring the sustainability of a reliable cultural resource. Beam perceives radio as being democratic and accessible, offering anyone the opportunity to access the sounds of the culture, regardless of their ability to draw upon other resources such as personal relationships or digital media.

The materiality of radio: landscapes and remote audiences

The material parameters of analogue radio shape how programmers imagine community access to radio both metaphorically and pragmatically, forming an intersection between real and imagined communities. Edward King (2014) observes that the relationship between imagined radio communities and actual listenership is dynamic and nuanced with listeners engaging both actively and selectively. As the reach and content of the radio waves are shaped by the physical landscape, listeners engage with broadcasts in a personal manner, working to further shape the meaning of the programming in relation to themselves and their place in the cultural and physical landscape with which they identify. As Henning (2006) theorizes, media are both dependent on the material world and influential of social relations. As such, the programming offered by the radio stations I contacted during this study is simultaneously shaped by and influential of understandings of the material and social landscapes in which these stations operate.

Local communities play a significant role in shaping the identity and development of radio stations like Gimaa Radio and Rez 91, but the network represented by such stations is almost global in scale. As Loft observed, Indigenous peoples all over the world are actively using media
(and particularly radio) as a means to maintain and share their cultures\textsuperscript{10}. As a result, radio stations that are intensely focused on a small, geographically confined community often have strong connections with geographically and culturally distant broadcasting communities. As Beam describes, Gimaa Radio is a strong example of this, with its roots stemming from an international collaboration.

My father started [Gimaa Radio] …as pirate radio and what happened was he wanted to do it and he had a friend who went to Radio Free Berkeley. Radio Free Berkeley is down in California and they help people make FM broadcasters. They supply them to Indigenous communities that are trying to hold onto their languages. So the Zapatista movement in Mexico received a transmitter from them, we received a transmitter from them and so my father started it just doing it on pirate and then after he passed away I wanted to continue it. (Beam, personal communication, October 2015)

This widespread collaborative spirit is often apparent not only in the production and administration of First Nations radio stations, but also in their approach to content and format. Loft approaches radio as a means of sharing his traditional teachings with his listeners. At the heart of his approach to radio broadcasting is a philosophy of equality and sharing. When I asked for his advice about developing an archaeology-focused radio program Loft’s immediate response was to consider how such a program might be brought about through institutional collaborations and the mobilization of professional and community networks spanning countries and provinces.

In describing the style and audience reception of Rez 91 radio, Chechock observed that though the content is largely aimed at the Wasauksing community, there is a greater listenership in the nearby town of Parry Sound – a fact which Chechock attributes to the appealingly loose format of the station. Chechock also observed that since the Wasauksing community obtained improved internet access and speed, the radio station has been able to greatly expand its listenership, offering live digital streaming as well as archived episodes of a selection of programs. The role of digital access in building audience was also confirmed by Beam and Loft, as Loft mentioned that he has listeners in Alberta and Beam noted that Gimaa Radio’s audience extends as far as Michigan, Minnesota, Sault Ste. Marie, and Southern Ontario. Yet despite the benefits of digital access, the primary means of dissemination for all three stations is still radio broadcasting.

\textsuperscript{10} See Wilson and Stewart (2008) for examples of the ways in which Indigenous cultures around the world are using radio and other media as a form of cultural activism.
Regarding his attraction to radio as a medium, Chechock said “I think with the advent of APTN and some other broadcasters, I think we’re starting to make a mark in the world as far as reaching out. Reaching out to each other and to the rest of the world. And anything that helps that along, I’m in favour of” (personal communication, August 2015)

As Beam observed, reaching out to the communities described by Chechock requires an acknowledgement of what kinds of media are appealing and accessible to the people who make up those communities. In cases where internet access is limited, broadcast radio remains a logical recourse which also offers the benefit of not requiring listeners to intentionally visit the medium to the same extent as does a digital resource. Beam and Chechock both described listeners who happen upon their radio stations almost serendipitously while shopping or driving, suggesting that, within the geographically local community, broadcast radio may actually be a more effective means of reaching listeners than digital streaming. In this way, Gimaa Radio, Rez 91 and The Aboriginal Component take advantage of a combination of dissemination methods to connect a remote audience with a local one – an aural landscape that is reflected by the wide-ranging network of media organizations, communities, and individuals that support all three of these stations.

Listening to the past while constructing the present

Closely related to the interaction between radio and landscape is the role heritage plays in interpreting the physical and cultural landscape of the present. While landscape was discussed frequently during the interviews in relation to audience and media communities, Loft and Chechock mentioned it extensively when discussing their relationship to and opinions about how to represent Indigenous heritage.

One example of this is the response Chechock gave when I asked him what kind of history or heritage he would be interested in hearing about on the radio.

I still don’t have a complete picture of how my family came to be. My grandmother was from a community which was about sixty miles north of here and my grandfather was from here down in the lower village and how the devil they even got together, I’m not quite sure. It was I think some siblings that first met each other and got married, and how
they got together, I’m not totally sure either… The mode of travel back in those days was by the water and it seemed to be to go from here up to Shawanaga (which is the next First Nations community north), that’s like a two-day row-boat trip. So I would imagine, well, if you wanted you could probably make it in one day in a canoe. Franklin Island, which is just off the coast of this neck of the woods here, it’s a huge blueberry patch. So that was where people used to go and pick blueberries. We were hunter gatherers and the original settlement here was in Sandy Island which is just west of Kerry Island (aka Wasauksing First Nation). It used to be, I understand, a Hudson’s Bay trading post. So the main highway was out there [on the water]. It wasn’t highway 69 or 11, it was out there. So, perhaps that’s how my ancestors got together. (Chechock, personal communication, August 2015)

For Chechock, history is closely tied to movements across the land. Just as radio signals and the communities they reach are determined by the shape of the landscape, so, in part, is the sense of identity built through Chechock’s relationship with history. Chechock’s interest in and understanding of the value of history is also deeply personal in nature. He is interested in learning more about the past as a way of negotiating his own identity in the present, with a particular focus on the relationship between individual experience and broader narratives. When asked about what he felt the focus of a heritage-based radio program should be, he said it should address both stories such as the one about his grandparents as well as bigger stories exploring the relationship between nations, where they came from, and how they survived: “information and experience that can be used as we go forward” (Chechock, personal communication, August 2015).

This understanding of the past as a tool for the present and future was echoed strongly by Loft and Beam. Loft’s assertion of the importance of song stems from his understanding of the role of memory in constructing the present and the future. Although optimistic about the endeavor of sharing song and memory, Loft also acknowledged the challenge faced by First Nations knowledge holders in overcoming oppression, stating that “if colonization has been here for five hundred years it could probably take another five hundred years to get back, and I ain’t kidding about that. We need to go do the residential school thing in reverse to repair who we are as a people. Not only that, but to tell the rest of the world exactly what the truth is” (Loft, personal communication, August 2015).
The process of repair noted by Loft is also a process of reconciliation – a concept that expands on Laurajane Smith’s (2006) conception of heritage as a process which takes place in the present. Not only is heritage constructed in the present in a broad sense, its production can be used as a personal process of negotiating identity in relation to others. Moving beyond the space of heritage visitation identified by Smith, Loft and Chechock both understand the production of heritage as a social and highly active process firmly rooted in the present and directed at negotiations of the future. Offering an example from her own community, Beam described the multi-faceted and participatory approach to heritage interpretation that is currently prevalent in the community of M’Chigeeng, highlighting the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation that regularly hosts events featuring craft demonstrations and talks from elders, historians, and archaeologists. In describing these events, Beam noted the potential of Gimaa Radio to help broaden their impact within the community, stating that while the range of events is interesting, they are not accessible to all community members, such as those with young children or limited mobility. By recording and broadcasting such community events, Gimaa Radio offers them up for listeners to stumble across and discover unintentionally, encountering diverse interpretations of Ojibwe heritage in both private and public spaces.

In a culture which has suffered severe cultural oppression through systems such as the Indian residential schools, Beam argues that the ability to encounter both heritage and language in one’s own home is an important aspect of cultural revitalization. Beyond simply learning about the past, such encounters (especially those that take place in Ojibwe), are a way of renegotiating the relationship between the past and the present, weaving knowledge of the past into narratives of the future. Addressing this concept, Beam observed:

There’s always the historical past of your culture and where you are now and where you’re going. You can see that in the development of new words – like every year Webster’s Dictionary has words that are taken out of the dictionary and also words that are added and this is something that’s also going on with the Anishinaabe language, and French, and this is something that we all have to collectively dialogue. What kind of language are we using to describe ourselves in the present, and how do we talk about the past? These are all really important things for the health of a culture and hopefully that’s what Gimaa Radio is doing and is going to be doing for Anishinaabe culture. (Beam, personal communication, October 2015)
For Beam, then, heritage is not simply something which matters in the present, it is a kind of identity that is constantly being renewed and remade in the present – a tool for self-knowledge and empowerment as well as the construction of cultural identity. Though heritage and its production are never neutral and are not always benevolent, access to authority over one’s own heritage is an important tool in ensuring the health of Indigenous cultures in the present and future.

**Approaching radio and interpretation from the institutional perspective**

In addition to consulting members of First Nations radio stations in preparation for the radio program, I also spoke with Catherine Paterson, the Operations Manager of SA: McMaster at the time of this research. Throughout our conversation, Paterson repeatedly expressed enthusiasm for expanding the interpretive options afforded by the facility, but acknowledged that offering interpretation and access to collections has been a point of struggle for the organization so far. Although SA: McMaster aims to make the collections it holds accessible to academics and members of descendent communities alike, there have thus far been a number of obstacles which have skewed the demographics of those using the collections strongly in favour of non-Indigenous academics. One such obstacle is the facility’s lack of a public space. This is exacerbated by a small staff, complementing a lack of funding for offering interpretive programming and the facility’s limited ability to publicize the collections in their care. At the time of this study, SA: McMaster had just launched its first website, offering the opportunity to discuss the collections in a public forum that targets audiences beyond academic circles. Before the launch of this website, the facility’s only publicity channels were through Facebook, McMaster’s institutional website, and the Sustainable Archaeology institutional website, none of which were designed for extensive interpretation of collections. Given these obstacles, Paterson highlighted the need to offer a greater range of interpretive materials in order to reach a more diverse audience and noted that the organization was looking for new ways to use and discuss the collections.

While the lack of First Nations involvement with the collections is being addressed by Sustainable Archaeology through consultations with an advisory committee, it is an issue with
deep roots in the collections and in Ontario archaeology more generally\(^{11}\) (Nahrgang, 2013; Supernant and Warrick, 2012; Warrick, 2012). For large portions of the collections held by SA: McMaster, documentation of the involvement of First Nations people in their excavation or analysis is very limited and often absent. According to Paterson (personal communication, July 2015), this absence is especially apparent in sites excavated in the 1970’s and 1980’s, many of which have never been analyzed or even unpacked from the bags in which they were stored immediately following excavation. Because of the state of some of these collections, it is sometimes difficult for SA: McMaster staff to determine their contents and origins, let alone offer public interpretation of the material. Moving forward, Paterson predicted that this problem will persist as the facility begins to take on more collections from a range of sources. In light of this concern, Paterson emphasized that communication with the public will play an important role in ensuring the care and contextualization of these collections.

Regarding the form such communication could take, Paterson described her own experiences facilitating interactions between the public and archaeological collections at Doors Open events and public talks. Noting that members of the general public sometimes view visually impressive archaeological material as a kind of “treasure” while disregarding the value of less appealing artifacts, Paterson said that she makes every effort to help visitors understand the narratives represented by collections as a whole rather than favouring individual pieces. One tactic she has found helpful is to allow these interactions to unfold organically as an informal conversation.

My focus has always been the range of material that has been excavated and then what stories do archaeologists tell and what kind of information are they gathering from that, and again highlighting the usefulness of having an abundance of material that you can through. So really steering away from just “these are interesting objects” and more towards “this is the range of debitage” and “here’s what people are using that for” and “here are the tools that are produced” […] So I think it’s always been more just about getting the material out and seeing what people are reacting to and just having a conversation based on it. I don’t think I could say anything I’ve actually done with the public has been anything close to interpretation or putting together artifacts […] It’s been more material based and just kind of getting material out there for people to look at. (Paterson, personal communication, July 2015)

\(^{11}\) See also DeVries (2014) and “Engaging Aboriginal Communities in Archaeology” (2010) for further detail on current requirements for First Nations involvement in archaeological survey in Ontario.
According to Paterson, the people who attend public events at SA: McMaster are interested both in the artifacts themselves and in the practice of archaeology. Using her method of interpretation via informal discussion, Paterson took an approach of interweaving the stories of the sites and artifacts with the stories of how they made their way into the collections at SA: McMaster. Paterson described these narratives as separate layers of the same story, invoking a multivocal understanding of archaeology anchored by the material artifact.

**Recommendations for the radio program**

The perspectives on radio and heritage expressed during my conversations with Anong Beam, Vincent Chechock, Allan Loft, and Catherine Paterson were diverse in both source and practice. While Allan Loft expressed a deeply philosophical approach to radio and voice, Vincent Chechock described the logistical challenges of running a community radio station, Anong Beam spoke of the cultural value of language and heritage programming, and Catherine Paterson offered her own experience with facilitating encounters between the public and archaeological collections. Although each interview drew upon unique experiences and opinions, agreement emerged from all four conversations regarding a core set of recommendations for the proposed radio program. The main recommendations that were emphasized by all four advisors were as follows:

- The radio program should feature interpretations of archaeological material from members of the descendent community in question
- Elders from this community should speak on the program
- It could be helpful to also hear an archaeological interpretation of the artifacts, although this is not as important as hearing from elders
- The program must consider what the contemporary implications of the artifacts are and strive to offer information that is relevant to communities in the present

In light of the shifting meanings of heritage, Beam suggested that while it would be important to hear an elder’s interpretation of the artifacts in the proposed radio program, it would also be
valuable to hear from individuals such as artists or craftspeople who had had personal contemporaneous experience with materials similar to the ones composing the artifacts. In this way, the artifacts could be mobilized not only as vehicles for discussing the past, but also as a means of drawing connections with the present and highlighting cultural work currently being pursued in the local community. This complication of the definition of “expert” upholds the considerations of expertise offered by Krmpotich and Peers (2011).

The issue of ensuring relevance to the communities in question is one which also extends to the form and execution of the program itself. As Chechock and Beam described, the logistical obstacles faced by community radio stations can be numerous and daunting, leading such stations to develop elaborate models of collaboration and community involvement. By participating in this network of First Nations broadcasting, institutions such as SA: McMaster can help to contribute content to partner stations while also expanding their own interpretive repertoire. However, as highlighted in the ideas expressed by Beam, Chechock, and Loft, voice and authority play important roles in the accurate communication of knowledge via First Nations radio. As such, any collaboration between a heritage institution and First Nations radio mediators must embrace First Nations radio practices wholeheartedly with regards to content, process, voice, and platform.

Conclusion

Reinforcing and adding to the arguments made by scholars active in the field of Indigenous museology and cultural heritage that the assertion of Indigenous authority over material heritage is vital not only to the contextualization of that heritage but also to the cultural health of descendant communities (see Bell and Napoleon, 2008; Doxtator, 1996; Thornton, 2002; Weasel Head, 2010; Weasel Head, 2015), and further that the production of this heritage is a process of the present (Smith, 2006), Beam, Chechock, and Loft offered diverse experiences and expertise in contribution to the identification of a number of core themes for the project. As outlined above, these themes consist of: an assertion of the power of voice as a means of producing and claiming authority over heritage; the confirmation of heritage as a process which is rooted in the present; an acknowledgement of the practical obstacles faced by community radio stations and the complex social and professional networks which are used to overcome them; and the intricate
relationship between radio, landscape, and the formation of community. Moving forward, these themes are used to inform decisions made during the recording of the radio program and are considered in conjunction with the findings of the second half of the study.

In the next chapter I focus on the development and recording of the radio program, drawing upon the ideas and recommendations offered by the expert advisors profiled in this chapter. As I document the process of developing the radio program, I will also explore how information shared during these interviews was mobilized in the face of logistical obstacles faced during the production of the radio program.
Chapter 4
Creating the Radio Program

Introduction

The early process of developing the radio program (titled *Artifacts on Air*\(^{12}\)) was informed not only by the direct recommendations made by the expert advisors I consulted, but also by the practices and cultures they described when discussing their approaches to Indigenous radio broadcasting. In this way, the preliminary interviews conducted with the expert advisors guided both the content and the format of the program. The major decisions to be made leading up to the recording of the program consisted of the following:

- Who should speak on the program?
- How long should each person speak?
- Where should the program be recorded and who should be present during the recording?
- Which artifacts will be addressed?
- What kind of music or sound effects should be included?

While the ideas put forth by the expert advisors went a long way towards answering many of these questions, addressing these issues in practice often presented logistical obstacles or considerations that worked to shape the final product of the radio program. This chapter addresses each of these decisions, describing the process of assembling expert speakers, selecting artifacts, and planning the recording of the program. This chapter also includes an engagement with the ideas expressed by expert speakers during the production of the radio program (in line with my PAR methodology) and concludes with a description of the process of licensing and circulating the completed program.

\(^{12}\) The program is now available on SA: McMaster’s website: [https://sustarc.mcmaster.ca/?p=1406.](https://sustarc.mcmaster.ca/?p=1406)
Choosing the format

Although I began trying to recruit expert speakers almost immediately after finishing the preliminary interviews, I found that without being able to describe the structure of the program in any great detail, it was very difficult to appeal to potential speakers who were likely receiving a number of other invitations at the same time. Acknowledging the need to define the program more clearly, I turned instead to the task of devising a format and rough structure for the program. Taking the initiative to make these preliminary decisions defies conventional collaborative best practice to an extent. Typically, it is considered best to engage collaborative partners closely in every decision (see Ames, 1999 and Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, 1992) However, as was expressed by several of the potential speakers I contacted, this is not always feasible and at times puts an unfair burden on community members as they are asked to commit to the project in addition to their own work without fully knowing what the project will entail. Viewing this stage of the project as only a small part of the overall process which would be open to change once the speakers had been recruited, I felt that establishing a rough plan for the program was a necessary and ethical undertaking.

Here, my own role and voice within the program presented a challenge: because of the small staff and logistical constraints at Sustainable Archaeology, it seemed unlikely that a representative of the organization would be able to speak on the program and as such, my voice would, by extension be the closest they would come to having a representative in the program. While my role in the project was that of an independent researcher, my past affiliation with SA: McMaster through a collections management internship, as well as my academic background often led the Indigenous experts and advisors I contacted during the course of the project to associate me with SA: McMaster. While this could be brushed off as a misunderstanding, the fact remained that my voice in the radio program was likely to be perceived as the institutional voice, meaning that I needed to carefully consider the structure and format of the program in order to ensure that the Indigenous voices that needed to be heard in relation to the artifacts in question were not overshadowed by the perceived institutional voice. This recalls Ames’ (1999) observation that collaborative partnerships are often initiated (and thus largely determined) by the institution. Aware of the need to not only include Indigenous voices in the project as a form
of legitimization (see Brady, 2011) but to ensure that they were afforded the space to execute an effective social process (Couldry, 2010, 9), I sought to reduce my own voice while still engaging with the ideas put forth by the speakers.

The need to limit my own voice within the program extended not only to the sounds included in the program but also to the structure of the program itself and the act of recording those sounds. Based on my conversations with Allan Loft, Anong Beam and Vincent Chechock, the program needed to hear from a number of different voices in order to access a more complete and multivocal representation of the objects and issues at hand. Having used the interviews described in Chapter 3 to identify the kinds of voices that needed to be heard (that of an elder from the descendant community, an archaeologist, and someone with a contemporary connection to, or understanding of, the material), the question then became centered upon who and what should be present during the recordings.

The simplest option, logistically speaking, would have been for me to meet with each speaker (or vice versa) and record their interpretation as a one-on-one interview. However, although it would be possible for me to edit out my own voice, leaving only the words of the speaker in the form of a monologue, the fact would remain that my voice had played an active role in a dialogue, working to shape what was expressed by the speaker and, through my presence perhaps limiting or altering the ways in which they engaged with the material. It was also unlikely that I would be able to bring artifact to each of these meetings, unless they were held at SA: McMaster. Though the aim of the program was to offer insights into archaeology by and for an Indigenous community, recording speakers in this manner would be to record them as speaking to me: a non-Indigenous and academic listener.

Informed by Hooper-Greenhill’s (1992) idea of multivocality and Schwarzer’s (2007) description of meaning making through public dialogue, I decided that the program should consist of a single recording of a group discussion between all speakers, with myself acting as a moderator when necessary. Aiming to maximize the public value of the program and drawing upon SA: McMaster’s past interactions with the public, I further decided that the program should be recorded as a public workshop, wherein the discussion offered by the speakers would make up the majority of the workshop, with an additional question, answer, and discussion period open to audience members at the end. The format of a workshop was chosen in an effort to promote
discussion during the recording and foster a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging dialogue over debate and reducing the dichotomy between speaker and audience. There would be multiple speakers present, each of whom would, at times, form part of the audience. By labeling the event a workshop, I hoped to promote active engagement between all participants and encourage all parties to consider their own role in the issues being discussed. Because SA: McMaster already had a working relationship with the Hamilton Public Library, the Westdale Branch of the library was chosen as the setting for the workshop. This choice served a number of purposes in that it allowed the workshop to take advantage of the library’s strong public presence and welcoming public space while also furthering an existing partnership and helping the library to offer public programming.

I hoped that the format of a live workshop would make the experience more immediately fulfilling for the speakers as they would have the opportunity to share knowledge directly with audience members. It would also serve to foster more dialogue both between speakers and with the audience, making for a more rounded and multivocal engagement with the material. The speakers would be presented as expert teachers and would each have an opportunity to share their knowledge within the setting of a respectful discussion. It was anticipated – and indeed encouraged – that the speakers would not necessarily wholly agree with all of each other’s ideas, and the importance of addressing these differences within the frame of a respectful discussion rather than a debate would be emphasized at the beginning of the workshop (see Abram, 2007 and Schwarzer, 2007). Once the workshop was over, I would then edit the recording to create a fluid narrative and would submit it to the speakers for their feedback. Though this approach would still involve me imposing my voice in an editorial manner, the recording itself would be less directly influenced by my presence and preconceptions about the artifacts, allowing the primary narrative to be shaped by the unfolding discussion between speakers.

Finding the speakers and choosing the artifacts

Like the advisors consulted during the preliminary interviews, the speakers for the radio program were selected according to relevance and availability. I began the recruiting process by contacting individuals who had been involved with Sustainable Archaeology in the past. I received a positive response from William Fox, an adjunct professor with Trent University’s
Graduate Anthropology program. In his former role as Regional Archaeologist for Southwestern Ontario, Fox had worked with many of the sites represented by the collections at SA: McMaster. With Fox confirmed as one of the speakers for the workshop, I was able to narrow down the pool of possible artifacts to choose from to those Fox had worked with. Within this, I chose to focus on those related to sites near the Six Nations region, in order to appeal to a local audience while also remaining relevant to a widespread and diverse remote audience.

From the sites in this region, I selected the Sealey Site. The Sealey Site seemed well-suited to the project as the materials held at SA: McMaster consist of a single box of material with a diverse range of artifacts, including worked bone, trade beads, ceramics, lithics, and faunal remains. Dating from about 1630 A.D., Sealey is a Neutral Iroquoian village site with a large associated cemetery likely made necessary due to the epidemics that took place during the time of the site’s occupation. Closely resembling the larger and better documented Walker Site (Wright and Lennox, 1981), Sealey appears to be part of a network of Neutral Iroquoian village sites present in the region (Fitzgerald, 1990).

Like many of the assemblages held at SA: McMaster, the Sealey Site material was compiled from a number of different collectors over the years and came to the facility with very little documentation. While some of the artifacts from the Sealey Site were numbered and labeled with a collector’s initials, often a catalogue from the collector would be unavailable or the numbers and artifacts would not correlate accurately. Adding to the mystery surrounding the Sealey Site, it had rarely been mentioned in academic publications and the materials at SA: McMaster were not accompanied by any kind of site map or contextual information. Because a number of the artifacts were labeled with dates from the 1960’s and 1970’s it was assumed during the accessioning process that some sort of excavation had taken place at the site during this time, although no documentation of such an event could be found. Upon contacting Fox about the radio program, he explained that the Sealey Site had never been properly excavated, but rather had been the victim of severe looting for over a century with large quantities of artifacts finding their way into the hands of prominent 19th and early 20th century collectors such as Frank S. Wood and George Gee (Fox, personal communication, February 2016). Rather than taking part in an excavation at the site as was suggested by the labels on some of the artifacts, Fox had visited the site in the 1970’s during his time as Regional Archaeologist in efforts to prevent ongoing looting (Fox, personal communication, February 2016). Combined with the site’s own
important historical role in the region, the complex history of looting\textsuperscript{13} and preservation surrounding the site gave it the potential to act as a rich access point for a discussion surrounding the history of the site itself, the history of archaeological practice, and the different values attributed to First Nations material heritage ranging from ancestral ties to market value.

Having selected the Sealey Site as a general subject for the radio program, I was able to significantly narrow down the pool of potential speakers to contact, shifting the focus to speakers with a connection to Six Nations. This lead me to contact Rick Hill, a prominent heritage scholar and artist from Six Nations who is currently serving as the Senior Projects Coordinator at Six Nations Polytechnic Deyohahá:ge (Indigenous Knowledge Center); as well as Heather George, a member of the board of trustees and former Cultural Coordinator at Chiefswood National Historic Site. To help reinforce the contemporary relevance of the material (as recommended during the preliminary interviews), the final speaker invited to the workshop was Jessica Hinton, an Anishinaabe Master’s student from McMaster University studying archaeological portrayals of Indigenous peoples and the importance of cultural self-representation. The finalized roster of speakers for the workshop consisted of William Fox, Heather George, Rick Hill, and Jessica Hinton (for biographies of each speaker see Appendix A).

**Planning the workshop**

Though the Sealey Site had been selected as the broad topic for the workshop, the specific artifacts and focus of the discussion remained to be decided. Ideally, the work of refining the subject of the program would have happened over a series of in-person meetings with all of the speakers, but this was not possible as the speakers’ full schedules and disparate locations made it difficult to coordinate multiple pre-recording meetings. As a result, a single preparatory meeting was planned leading up to the workshop. To help the speakers familiarize themselves with both the material and each other, the meeting was planned to take place at the SA: McMaster facility over the course of an afternoon with a flexible start and end time to help accommodate each speaker’s schedule. Despite this strategy, it still proved impossible to fully accommodate

\textsuperscript{13} For background on the history of looting in Ontario, see Hamilton (2010) as well as “The Legacy of Looting” (2016), a blog post about the history of private collecting in Ontario published by SA: McMaster shortly following the release of *Artifacts on Air.*
everyone’s scheduling needs and, as a result, only Hinton and George were able to attend in
person with Fox joining the meeting via video chat. Hill was updated about the results of the
meeting via email the next day.

In preparation for the meeting, I arrived early to the laboratory and laid out a selection of
material from the Sealey Site for Hinton and George to examine. Upon their arrival, I invited
Hinton and George to take their time looking at the artifacts and invited them to touch them if
they wished to do so. Both Hinton and George lingered over the artifacts, looking at each piece
carefully, but seemed hesitant to touch anything and also seemed a little overwhelmed by the
presence of so many Indigenous artifacts in a laboratory setting. After we had all introduced
ourselves, the beginning of the meeting was largely silent as Hinton and George examined the
Sealey Site artifacts.

**Negotiating the relationship between academy and community**

Seated around a table covered in artifacts from the Sealey Site, Hinton, George, and I turned to
the question of how to plan the workshop and radio program. Though none of the artifacts had
particularly interested them as a focus for the workshop, using the collection before us as a
starting point, we began to discuss broader issues related to the practice of archaeology in
relation to Indigenous communities. In response to my invitation to express what ideas or
emotions were brought to mind by the presence of the artifacts, both Hinton and George spoke at
length about the complexity of the relationship between First Nations communities and
archaeologists. George described an experience where she had witnessed an archaeologist
neglect to include culturally accurate information in their assessment of a feature on an
Indigenous site and this frustration was echoed frequently by Hinton as she shared similar
experiences of her own. Both George and Hinton spoke often about encountering archaeologists
who feel comfortable dismissing Indigenous interpretations of archaeological material in favour
of the more privileged academic interpretations of the same material.

In approaching the Sealey Site material, Hinton, George, Fox and I began with the question of
why the public should care about these artifacts. Both Hinton and George described experiences
where they felt pressure to care about Indigenous archaeology simply because of their own
Indigenous identities, noting that archaeological investigations will continue to take place regardless, and they feared there would be no Indigenous oversight should they not take an interest in the field. They further elaborated that although community consultation is currently a popular practice, it rarely guarantees that the ideas and knowledge of Indigenous advisors will be taken seriously. George observed that Indigenous people are often expected to devote time and emotion to educating both their own communities and their non-Indigenous counterparts in addition to working full time, raising families and handling their own personal lives. According to Hinton and George, efforts at community collaboration often result in non-Indigenous academics or officials relying upon or demanding free advice and knowledge from Indigenous community members without truly taking that advice to heart and enacting it within their own work.

Hearing this description of experience from Hinton and George helped me to understand more fully the elements at play in collaborative practices such as those described by Ames (1999) and Brady (2011). In addition to holding implications for the content produced by the partnership, collaborative methods can affect the lives of those involved in a tangible way. As we discussed the relationship in greater depth, Hinton and George emphasized that this kind of practice amounts to an emotional, financial, and cultural burden with little benefit other than the mitigation of the threat represented by declining to provide such consultation. During the meeting we also acknowledged how the project at hand was contributing to the imperfect collaborative model they were describing. The knowledge of this project’s participation in an imbalanced collaborative model remained prominent throughout our discussions of the program and the implications of participating in such a model will be explored more fully in Chapter 5.

The importance of saying “no”: Creating a safe space for Indigenous publics through the assertion of Indigenous cultural authority

The question of why Indigenous audiences should care about the artifacts before us then changed to how they could go about caring and how SA: McMaster could help to make this audience feel safe and welcome in their caring. As the meeting continued, a pattern began to emerge wherein lulls in the conversation would be occupied by returning our attention briefly to the artifacts on
the table considering how they were made or where they came from, only to once again take up a discussion of their transition from their cultural origins to their current location and role within SA: McMaster’s collections. In addressing this transition, the conversation returned frequently to the broader themes of consultation, privilege, and authority within contemporary archaeological practice in Ontario. Though the Sealey Site and its assemblage served to anchor the discussion, it was clear that the most pressing aspect of their meaning was not the specific significance of the Sealey Site itself, but rather its symbolism of the difficult relationship between archaeologists and First Nations communities in Ontario’s past and present.

As we began to plan the workshop in more detail, the focus of the meeting moved from the content of the program to its audience, grappling with the question of how to make archaeological material accessible to Indigenous communities while also ensuring that community members feel safe and respected (see Christen, 2015; Curtis, 2006; Doxtator, 1996; Nakata et al., 2008). Having made the decision to host the public workshop in Hamilton in order to build on SA: McMaster’s existing relationship with the Hamilton Public Library, we were faced with the probability of having a predominantly non-Indigenous live audience while the targeted Indigenous audience would largely remain remote. Early in the meeting, we had considered bringing a selection of artifacts to the workshop so that participants would have the opportunity to view and perhaps handle some of the material being discussed. However, acknowledging the potential disparity in demographics between the live and remote audiences, Hinton expressed discomfort at offering a non-Indigenous audience the opportunity to see and touch artifacts while the Indigenous audience listening at home would have no such opportunity. Hinton explained her objection to this disparity by emphasizing the power of being able to say “no” when it comes to affording access to Indigenous material heritage, noting that “people want our stuff, but not our bodies” and citing a history of settler society asserting ownership and expertise over Indigenous material heritage while simultaneously participating in the cultural oppression of Indigenous peoples. We decided not to bring the artifacts to the workshop and decided instead to center Hinton’s ideas about the importance of saying “no” at the core of our plan for the workshop.

Hinton’s objections to including the artifacts in the workshop helped me to think more deeply about the idea of “not looking” presented by Kimberly Christen (2015). As Christen writes, within a colonial context, the act of looking is never neutral (2015, 366). Like Christen, Hinton
was challenging the notion that “seeing is believing” (Christen, 2015, 366), arguing instead that, in a process of decolonization, Indigenous voices should be privileged over control of and access to Indigenous objects. In addition to protecting and conforming to the cultural values of some descendant communities, the act of denying access to material heritage is also, in this case, a political statement – a means of drawing the public’s attention away from the objects and towards the lived experience of individuals instead.

**Developing a structure for the workshop**

Using Hinton’s idea of saying “no” as the central concept for the workshop, we began to break down the areas we had discussed and assign them to each speaker. It was decided that the workshop would begin with each speaker introducing themselves and giving a short summary of why they chose to participate in the program. This would be followed by each speaker offering their ideas in relation to the Sealey Site and Indigenous archaeology more broadly, with me acting as a moderator and ensuring that the workshop stayed on schedule. In order to ensure that each speaker was afforded an equal amount of time to speak and that the voices of the Indigenous speakers were given priority, we created an itinerary for the workshop, indicating when each person would speak and for roughly how long. Along with photographs of a selection of the Sealey Site artifacts, this itinerary also helped to update Hill and Fox on what had been decided at the meeting regarding the workshop’s content, as neither of them were able to attend in full. The workshop was broken into four main sections based on each speaker’s area of expertise and interest, with an additional section involving a demonstration to help illustrate the points being made. With Hill beginning the discussion by addressing the relationship between the Six Nations community and archaeology, it was decided that Fox would then describe the history of the Sealey Site supported by his own insights from his experience as an archaeologist. The second half of the workshop would then be devoted to ideas of access and privilege discussed at our meeting, with George addressing the role of social relationships in determining access to and authority over archaeological remains and Hinton explaining the need for Indigenous peoples to assert authority over their own material heritage. Together, Hinton and George also planned a demonstration intended to illustrate how privilege is enacted in archaeological practice wherein they would ask take a personal belonging from me (or any
willing audience member), remove it from its original context, and interpret it according to their own knowledge system. The workshop’s full itinerary is presented below as shared with the speakers.

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**SUSTAINABLE ARCHAEOLOGY ARTIFACTS ON AIR WORKSHOP ITINERARY**

***Although each section is directed towards a specific speaker, other speakers are welcome to respectfully engage with the ideas presented and ask questions, as long as each speaker is afforded adequate time in which to express their ideas.***

**Introduction:** (5mins)
- Emily will give a general introduction to the workshop, providing background on Sustainable Archaeology, the purpose of the workshop, and brief introductions of the speakers. Emily will also explain why the artifacts are not present at the workshop.
- This section will address the fact that the workshop is being recorded and will provide instructions to participants about what this will require of them (refrain from tapping on the table, try to speak in the direction of the microphone, only one person speaking at a time)
- This section will wrap up with Emily explaining the format of the workshop and reinforcing the idea that it is meant to be an informal and respectful discussion, allowing each speaker equal time and space to express their thoughts and engage with the ideas of others.

**Speaker overviews:** (15mins)
- Each speaker will introduce themselves and their backgrounds and to give a brief overview of their interest in the Sealey Site collection as well as any other ideas relating to archaeology and First Nations communities they would like to discuss.
- To avoid confusion during the workshop, the speakers will introduce themselves in the following order:
  - Rick Hill
  - Heather George
  - Jessica Hinton
  - Bill Fox

**The Sealey Site:** (15mins)
- Bill will be invited to give some background about the Sealey Site, addressing the following questions as well as any other points Bill would like to include:
  - What is the Sealey Site?
  - When does it date from and who were the occupants?
  - How did the collection come to be in the care of Sustainable Archaeology?
  - Why is it important to discuss this site?
  - Why is there a need for organizations such as Sustainable Archaeology?

**Archaeology at Six Nations:** (15mins)
- Rick will be invited to speak about his experiences with archaeology and material heritage in the Six Nations community, addressing the following questions as well as any other points Rick would like to include:
  - How is archaeology perceived in the community?
What value does the Sealey Site hold for members of the Six Nations community? Why should people care about it?
What do you feel are the most pressing issues in Ontario archaeology today?
How does the lack of context change how we interpret the Sealey Site?
Why should anyone care about the Sealey Site?

The role of relationships: (15mins)
- Heather will be invited to speak about the way in which archaeology relies upon and influences contemporary relationships.
  - How does archaeology influence relationships between First Nations communities and academia?
  - What role do relationships play in the process of interpreting archaeological collections?
  - How do relationships determine access to and care of collections?
  - How should ethics and issues of responsibility/authority be approached considering the relationships you’ve described?

Interactive activity Part I: (5mins)
- Heather and Jessica will ask Emily to give them one of her personal belongings. It will be unclear as to whether or not she is going to get it back. Throughout the next section, the speakers will take the object out of context and interpret from their own point of view as if it were an archaeological artifact.

The importance of “no”: (15mins)
- Jessica will be invited to discuss issues of access and privilege concerning indigenous archaeological collections.
  - Who gets access to collections and why?
  - Why did you feel it was important that we did not bring the artifacts to the workshop?
  - Who gets to tell stories and why does this matter?
  - What is the role of cultural context in understanding collections?

Interactive activity Part II: (5mins)
- Having imposed their decontextualized interpretation onto Emily’s object, the speakers will not allow Emily to regain authority over the story of the object. We will then discuss how this relates to practices of collection and interpretation employed throughout the history of archaeology in Ontario.

Moving forward: (15mins)
- All speakers will be invited to discuss and provide advice about how audience members can further educate themselves about First Nations cultures and history.

Question period: (15mins)
- Audience members will be invited to ask questions and engage with speakers.

Plate 1.2: Artifacts on Air workshop itinerary (page 2)
Executing the workshop and recording the program

Originally scheduled to take place on March 1\textsuperscript{st}, the workshop needed to be postponed until March 15\textsuperscript{th}, due to one of the largest snowstorms of the year. However, apart from causing a small flurry of calendar-checking and schedule-shuffling, this change did not seem to negatively impact the workshop in a serious way, as all five of the audience members who had initially registered for the workshop were still able to attend. In total, the workshop’s audience consisted of seven members of the public and SA: McMaster’s Principal Investigator, Aubrey Cannon. When asked by Hinton during her section of the workshop, none of the audience members self-identified as being of Indigenous heritage. Of those in attendance, four had attended SA: McMaster’s previous program at the library and one identified himself as being a member of the Hamilton chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society. The audience members thus shared an established interest in local archaeology and were actively involved in pursuing this interest. The workshop ran for the entirety of the two-hour time slot we were given and likely would have continued for longer had more time been available. The workshop took place in an enclosed meeting room with the speakers and audience sitting together around a table. It was recorded with a laptop using a portable desktop microphone and the free audio software Audacity.

Following my introductory segment and once each of the speakers had introduced themselves, Fox began the workshop by offering a brief history of the Sealey Site’s occupation as well as its place within the history of archaeology in Ontario, describing the looting that took place at the site throughout the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

The Sealey site, like all 17th century village sites in this region, became known [to Euro-Canadian settlers] as a result of the clearing and breaking of the land during the early 19th century. So when the land was broken, there’d be very substantial middens, so-called, dumps associated with habitation. Those would have been seen quickly and they were full of iron axes from the French trade, glass beads, pot sherds, bones of the animals they lived on, carbonized corn, everything you can imagine… In addition, these sites also had cemeteries which weren't necessarily identifiable when the land was first broken and ploughed because they were down a bit deeper and however often times they were exposed by groundhogs who dug in and then threw the bones out, signaling the location of these sites. Now… when these cemeteries were identified, they actually had cemetery-digging bees - just like you'd have a barn-raising bee. People would crowd in and just have a picnic lunch and dig through these graves, which is – I mean, what can you say? There's really no way of describing the wrongness of that. (Fox, March 2016)
Building on Fox’s introduction of the site and early collecting and looting practices, Hill described his own experiences with archaeology and heritage institutions, drawing particular attention to the way archaeologists treat Indigenous human remains. Hill observed that the relationship with archaeologists at Six Nations has long been a “rocky road,” with much of that difficulty stemming from the treatment of human remains.

The old people […] insisted that part of our problem today as Native people is the torment caused by the fact that our dead people have been dug up and this restlessness that this created in them has reverberations back into our society today. So I took that seriously. The idea of putting things back properly, as properly as you could, which you know is very difficult sometimes, because archaeological collections get scattered sometimes. A skull will be here and leg bones over here and on and on and on. So you have to be like a detective. Go through all the paper work. Reassemble it as best you can. Negotiate as best you can to put these back. But we also became aware that in order to protect them for the future, so that other archaeologists or these amateurs won't come back looking for the remains – that kind of got to me, to tell you the truth, because I don't know who else here in Canada has to go to such great lengths to protect their dead people. (Hill, March 2016)

With the audience’s rapt attention, Hill further described having witnessed the mistreatment of both Indigenous human remains and archaeological artifacts, relating his experience of encountering an archaeologist who was in the practice of paying his employees with artifacts. Hill’s stories were immediate and personal and intricately connected with the Sealey Site assemblage in the sense that his own experiences so closely mirrored the “past” treatment of these artifacts. It became clear that such wrongdoings were not relegated to the past. Hill’s voice remained soft throughout his segment as he spoke of his anger, disgust, and exhaustion at having to fight so hard to ensure the safety of his cultural heritage and the bones of his ancestors.

For Hill, the urgency of protecting this material stems from a real concern for the future both in terms of maintaining cultural knowledge and the more visceral fear that the remains of loved ones will one day meet the same fate as the remains of Indigenous people of the past.

When we do a funeral today, they specifically mention, don't put any metal or glass or anything that won't decay with the body, whereas you know in the 17th century we were putting everything in because the belief used to be that the dead people are going to need everything - everything they need in this life, they're going to need in their journey to the sky world. So we wanted to make sure they would have that. Now think about this
philosophically that we no longer do that? We put our dead people in the ground unprepared for that journey because we're so fearful that some archaeologist is going to come and dig them up. (Hill, March 2016)

Although Hill spoke at length of the problematic treatment of Indigenous material heritage and remains by archaeologists, he also spoke of his respect for the field and of his hope for the future. Acknowledging the cultural value of the archaeological record and expressing respect for the rigor shown by many archaeologists, Hill advocated strongly in favour of continuing to work towards a healthy relationship between archaeologists and First Nations communities.

George followed Hill’s segment with her reflections on the role of relationships in the care, interpretation, and access of archaeological collections. She prefaced her ideas with an explanation of her decision to actively avoid the field of archaeology in a professional capacity due to the degree of injustice and oppression present throughout its history. As discussed during our preparatory meeting, George once more told the story of the archaeologist she had encountered who misinterpreted archaeological evidence due to a lack of cultural knowledge. She asserted that because Indigenous peoples are often excluded from archaeological interpretation, a cycle of misinterpretation and exclusion is perpetuated. Citing her own experiences during childhood, George highlighted the shortcomings of Ontario’s educational system whose curriculum on Indigenous cultures was both brief and unfavourable. She explained that she had grown up knowing very little about her own culture, and that the information she was offered painted a very negative picture of the Mohawk people. According to George, this dearth of information is due to a cultural disconnect and lack of communication – an issue which she described as remaining prevalent within the heritage sector today.

I think that there's a really big disconnect between these different groups of people and different institutions and how we work together. And there's still a lot of fear – I think both from archaeologists and from museum workers – that if they engage with Indigenous communities that they're going to lose things. (George, March 2016)

George acknowledged that though this fear remains present, museums and archaeologists are slowly changing for the better and beginning to form better relationships with Indigenous communities. However, as during our meeting, she also warned against developing unequal relationships and over-burdening Indigenous cultural experts.
We are overdrawn and while there are more young people in our communities that are becoming more interested in this work, it's also about an understanding that sometimes you might have to wait. As an institution, as an organization, you might have to wait a little bit longer than you would otherwise because there's a lot of people asking for time and knowledge from our communities. (George, March 2016)

Following George’s introduction to the importance of consultation and community involvement, she and Hinton deployed their demonstration of archaeological interpretation as a segue into Hinton’s section. The audience eagerly participated in the activity and it appeared to help lighten the mood of the workshop and make the serious ideas that were being presented more relatable. Everyone in the room contributed an “artifact” (in the form of a personal belonging) which Hinton and George then proceeded to interpret out of context using conjecture and their own cultural assumptions. While this segment had to be removed from the recording during the editing process as it created a great deal of background noise, the laughter and vocal engagement of the audience signaled the success of the activity: dialogue, rather than debate, was occurring as audience members thought about how knowledge is produced as well as what kinds of knowledge is produced.

Once the makeshift artifacts had been returned to their owners, Hinton began her explanation of the importance of cultural agency over material heritage and of First Nations communities retaining the right to say “no” when it comes to allowing access to Indigenous archaeological material. Hinton framed her segment around the decision not to bring artifacts to the workshop and used the immediacy of that example as way to relate her ideas to the people in the room.

I try to think about equity and fairness and is it right, is it ethical to constantly be allowing non-members of a community to have access to things that aren't theirs while descendant communities lack access and opportunity? This is really important. I had access to these things because I grew up off reserve. I'm white-passing and middle-class and I had a lot of parts of my social identity working in my favour in the larger Canadian context. I easily went to university. I'm in grad school. I'm thinking about doing a PhD. These things are available to me. They're not available to everybody else. (Hinton, March 2016)

By drawing upon examples from her own life and speaking about a real and relevant collection of artifacts Hinton moved the discussion from the abstract and historical to the people who were seated at the table with her, helping to impress both the personal relevance of the discussion to everyone in the room and the responsibility implied by that relevance.
Following Hinton’s segment, the discussion diverged from the planned itinerary, taking on a looser and more organic nature as the speakers took up each other’s ideas and engaged with them. After some discussion, Fox added an extra segment to the workshop, presenting an artifact from his personal collection and telling two stories about it as he turned it in his hands. In the first story he interpreted the artifact from an archaeological perspective, identifying it as a ground stone axe dating to about 4000 years before present. He observed that it likely would have been hafted (attached to a handle) and that at some point it seemed the tool had broken and the broken edge had been rounded somehow. His second story described the more recent life of the artifact, explaining that Fox’s father had found it when he was a child and that his grandmother had used it as a meat tenderizer for years, before placing it in her garden where Fox himself had come across it as a child. Fox added to his first story by explaining that he had dulled the edge of the axe shortly thereafter when he had tried to use it to cut down a tree and had given the rounded texture to the break by trying to fix it with his father’s grinding wheel. Similar to the demonstration conducted by Hinton and George these stories offered insight into the processes involved in interpretation and how these may or may not reflect the many voices of an artifact.

During the final segment of the workshop, I invited the speakers to offer guidance on how to learn more about the ideas that had been expressed during the discussion and we invited the audience members to ask questions, leading to a less formalized general conversation between the speakers and the audience members. Although this discussion period seemed to be well received and was quite animated, it had to be cut short as the library needed to close. Despite the gravity of what had been discussed during the workshop and the potential for the entirely non-Indigenous audience to feel threatened or alienated by the ideas expressed, the atmosphere as we left the library was friendly and cheerful, with audience members and speakers alike continuing to chat about the ideas they had encountered and asking each other questions.

**Editing and circulating the radio program**

The recording resulting from the workshop was over two hours long and while the entire workshop had featured valuable discussion and important interactions between the people present, it needed to be edited in order to suit the format of a radio program. Embarking on this
task, I began by asking each speaker to list the top five ideas from the workshop that they felt were the most important to include in the radio program. Of the four speakers, Fox and Hinton responded to this request. Fox listed the following as his impression of the most important points from the workshop:

1. We do not "own" the "voices" (artifacts) produced by past peoples.
2. We are the custodians of these voices during our lifetimes.
3. If we are poor custodians, these voices will be extinguished, or at least, muted (loss of provenance).
4. We hold these voices in trust for future generations (ie. the 7th).
5. Indigenous peoples must play a major role in the preservation of voices related to their heritage.

(Fox, personal communication, March 2016)

Hinton expressed the following preference:

1) Archaeologists need to reflect on the historical context of the discipline (theft of land, material culture, control over representation, etc.) and understand why Indigenous people are often hesitant or unhappy about working with them.

2) There are valid problems, but we need to reconcile in order to move forward (TRC calls to action) because both sides can learn from one another and can benefit from each others' knowledge, and archaeology shows no signs of stopping.

3) Archaeologists need to understand the importance of community based research: research by and for the community, which includes building relationships and demonstrating reciprocity, rather than research simply for academic or professional prestige/financial gain.

4) Indigenous people have valuable knowledge to contribute to the documentation of the archaeological record, and even though it may be painful and bring forward feelings of exclusion, we need to step up.

5) There are good archaeologists doing ethical work, but we do not talk about them or learn from them enough. Their work is not as often discussed in university settings,
arguably the most important place for these conversations, as it is the place where future archaeologists are trained.

(Hinton, personal communication, March 2016)

Working with these recommendations as guidance and attempting to alter the speech patterns and logical progression of the speakers as little as possible, I pared the recording down to slightly less than an hour in length. In order to improve the flow of the program and better suit the radio format, I replaced my own introductions of each segment with freshly recorded segues offering background and context for each section of the discussion. In devising these segues, I drew from the ideas and vocabulary that were used both during the workshop itself and during the preparatory meeting at SA: McMaster. Thus, although my voice was used to frame the ideas expressed in the program, I attempted to minimize my own perspective as much as possible by drawing upon the narratives produced through the workshop. For a full transcript of the program see Appendix B.

During our meeting at SA: McMaster, Hinton and George had indicated that, should any music be used in the program, it should be that of an Indigenous musician with some connection to the Six Nations community. The piece “Theresa” by Six Nations Anishinaabe artist Melody McKiver was chosen for the beginning and end of program. With the approval of the speakers and SA: McMaster, I licensed the program under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (as required by the license McKiver applied to “Theresa”), meaning that the program can be freely shared and sampled for non-commercial purposes as long as any derivative works give credit to the original and are shared under the same license. By using this license we were able to ensure the ease of sharing the program widely amongst a range of communities.

Once all of the speakers had approved the final version of the program it was time to make it available to the public. In order to do so, we made use of both digital and broadcast media. It was circulated to a number of radio stations, but because radio stations typically have carefully planned broadcast schedules, only CFMU McMaster Campus radio was able to play it with any immediacy. To enable other stations to access the program at their own pace, the program was made available for download via the music sharing website Soundcloud. The program was also
featured in a blog post on SA: McMaster’s website and linked to in a related post about the history of looting in Ontario. By making use of digital spaces for the program in addition to broadcast spaces, the program is able to reach both the local and remote audiences described during the preliminary interviews with Loft, Beam, and Chechock.

Conclusion

Through the process of planning and executing the workshop (and radio program), a number of clear themes were identified. As explained by Hinton and George during our meeting at SA: McMaster, collaboration is imperfect and can pose a burden to community partners. The identification of this theme was one of several instances where the boundaries between the content of the radio program and its execution seemed to blur. Just as I grappled with the ethics of collaboration throughout the execution of this study, George and Hill discussed the task of mending relations between First Nations communities and archaeologists. As George and Hill noted, there is a long history of distrust between these two communities, with fear on the part of museum workers that fully welcoming Indigenous voices and authority will result in the loss of information or collections. This concern and distrust is also noted by Shannon (2014), who describes tension between departments at the NMAI surrounding the degree to which the voices of Indigenous partners were taken to be authoritative.

Given this strong precedent of poor relations between First Nations communities and museums and archaeologists, there was plenty of potential for tension and poor communication in a workshop such as the one we designed. However, as Schwarzer (2007) and Abram (2007) assert, the format of public group discussion helps to foster a sense of good will, accountability, and tolerance, allowing difference to be encountered and embraced. By inviting diverse speakers and members of the public to share a space and engage in discussion over debate, we were able to ensure a safe space for the encounter and interpretation of difficult aspects of Indigenous heritage and archaeological practice.

Contributing to this construction of a safe space for engaging with Indigenous heritage was the marked absence of the artifacts. As has been acknowledged in considerations of the use of digital media for providing remote access, there are times when it is necessary to deny access to certain
content for certain publics (see Byrne, 2008; Curtis, 2006; Nakata et al., 2008). As Hinton argued, supported by Christen’s (2015) idea of “not looking,” this is not only a means of protecting certain forms of cultural heritage, but also acts to direct attention away from materials and towards individuals. Deliberately absenting the objects can be a way of reinforcing the presence of people, demanding an act of listening (Couldry, 2010, 9) and recognition (Peters, 1999, 31) and generating a sense of presence (Clark, 2007; Lee, 2004) or connection with the lived experience of individuals in the present.

From beginning to end, there were many points in the creation of the radio program when the reality of the process differed greatly from the plan. As Shannon observes (2014), collaboration is complicated by its reliance on effective communication and by the fact that it relies on coordinating individuals who lead busy lives. Often, I found myself faced with having to make a decision which I had originally planned to leave to the speakers. With my own hand so heavily involved in the decision making and production process, how can this program rightly be considered First Nations radio? It can’t. However, the aim of the program was not to appropriate First Nations radio practices, but rather to create a form of interpretation informed by First Nations radio and to adopt Indigenous methodologies to improve the accessibility of the content. By drawing upon the preliminary perspectives offered by Beam, Chechock, Loft, and the workshop’s speakers, I endeavoured to have the program as a whole informed by Indigenous voices and perspectives.

In the last chapter, I consider the radio program, collaboration, and interpretation in a broader context. I ask how the findings of the two phases of this project (the preliminary interviews and the recording of the radio program) inform each other and what this means for future directions of investigation into museum practice.
Chapter 5
Conclusions: Rethinking Collaboration and Establishing Presence Through Absence

Introduction

At the outset of this investigation, I identified two primary goals for the project. The first was to explore how museums can approach the task of interpretation in a way that provides source communities with cultural agency. The second was to understand what aspects of collections are prioritized by cultural experts during interpretation. Having consulted a selection of experts in First Nations radio in combination with staff at SA: McMaster, I found that although there were differences in what they perceived to be valuable aspects of the stories told by artifacts, there were also marked similarities. Just as Paterson asserted the importance of understanding artifacts within the network formed by their context, Chechock, Loft, and Beam expressed an interest in hearing about the broader narratives of migration, social relations, and cultural expression offered by material heritage. Once this point of connection was identified, I was then able to address the first question through my PAR-centered approach to developing a radio program. Through active and continuous consultation with all of the parties involved, we were able to ensure that the material included in the workshop and radio program suited the needs of both the institution and the cultural experts involved (I consider the needs of listening audiences later in this chapter), uncovering new dimensions of the collections as a result of our collaborative approach.

In this final chapter I examine the findings of both stages of this project in tandem and conclude with a consideration of future avenues of research pertaining to inclusion, access, and remote interpretation in Indigenous collections. I begin here by briefly summarizing the findings of each stage of the project and move on to consider each in conversation with the other.
Stage 1: The preliminary interviews

Though the preliminary interviews conducted with Anong Beam, Vincent Chechock, Allan Loft, and Catherin Paterson were diverse and individual, there were nonetheless a number of strong themes that recurred throughout. In summary, these were as follows:

- **Voice matters:** the sound of certain voices using certain languages to describe and engage with Indigenous cultural heritage is not only a means of claiming authority over that heritage, but is also a method of accessing additional cultural information which may be left out or overlooked by other voices.

- **Heritage is rooted in the present:** Not only is heritage produced in the present through practices of visitation such as those described by Laurajane Smith (2006), but it holds serious implications for the well-being of present and future generations. Thus, any interpretation of Indigenous material heritage should hold relevance to communities in the present.

- **First Nations mediators participate in complex and widespread social and professional networks:** In overcoming challenges faced in offering community programming, First Nations radio mediators often draw upon complex networks of support formed through personal relationships, leading to a strong culture of collaboration and sense of community.

- **Radio stations are both tied to, and transcend physical landscapes:** Physical landscapes shape radio signals, meaning that the sounds of certain radio stations signify certain physical locations, even when accessed digitally. As a result, radio stations serve to anchor diverse diasporic audiences to a discrete geographic landscape, adding to the multivocality of that landscape in so doing.
Stage 2: Recording the radio program

The process of planning the radio program and workshop supported the findings of the preliminary interviews in many respects, adding to and expanding upon them when put into practice. The findings of this stage consist of the following:

- **Collaborative best practices are imperfect and often impose an unfair burden on community members:** According to the expert advisors consulted, in working towards inclusion, collaborative efforts undertaken by museums often do not take into account the burden of time, labour, emotion, and sometimes expense represented by collaborative partnerships for community advisors. Though inclusion is acknowledged to be necessary and worth working towards, collaborative models need to be adjusted so that they are balanced and suit the needs of all parties.

- **The importance of saying “no”:** In the context of a long history of oppression and exclusion, the ability of First Nations communities and individuals to deny access to their material heritage is an important part of retaining and exerting cultural agency and authority.

- **The absence of material objects can help to draw attention to the presence of people:** By intentionally excluding tangible artifacts from the site of interpretation, audience members are forced to focus their attention on the presence of First Nations individuals and aurally encounter their lived experienced rather than visually linking their presence to historic material objects.

- **Sharing a space helps to foster good will and accountability:** Though the workshop presented some difficult subject matter, the simple fact of sharing a table and conversing with other individuals helped to make the material more relatable and helped to hold participants accountable to each other.

Among the most significant of the project’s findings is the role played by absence and presence in the interpretation of Indigenous material heritage. Because this theme exerted so much influence over the decisions made throughout the project (both metaphorically and
pragmatically), I return to it frequently throughout this chapter in addition to the initial section devoted to its consideration.

Absence, presence, and the role of voice in community collaboration

As demonstrated by the ideas expressed in the radio program we created, one of the most pressing stories associated with Indigenous archaeological collections is the history of the exclusion of Indigenous voices and mistreatment of Indigenous remains (see Doxtator, 1996; Hamilton, 2010). The Sealey Site assemblage represents a number of stories important to the history of both the Six Nations community and the archaeological community. The story that bridges these two is one of looting and exclusion and it is a story that continues to have repercussions today. It is also a story which is not often publicly told in direct reference to specific collections in Ontario. This is starting to change, as SA: McMaster itself published a blog post about the legacy of looting in Ontario shortly after the release of the radio program, but the level of dissociation and limited accessibility present in many of Ontario’s archaeological collections means that although scholars, descendant communities, and even the general public may often be aware of such stories, it is difficult to connect them to their material counterparts.

In Chapter 1, I asked how remote access methods could facilitate an intimate intangible interaction with heritage objects in the absence of those objects. With regards to Indigenous collections, this question carries more clout than it might seem, as the absence of heritage objects in First Nations communities is not simply an inconvenient logistical fact, but often a symbol of cultural violence and oppression. The kind of heritage visitation enacted by the Waanyi women described by Laurajane Smith (2006) is not currently possible with the artifacts from the Sealey Site in the presence of a non-Indigenous audience – at least not yet. Whereas the Waanyi women were able to give their full attention to the visitation of heritage and the personal meaning it holds for them, at this point in time, the colonial actors and events that led to the Sealey Site material’s current location and context are inextricably part of the story of these artifacts need to acknowledged by any non-Indigenous participants in their visitation. As evidenced by the themes discussed during the production of the radio program and by Hinton and George’s urgency in ensuring that First Nations audiences felt safe while listening to the program, this painful part of
the story needs to be heard and acknowledged by non-Indigenous communities before institutions and First Nations communities can begin to work together to unfold the rest of the stories associated with such material. Before the sense of presence (a sense of true connection to a remote location through interaction with a virtual object) described by Kwan Min Lee (2004) can begin to be developed for these collections using remote access methods, the presence of Indigenous voices must be asserted in a position of equal (if not greater) authority with the voices of heritage institutions and academics.

To return to a question raised in Chapter 1, culturally dissociated artifacts are certainly still heritage according to Laurajane Smith’s (2006) assessment of heritage as being produced through visitation, stories, and context. Artifacts such as those from the Sealey Site represent the heritage of the Six Nations community no less for having been removed from that community; yet in experiencing this contextual translation (Silverman 2015), the objects have become intersectional in the heritage they represent, expanding their cultural network to include that of the colonial collectors and archaeologists present in the most recent parts of their story. These are still indisputably Indigenous objects with multiple and complex Indigenous stories to tell. Yet, in order for those stories to be heard in a culturally safe and respectful atmosphere, the more recent history of trauma and oppression must first be confronted by non-Indigenous publics and scholars.

The combined format of a live workshop and a recorded radio program enacted in this project was well suited to confronting the theme of absence with regards to Indigenous material heritage. As Jessica Hinton articulated, exercising the authority to deny physical access to Indigenous material heritage is a powerful means of confronting the entangled history of cultural oppression inherent in archaeological practice in Ontario. By combining the format of the live workshop with the remote format of the radio program, Hinton and her fellow speakers were able to simultaneously offer a form of remote access to the artifacts for a physically distant Indigenous audience while also engaging in productive face-to-face dialogue about privilege and access with the non-Indigenous audience at the workshop. The absence of the artifacts was made a central focus of the discussion, offering a means of addressing their continued absence within First Nations communities.
Dudley (2012) and Ingold (2007) make strong arguments for the social power of materials. Combining this notion of the power of materials with Kwan Min Lee’s (2004) conception of the production of presence, the material presence of objects can be understood as a powerful means of accessing connection to the cultural networks they represent. Because tangible materials are acknowledged to hold such power, there is also considerable power in the deliberate absence of the material object. McRanor (1997) writes that the storage of First Nations material heritage at locations distant from source communities hinders the ways in which the objects are understood. By intentionally excluding the material presence of the Sealey Site artifacts from the workshop, the speakers created a kind of controlled absence, giving them the freedom to inform how the objects were understood by the audience and which aspects of their identities were prioritized. During our initial meeting, Jessica Hinton observed that First Nations material heritage often seems to be prioritized over First Nations people by Euro-Canadian settlers. By removing the artifacts from the workshop this dynamic was forced to change, shifting attention that would otherwise have been devoted to the objects to the lived experience of the First Nations individuals present.

Because the decision not to bring the artifacts to the workshop was not made until relatively late in the organization process, much of the publicity for the workshop was focused on the artifacts, even including images of a selection of pieces (see Appendix C). Staying true to the publicized concept for the workshop, the Sealey Site and its associated artifacts were used to frame and anchor the discussion offered by the speakers. In this way, although the artifacts were physically absent, their conceptual presence was prominent throughout the workshop, leading audience members and speakers alike to actively engage with the reasons for their absence. Although not wholly intentional, the dissonance between the audience’s expectations and the speakers’ intentions was productive and likely worth repeating. Rather than characterizing the change in plans for the workshop as a mistake, it was acknowledged from the outset of the event as being an intentional alteration and was thus used as a means of encouraging the audience to actively contemplate the meaning behind the absence of the objects.

Recalling Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1992) characterization of research as a site of struggle, the experience created through the workshop was a similar, though productive site of struggle and negotiation of differing worldviews, knowledge systems, and opinions moderated by care and respect for the other individuals in the room. Although this face-to-face accountability may not
spread to a radio audience in the same way, the audio broadcast format encourages face-to-face encounters between speakers in a way which is not often seen in text-based digital media. Thus, in addition to offering remote interpretation using Indigenous methodologies which may be familiar and appealing to First Nations audiences, the act of creating a radio resource about an archaeological collection also affords valuable means of relationship-building and inclusion.

**Interpretation as a site of struggle: Negotiating access and identity**

I had expected the radio program to focus on the history of the artifacts, with speakers describing the people who had lived at the Sealey Site and explaining the cultural significance of the material. The latter did happen, but in a very different way than I had anticipated. Not only were the stories told important as a means of empowering Indigenous audiences, they highlighted an important dimension of the collection’s identity – a site of looting – which had not been prominently associated with the artifacts in their current context. In telling these stories, Fox, George, Hill, and Hinton drew upon the multivocality of the objects with which they were presented, teasing out voices and layers of intangible cultural expression which are rarely privileged by, or accessible through archaeological interpretation. Through the use of dialogue and personal encounter between representatives of the multiple identities embodied in the object, the workshop served as a performative example of the process of negotiation between received and contested identities described by Laurajane Smith (2006) as each speaker worked to produce heritage in their own way in relation to the artifacts.

The sites of struggle identified by Smith include the negotiation between the material and the intangible as well as between individual and community. During the workshop, the struggle between the material and the intangible was fore-fronted by the simultaneous attention to, and absence of the Sealey Site artifacts, offering a platform on which to examine the implications of presence as represented by materiality and aurality respectively. Underlying this prominent site of struggle was the less apparent presence/absence dynamic of the targeted remote Indigenous audience. The knowledge that the audience for the program would not be composed solely of First Nations people influenced the decisions made concerning the content and the format of the workshop and program. Rather than operating in a purely Indigenous intellectual space, the
speakers at the workshop felt the need to negotiate the dynamic between the multiple identities of the audience, leading to their decision to prioritize the aurality of lived experience over the materiality of heritage.

By virtue of being physically present at the workshop, the live audience was, in a sense, afforded greater access to the content of the workshop. Yet in finding themselves faced with the physical presence of the speakers, the live audience was also afforded less flexibility in their engagement with the content. Conversely, listeners accessing the radio program remotely do so on their own terms, and may do so selectively in a space of their own choosing. As was shown by the relationship between radio and landscape, though the actual community represented by the audience of a radio station may be diverse and diasporic, the station is nonetheless linked to a clearly defined geographic landscape, which is in turn linked to a specific imagined community or culture. As such, the act of tuning in to a radio broadcast is intentional and may be interpreted selectively and individually through the listener’s contextualization of the content within their physical surroundings and their own sense of identity. Thus, though the live audience was afforded more immediate access to the content of the program, the remote audience was afforded greater agency over their interpretation of the content.

Renegotiating the ideals of collaborative best practice

As discussed in Chapter 2, I began the project intending to allow my co-participants to make all of the major decisions and to guide the production of the program quite independently. However, as I found during the preliminary interview process, this allocation of responsibility resulted in putting undue pressure on people who were already being asked to volunteer their time and expertise, and acted to severely hinder the progress of the project. The obstacle presented by this inherent burden lead to my decision to take on more of the responsibility associated with the production of the program myself.

Though this decision appears to contradict an ideal model of collaboration wherein everyone is equally involved in all decision-making (see Ames 1999; Shannon 2014), I argue that it is both a necessary and ethical approach to collaboration. By assuming responsibility for preliminary tasks which a) help community partners to gain a better understanding of what is being requested of
them and b) may equally be changed later in the collaboration, institutional heritage workers can help to relieve some of the burden of collaboration experienced by community advisors, allowing them to devote more of their attention to bigger questions of content and theory shaping the project.

At the end of Chapter 4 I acknowledged that, because my own voice played such an active role in shaping the radio program, it cannot rightly be considered First Nations radio, but should be seen as an effort to adopt and operate within existing Indigenous paradigms of knowledge sharing and communication. To draw upon Silverman’s (2015) understanding of heritage objects as discursive entities, the aim of adopting First Nations interpretive methodologies is not to mimic the practices of First Nations people, but rather to offer a means of translating Indigenous material heritage back into descendant communities through the inclusion of Indigenous languages, methodologies, and knowledge systems. In doing so, it is necessary not only to consult community advisors and incorporate their recommendations, but also to truly and fully co-work with such advisors, internalizing the methodologies they use and adapting institutional practice accordingly. Collaboration should not be a temporary relationship, but rather should result in permanent change for the institution in question (cf. Krmpotich and Peers, 2011; Shannon, 2014; Silverman, 2015).

Serving as a model for collaborations between heritage institutions and Indigenous communities, the social networks represented by First Nations radio stations offer a strong and sustainable approach to knowledge sharing and mutual support. As described by First Nations radio practitioners Anong Beam, Vincent Chechock, and Allan Loft, networks consisting of other media groups, cultural organizations, and personal connections are often mobilized in order to overcome barriers faced by radio stations such as access to resources, training, and programming. Though these relationships may stem from necessity and adversity, they also work to open up new opportunities and establish a strong culture of fruitful collaboration. One example of this which is pertinent to this project is the relationship between Gimaa Radio and the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation which hosts talks and events related to culture and heritage. Much like the radio program produced through this project, Gimaa Radio sometimes records and broadcasts live heritage events – a practice which helps to round out the programming offered by the station while simultaneously promoting the events themselves and making them accessible to those who are unable to attend in person. As a practice that is already used by First Nations
mediators, collaborating with communities to offer similar programming suited to existing practices is one way to reduce the burden imposed by collaboration. Establishing an ongoing relationship with community organizations such as the local radio station may be a means of incorporating (rather than appropriating) First Nations methodologies, as institutions can work to join permanent networks rather than fabricating temporary ones.

Conclusion: Investigations moving forward

Although the process of creating the workshop and radio program was successful in many respects and both speakers and audience members found it to be a valuable experience, there are many points of the project that suggest further research and exploration is required. One example of this is my selection of the artifacts to be discussed during the workshop. Because of the limited documentation associated with the Sealey Site, I was unaware of the troubling history associated with the artifacts and thus was unable to alert speakers to the difficult looting history of the site. Throughout the process, the speakers were given full power to alter the subject matter of the program in any way they felt necessary and though the Sealey Site presented an emotionally difficult subject for discussion, there was great value in having that discussion as the site’s numerous identities and stories were reunited. Following the recording of the program, Fox and Hill exchanged contact information, having never previously met, but finding that they shared a wide range of archaeological and cultural interests, and identifying the potential for future collaborations. In this way, although the initial dearth of information surrounding the Sealey Site was problematic, it also fostered productive discussion, learning, and the formation of new relationships. Moving forward, I suggest that this model for public knowledge sharing holds the potential to help fill in many of the gaps in information and communication that exist between heritage institutions, archaeologists, and First Nations communities.

Part of bridging these gaps is ensuring that the resources produced through conversations such as the ones described are able to adequately serve descendant communities. The aim of this project was primarily to examine the feasibility and implications of creating an archaeological radio resource informed by First Nations radio methodologies. An important next step from this project will be to assess the reception of such a resource within First Nations communities. A parallel investigation could examine the execution and reception of a similar broadcast of a live
workshop hosted at Six Nations with an Indigenous live audience as well as remote one. In keeping with the findings of this project, I recommend that such investigations implement a similar model of public discussion and consultation in order not only to observe how the radio program is accessed and received, but also to foster a space for productive dialogue and action with regards to how to improve the resource.

As Allan Loft observed during our interview, researchers should be careful not to characterize Indigenous communities as research subjects. Instead, research aimed at developing further remote access resources for First Nations communities should take a collaborative approach with an aim of not only answering research questions but also of producing sustainable relationships and actively engaging with the knowledge systems of these communities on their own terms. As this study has shown, models of collaboration currently being enacted in the heritage sector are not perfect and demand a great deal of emotional and intellectual labour from all parties. Yet by continuing to foster relationships between heritage institutions and descendant communities a culture of collaboration can be developed wherein heritage workers can begin to not only observe the knowledge systems of descendant communities in isolated situations but also meaningfully incorporate them into heritage practice more broadly.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: Speaker biographies

**William Fox** has been involved in Ontario archaeology for over 50 years and participated in research throughout the northeast U.S., and in several European countries. He was employed by the Provincial government for 19 years as Regional Archaeologist of northwestern, north central, and then, southwestern Ontario; next as Senior Archaeologist for the province, and finally supervisor of the Development Plans Review Unit, when the requirement for archaeological assessments was established under the Planning Act. In 1992, Bill was hired by Parks Canada as Chief of Archaeology for the Prairie and Northern Region. His 22 year career with the Federal government took him from Winnipeg to Inuvik to Ucluelet to Peterborough in various management roles. Today he continues his research as an Adjunct Professor in the Anthropology Graduate Program at Trent University, and is an instructor in the Anthropology Department. Throughout these years, he has had the honour of working with Indigenous communities from Quebec to BC and across the entire north of Canada.

**Heather George** is a Mohawk Public Historian working in museums and heritage sites with a focus on community building, through oral history, education programing, exhibits and digital collection methods. She is currently serving as the Cultural Coordinator at Six Nations Economic Development – Tourism and Culture.

**Rick Hill** is an artist, writer and curator who lives at the Six Nations Community of the Grand River Territory in Ontario, Canada. Over the years, Rick has served as the Manager of the Indian Art Centre, Ottawa, Ontario; Director of the Indian Museum at the Institute of American Arts in Santa Fe, NM; Assistant Director for Public Programs at the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution; Manager of the Haudenosaunee Resource Center; and Coordinator for the Joint Stewardship Board at Six Nations to develop an environmental interpretation centre and is the manager of the Six Nations Virtual Archives Project. He is currently serving as Senior Projects Coordinator at the Six Nations Polytechnic Indigenous Knowledge Centre – Deyohahá:ge:.
**Jessica Hinton** is Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) with family from Temagami First Nation. She graduated with an honours BA from Trent University in 2013, major in Archaeology and minor in Indigenous Studies. She will be finishing her MA in Cultural Anthropology this year, which focuses on archaeology's portrayals of Indigenous people, and the importance of self-representation / determination here on Turtle Island.
Appendix B: Program transcript of Artifacts on Air

ARTIFACTS ON AIR

PROGRAM TRANSCRIPT

EMILY: The following recording is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. For more information about this license please visit the Creative Commons website at creativecommons.org/licenses.

[MUSIC]

RICK: Here's what we believe. The Earth is nothing more than all of the decayed remains of everybody and all of the plants, the animals, the birds, and the fish, everything that lived here before, that's what becomes the soil. And then when we put our bodies into the ground it's to refurbish, to rejuvenate, to reinvigorate the soil so that hopefully this spring, the plants will come up again and be able to feed us. So there's an intimate connection between us, the people we put in the ground and the things that happen to survive in the future.

We're defending that connection, because without that things will change. So people need to understand that for about as long as humans have been walking this place, those are my ancestors. They created a relationship to place. They created a culture based on that, and that's what shapes my identity today. So to ignore that is almost to betray your inheritance. That's why we have to fight for
this. At the same time, I kind of believe in this balance between archaeological inquiry and Indigenous reality. That if we bring these two things closer together, we will improve the field dramatically. For the sake of the future, we need to better understand the Native footprint, particularly here in Ontario. If people understand that, I think it would put a lot of issues into broader perspective.

EMILY: Archaeology has a difficult history in Ontario. The urge to learn from the material remnants of past cultures has often stood in direct opposition to the emotional and cultural needs of descendant communities, creating animosity on both sides. To try to build a better understanding of this relationship, a group of experts gathered at the Westdale Branch of the Hamilton Public Library in March 2016 to discuss their ideas about how archaeologists and First Nations communities can work together. Rick Hill is a Haudenosaunee elder from Six Nations, who has worked throughout his life to help Indigenous communities regain control of and access to their own cultural heritage. He is currently the Senior Project Coordinator of the Indigenous Knowledge Centre at Six Nations Polytechnic. Rick began the conversation by discussing the impact of archaeology at the Six Nations community.

RICK: Our relationship with archaeologists has been a rocky road since I've been alive. It's been and up and down journey that all depends really on the nature of the work being done and whether human remains are uncovered in the work. I have to say at Six Nations on the Grand River, we've done a lot in the last I would say twelve years to improve our relationship with archaeologists. We've had a series of workshops and we've also done a lot of training of our cultural monitors in our community. So we've spent a lot of time becoming more attuned to the nature of archaeology. We realize it could be a great asset to our people. Previously, I worked over in New York state, mostly with archaeologists, trying to recover human remains and burial objects and trying to protect the graves of our ancestors. Because that still remains the number one problem, that somehow, Native remains are not often given the same respect, because usually archaeology is started because of the need of a contractor or developer and often the economic incentives override both the field of archaeology as well as the Indigenous concerns. So it really depends on a project by project nature of the relationship we have with the archaeologists, how well the work can collaborate on that and ultimately getting access to and utilizing what's found. Because oftentimes things are found, we might see them before they're cleaned up and taken to a lab and we
never ever see them again and so a lot of our sense of heritage is not as strong as it could be.

One time we had to battle this one archaeologist in Buffalo who was uncovering - it was actually Erie remains. So whatever blood of the Neutrals and the Eries remains in the world flows through our veins today. We took a lot of people in and adopted them and then our cultures, it's kind of like the borg, we all become one. We all become Haudenosaunee. So we recovered well over 7000 remains over the time that I was serving over there, countless numbers of objects, and put them back in the ground. Now the old people, meaning people older than I was, insisted that part of our problem today as Native people is the torment caused by the fact that our dead people have been dug up and this restlessness that this created in them has reverberations back into our society today. So I took that seriously. The idea of putting things back properly, as properly as you could, which you know is very difficult sometimes, because archaeological collections get scattered sometimes. A skull will be here and leg bones over here and on and on and on. So you have to be like a detective. Go through all the paper work. Reassemble it as best you can. Negotiate as best you can to put these back. But we also became aware that in order to protect them for the future, so that other archaeologists or these amateurs won't come back looking for the remains, that kind of got to me to tell you the truth, because I don't know who else here in Canada has to go to such great lengths to protect their dead people.

So when you're younger this sort of stuff bothers you a lot and as you get older, all of a sudden you get closer to being in the ground, you start thinking differently about this. What can we learn from our ancestors, both the good and the bad, about history, about culture, in order to protect it? So when we do a funeral today, they specifically mention, don't put any metal or glass or anything that won't decay with the body, whereas you know in the 17th century we were putting everything in because the belief used to be that the dead people are going to need everything - everything they need in this life, they're going to need in their journey to the sky world. So we wanted to make sure they would have that. Now think about this philosophically that we no longer do that? We put our dead people in the ground unprepared for that journey because we're so fearful that some archaeologist is going to come and dig them up. And when I had to bury my daughter, I thought about this a lot. Because unfortunately this archaeologist in Buffalo, they were digging up the remains and then he was paying his archaeologists with artifacts. Here, take this pot, take this thing over there. So it
was a big job to get it all back. And needless to say I went into his office and there was a whole wall of boxes of remains. The first one I pull out is a baby, just about the same age as my daughter that died. So not only did it make my blood boil but I thought "what kind of people is this that does this? This is ghoulish." I could see if you accidentally uncover some remains and you've got to do something. But then to possess them as if it's cultural property, not a human remain and it doesn't have any dignity any more. So it was very difficult for me and my generation to want to play nice with archaeologists. Because we said the rules were getting in the way of constructive engagement. Their attitude was getting in the way. But I think what you highlight too is you can't paint the whole field with the same brush. There have been many really really good people working in archaeology and some people won't dig human remains, but sometimes you don't have a choice. They're right there in the middle and here's the bulldozer and they're planning to build these houses. But we always have to cave in and consent to move them. Very seldom will a developer or will the government then insist "there's too many graves there, we're going to move the road over here." So the question becomes how many is enough?

So we've tried hard to help train this next generation of Haudenosaunee people to say these are the realities of the situation. Maybe our ancestors' remains are coming up to the surface to remind everybody who was here first. And we're everywhere. So when they do come up, just think about that choice. What are they trying to tell us? SO I think the Haudenosaunee at the Six Nations Grand River, we try very carefully to listen to that voice: what our old people say, what our ancestors say to us. So I get a little tired of the emotional roller coaster ride, being tugged this way and that way, trying to be the defender of the dead. So I had to stop doing that work and focus more on those of us who are still alive to learn a little bit more about what it means to be Haudenosaunee. But I have to tell you I've been deeply inspired by the archaeological even in some things that we won't condone today, but the information is there, so we have to take advantage of it.

Now, my biggest frustration is that very little of archaeological knowledge ever gets into public education or into the school system. People don't realize the great heritage that lies right in their back yard. So I think we're trying to highlight that. But because of what happened with Douglas Creek and this land matter that's been unresolved for two hundred years, our people are very strident now about protecting any archaeological site because what they're really saying is not one more inch of land should be taken or uncovered until we resolve these matters. So
if the archaeological site becomes the flash point for that, our people will rally to defend that.

**EMILY:** Bill Fox is an adjunct professor at the Trent University Anthropology Graduate Program and has had a long career in archaeology, including serving as the regional archaeologist for Southwestern Ontario. Often this involved advocating for the preservation and care of endangered archaeological material and sites. One such site is the Sealey Site, located near Six Nations territory.

**BILL:** Sealey Site so-called is a fairly substantial Neutral Iroquoian Village. You have to understand that the Neutral as a confederacy were probably larger than all Five Nations put together. They had consisted of upwards of eight different tribes that had consolidated their home territory around Hamilton north of Lake Ontario to Burlington and perhaps a little east of there and the entire Niagara Peninsula and over into New York State on the east side of the Niagara River. One of the dominant tribes of the Neutral evolved in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and we can follow their paired villages moving southeast-ward into the Big Creek drainage near Brantford. So towards the end of their time - they were dispersed in 1651 - there was a very large village called the Walker Site and the Sealey Site so-called and Sealey was a pretty good sized village too, not quite as big as Walker. Both of them had associated cemeteries which was traditional with these groups. So the Sealey site, like all 17th century village sites in this region, became known as a result of the clearing and breaking of the land during the early 19th century. So when the land was broken, there'd be very substantial middens, so-called, dumps associated with habitation. Those would have been seen quickly and they were full of iron axes from the French trade, glass beads, pot sherds, bones of the animals they lived on, carbonized corn, everything you can imagine. In addition, these sites also had cemeteries which weren't necessarily identifiable when the land was first broken and ploughed because they were down a bit deeper and however oftentimes they were exposed by groundhogs who dug in and then threw the bones out, signalling the location of these sites.

Now, both in the Neutral area and the Wendat Confederacy area up in Simcoe County, and to a lesser extent in the Petun Area over by Blue Mountain, when these cemeteries were identified, they actually had cemetery digging bees - just like you'd have a barn-raising bee. People would crowd in and just have a picnic lunch and dig through these graves, which is, I mean what can you say? There's
really no way of describing the wrongness of that. But that's what happened. So as a part of that, material was collected out of the graves and out of village sites by individuals who were interested. A lot of times there were like Victorian collectors, some of the high brow ones in the Toronto area who bought much material and they put it on display and were enhancing their prestige by the display of these kind of materials to other member of society. So this material would sometimes if we were lucky would be acquired by a respectable, responsible curatorial institution, and other times would be passed down to family members who tended to disperse them. Nowadays they tend to put them on eBay, which is a huge issue. So anyway, we have collections like the one at Sustainable Archaeology for the Sealey Site. I'm not sure how many different collectors are represented by the collection there, but there are very famous ones that dug in that area.

So that's how the material ended up. The Sealey Village was occupied in the 1630's into the 1640's. It was a time of terrible challenge and sadness to the Neutral Iroquoian peoples because that was the time of the epidemics. So the whole population of the region was being decimated. So there are voices in the material that speak to their connections to places as far away as Alabama through the Shawnee of the Ohio Valley, there's material that speaks to everyday life hunting deer, there's material that speaks to attempts to control the epidemics’ terrible effects. There is a lot of different voices in the collections which tell us something about what life was like for these people and that we don't hear in the historical records.

**EMILY:** In order to derive meaning from an object, we rely on context. Where is from, who made it, and when? This is especially important for archaeological collections, as the people who made the objects are no longer alive to explain them. Because of the Sealey Site’s history of being looted, the majority of the material from the site is now without context, making it difficult for archaeologists and communities alike to learn from it. The Sealey Site is far from alone in this sense as unethical collecting practices throughout North America have produced untold collections without context. How, then, can the cultural meaning of these objects be restored?

**RICK:** Well what we've done in the past with major museum collections is we have to go examine them, but we have to go examine them, but we have to be very careful
about it because people are very nervous about its context. If it came from a grave or nearby, there's just some cultural and spiritual ramifications with that. So we need to know as much of the data, even before we go and visit the collection to know what the deal is. But also I have to say many of our people are very intuitive about this and when they see something, it kicks off a memory, which kicks off some teaching that they learned before, which kicks off something else. So we can make connections to what that one little artifact can tell us, because it will either reaffirm something that we've been told - a part of our oral history - or it will manifest that oral history in a new way. Whether it's a piece of pottery or an oddly shaped stone, or whatever it may be. Sometimes we can provide a level of interpretation for that because we were raised within this living oral history and we can make connections. Sometimes they might be a little fanciful, but if you look at what archaeologists have written in the past, what we're going to conjecture is not going to be any more fancy than what's been said before. So we just want an equal opportunity to make fancy. So by examining the collections it's hard to say, but I believe we will both learn a little bit more about it and then we can make a decision about what should happen to that particular piece right there. We did a little project with the Red Hill Valley to recirculate some of the artifacts that were found there into our community. I was overwhelmed with the response. People just loved seeing what this was because also you look at the creativity, the ingenious way in which things are made and for our current generation of artists this can be very inspiring to see that. When you think about it, just walking around in a back field and you find something 2000 or 3000 years old and it's there all the time. Now the question's always, should you leave it there? Is it a gift to you? Is it a voice calling out to you? Maybe the voice just says "hey, leave me alone," but that's always the attraction because these objects do resonate with the memory of the people who made them and that's that voice he's talking about. I believe we can get in tune with that voice - you may be surprised that they actually speak English! Or that you can understand it!

**EMILY:** Just as our understanding of an object is influenced by its context, the way we relate to and access collections is determined by social context. Heather George is a Mohawk cultural heritage worker who is currently engaged in exploring Indigenous research methodologies. Jessica Hinton is an Anishinaabe master’s student studying representations of Indigenous heritage at McMaster University. Together, Heather and Jessica spoke about how relationships influence our understanding of heritage. When your cultural heritage is held by people outside of your community, who gets to access these objects and why? Who gets to tell their stories and whose ears do those stories reach?
HEATHER: So I should mention, my first access to my own cultural heritage was through the Encyclopedia of the American Indian and what it told me was essentially that my ancestors had killed everyone and that we were pretty bloodthirsty and I didn't know that we had our language still, I didn't know that we had our ceremonies still, I didn't know any of that growing up and that's I mean, something like 50% of Indigenous people live off reserve, so I'm not alone in that. And so museums can play a really important role as being an intermediary, but only when they work in relationship with communities and they can almost act, I think, as a middle ground between archaeologists and the Indigenous community, but one of the problems that I've seen a lot is we're talking about these fanciful interpretations that Rick mentioned, and presenting at conference, I think it was two years ago now, I watched a young archaeologist, she was probably a little bit younger than me, talk about a dig that she'd been working on and her fanciful interpretation. Sitting there and listening to her speak, she was talking about essentially what she thought were refuse piles, garbage and how the things that were in those piles were not very significant. Her reasoning behind thinking that they were just garbage piles was that there was a lot of ash found in them, and what I found upsetting about that was that it just made me realize how much she lacked a cultural context for those artifacts and those objects because we have ceremonies that incorporate ash, or we have cooking practices that also incorporate ash. And so if you had never eaten lye corn soup, which we still make today using hardwood ash, or if you didn't know about ceremonies, you would think it was just garbage. You would think, well, from a European perspective, we take our ash out of our fireplace and we throw it out in the backyard and that's a garbage pile or maybe if we have roses, we put it on the roses or whatever. It's not important, it's a waste product. And so because she only had her cultural perspective to bring to this and maybe some secondary sources that she had read by another archaeologist that had been studying this say sixty years ago, her interpretation of it could only be based on what she knew and so it lacked that cultural connection that really would have informed that knowledge and that artifact really well.

So the process of things going from an archaeologist, most of whom store their own collections - maybe they pass away and so they leave their collections somewhere or maybe it comes to a centre like the one at McMaster or maybe it goes to a museum - it's completely out of context at that point. Hopefully they've made really good field notes so that you have some idea of what the context was, but then it might come to a museum where a person has no background in
archaeology because they've avoided it or because maybe it's a museum where the person doesn't understand anything about Indigenous culture because like all of us, they grew up in a curriculum that was quite lacking in that, and so even though now it's in a safe environment, it's not actually helping people to learn anything. And I think that there's a really big disconnect between these different groups of people and different institutions and how we work together. And there's still a lot of fear, I think both from archaeologists and from museum workers that if they engage with Indigenous communities that they're going to lose things. But the reality of it is that those things don't belong to the archaeologists and they don't belong to the museum. And in a lot of ways they don't even necessarily belong to us as descendant nations. They belong to the people who made them and they weren't placed there with the idea that someone two hundred years from now was going to dig it up. Just like when someone buried their relatives today, you don't think that someone's going to come along in two hundred years and exhume their body and study it. Most of our artifacts of a personal nature, we don't think about where they'll be two hundred years from now. So there's a lot of work to be done in that way and there can be positive things that come from it, but this isn't a new discussion and I think that's what maybe worries me the most, is that probably what has caused a lot of attention to this type of thing is because of Truth and Reconciliation and one of it's recommendations was for the Canadian Museum Association to work with Indigenous communities to develop new processes and new ways of working together, but in the museum world at the very least, right now there just isn't the available funds to do that. And this is especially true for small community museums.

So how do those types of institutions... you know it's really just based on the ethics of the people working there and whether they see that as something that's significant enough to do that work to put other things aside to actually build those relationships. We are overdrawn and while there are more young people in our communities that are becoming more interested in this work, it's also about an understanding that sometimes you might have to wait. As an institution, as an organization, you might have to wait a little bit longer than you would otherwise because there's a lot of people asking for time and knowledge from our communities. So that is another issue that sort of has to be dealt with, I think.

**JESSICA:** A lot of archaeologists who are working on Euro-Canadian sites, the archaeologists themselves are Euro-Canadian, but when you have archaeologists working on Indigenous sites, it's not Indigenous archaeologists. It's just about
equity and fairness. It needs to change and we're working on it. But I think it's okay if we say no, now and then. Like saying "no you can't have access to this because you have for so long and it's our turn now." It's not meant to be offensive and it's nothing personal, it's just you had it for hundreds of years and it's okay for us to take control over it now.

Often access is determined by opportunity and those who have access and opportunity to pursue higher education which will get us to positions like archaeologists and museum curators and university professors. And often times Indigenous people, because of real structural barriers - physical barriers like growing up in an isolated reserve community, financial constraints, even I've met some people who are often triggered simply by being in the education system because of the Indian residential school system. There are a lot of things - very real structural barriers that prevent Indigenous people from having access to our cultural remains.

So that was part of this too. I was pretty sure there wouldn't be that many Indigenous guests and I was thinking about is it fair that we bring these artifacts to this workshop where the ancestors of the people's remains are not present and they're largely not represented? So I try to think about equity and fairness and is it right, is it ethical to constantly be allowing non-members of a community to have access to things that aren't theirs while descendant communities lack access and opportunity? I had access to these things because I grew up off reserve. I'm white-passing and middle-class and I had a lot of parts of my social identity working in my favour in larger Canadian context. I easily went to university. I'm in grad school. I'm thinking about doing a PhD. These things are available to me. They're not available to everybody else. I can get hired at archaeology company, whereas maybe somebody who is not white-passing will not get hired. White-passing means that you're Indigenous, but it's largely assumed that you're of Euro-Canadian descent. And often because of the colonial context in which we live, we're afforded privileges that are also afforded to Euro-Canadians. When you're visibly not a part of the mainstream culture, you're going to be treated differently and we do see this in archaeology. I don't think it's necessary to expose non-Indigenous people to Indigenous cultural remains in order for non-Indigenous people to respect Indigenous nations. I don't think you have to hold something in your hand or know everything about the culture. I don't think it's necessary to possess a culture, essentially, in order to have respect for them. Anthropologists and archaeologists come into our communities and they tell us they're doing this
work. Or they don't even come into our communities - they do the work around our community and we don't get a say. Just because you can't have our stuff, doesn't mean that we're not of value.

HEATHER: It's frustrating that you need to have archaeological evidence to validate history that we've been telling each other for thousands of years. We know it to be fact. We don't need to prove it through archaeology.

JESSICA: There's tons of examples. Two specific ones I can think of: there's one community in British Columbia and they were working with archaeologists and the archaeologists were saying "oh there's no village site, there was nothing complex and interesting going on" and the Indigenous community was like "yes there was, I think you need to look in the water, because the sea-levels have changed, obviously, over time" and once the archaeologists did, they did find very complex and interesting village sites. Finally nonce the archaeologists find these things, THEN it's valid, but it's only valid after being backed by scientific empirical evidence, not by oral tradition.

It's powerful, these things that are not taken seriously by non-Indigenous cultures, but they're valid and I don't think it's right to say that they're inaccurate just because archaeologists or historians are uncomfortable with it. I guess that's the issue with not having the ability to represent ourselves too. A lot of things that Indigenous knowledge holders and elders can contribute, they're being allowed to. I'm really interested in representation for that reason because there's a lot of misrepresentation and misinformation. I think people want it to change. Archaeologists want to change their relationship. There's a lot of good scientists out there. But it is still a fight, even in my own graduate program, to be able to say "no, this isn't accurate, this is the Indigenous representation and it's not fair that you're constantly seeing this with a Eurocentric lens and then you're presenting that view to the rest of Canada and we're largely silenced.

HEATHER: Actually, one of the things that when you were talking it makes me think about it, we were talking about this as a science, right and the thing about science is it has a methodology and a language of its own. So we talked about barriers. There are systematic barriers that we create for our knowledge holders in our communities
by having these systems in place. So whether it be the way that we number something, what we refer to it as - it's an artifact. And so we take - and this happens in lots of fields - we take the things that were created by people and we take that knowledge. We take it into the academic world and we reinterpret in in a way that that person could not understand it and this is a huge issue and it happens across the board. And it really is something that people need to think about professionally in fields where whatever we're doing has a relationship to living people. We need to be able to understand things.

RICK: There's this great fear that something that's critical to understanding human nature is going to be missed. So a lot of these collections... when I was doing work for the standing committee, we visited all the major museums. There were drawers and drawers and drawers of a million objects and sometimes archaeologists gets so "oh this flint flake is too valuable to get rid of". So they do study the minutiae, that's for sure - the thickness of the wall of pottery, what it's made of. All that kind of stuff. They're developing this record. But where they've, in the past, made a critical mistake is trying disassociate that process of making from the human element. And as we know in the archaeological world, their favourite way of dealing with something that doesn't fit this formula is to call it an anomaly. This doesn't fit, so it must not be real. So terminology is important. Think about if we never used the word artifact again and instead called it art. If we never listed anything as an archaeological specimen, but called it human. If we change our way of thinking about this, we actually may do more to advance the concept of human society. By the same token, if you go to school, one reason why I think there's not a whole lot of native archaeologists (you would think it would be a natural field - "well let's go and take over like everything else") but it's because of this premise of having to go in and disassociate yourself from the people so that you have this disinterested point of view. You can analyze, you can critique. You can dig up human remains. Because you're doing something in service to humanity. Most native people would say "how can you deny humanity to do something in service to humanity?" So there really is an ethical barrier I think to all of this.

So I think for Native people, we're on this voyage of rediscovery. By seeing this art that our ancestors did and redeveloping some kind of relationship to it, I think it will help heal. What I'm getting at is I've seen objects from cultures all over North America and I don't understand them all sometimes, but there's something that reverberates with it and me. Resonates, because we have something similar to
that. And it's reassuring somehow, to see something from the people in Northwest Coast, the Hopi people in Arizona, the Cherokees in North Carolina and the Haudenosaunee that this talks about this underlying Indigenous unity. Visual, spiritual, and I believe cultural unity. That's kind of significant. But in working in our museums - the tribal museum, the local museum, the national museum - you're always editing the culture and we're stuck. We often have to cite what a non-native said to prove what a native thought was true. Just like today, most dissertations that are done in Indigenous knowledge, will quote one of three non-Indigenous people who define what Indigenous knowledge is. It's become the standard in the field. But if I was to say, "this is what my grandmother said" people would say "can you verify that?" I'd say no, because none of those people ever talked to my grandmother. It's hard sometimes because we over-intellectualize Indigenous knowledge, thinking that we're going to be competing in the academic marketplace and at the same time to give archaeologists their due, they spend a lifetime looking at this material culture and a few are inspired deeply by it.

Ultimately the majority of archaeological information is not intentionally kept from us, but because we don't have the academic standing - you have to be a certified archaeologist to see certain materials - we don't even know sometimes where these sites are. We may have a memory about that. So what we're trying to do know is change that. For us to avoid having to be out in the middle of the road protesting the bulldozer, let's work together. You know where the sites are. Let's come up with a predictive model and begin to say "yes, in all likelihood, this area should be avoided." If you do it together in advance, it saves a whole lot of time. So there's different issues here. One is how do we protect what's in the ground and maybe should stay in the ground? How do we learn the most from what inadvertently comes out of the ground? But also, we have to go aback and look at the archaeological record of the past, because there's a whole lot of - if you really think about it - a mountain of paper, of photographs of objects that I think we need to do some rethinking about. And who knows what would come out of that?

Right now goodhearted, good-minded archaeologists and even-minded Indigenous people, we can work wonders together, but seldom do we have that opportunity. We've got to be creative about how we do that, because as we also know, there's a conservative element within archaeology at times that it still wants to hide. There's still a lot of racist dialogue going on about our cultures saying that we're so acculturated that our knowledge is not valid. So we'll have time to
wrestle with all of that. But if we can find people who are willing to engage and then we co-publish together, I think that's going to be really critical in the future, because then we're both saying we've invested in this for a product - this interpretive analysis of Ontario and I think that will go a long way to help reduce the ignorance in the field.

HEATHER: Nobody's objective. Not the person who made the artifact or the art, not the person who's interpreting it, not the person who's reviewing the article that interprets it, not the person who is then viewing it within a museum. We all come to things with our own cultural context and our own social and political views that we bring to that engagement. So, it's actually almost more important to understand why. Why is that thing significant to you? And is the significance you place in it more valuable than the significance that someone else might place in it? And I think for a lot of archaeological artifacts and the people that are working with or have access to them, the answer is actually no.

Everybody has an ancestry somewhere and whether the Romans invaded and took out your ancestors or whether it was the British that did it, we all come from somewhere and the things that we leave behind are reflections of that and I think it's really important that the people who are of those things and of that place have first access and that that sort of ethics goes into all of the work that we do as archaeologists or as museum workers or whatever it is. That we recognize that and that we work to make that happen.

BILL: So, I was hoping to bring out a piece of art as an example and to have and to hold. I'll tell you a story about it as an archaeologist. It's heavy. It's made out of... as a geo-archaeologist, I would say that it's made out of something called gabbro. It's shiny over most of its surface. It seems to have what was formerly a cutting edge at one end. It's blunt at the other end. So, as an archaeologist, I would look at that and say, first of all, where was it found? What is this material it's made from? What does its form tell us? What this form tells me is that this used to be a longer piece of art, probably almost twice as long. It tells me that whoever made this spent a great deal of time making it. It's not a soft stone and it's been pecked into shape over countless hours to make this. I don't imagine they were too thrilled when it broke. The fact that it did break, tells me that it was in probably a solid hardwood haft that was used heavily for cutting and actually broke the piece in half due to the torque using it. But the other thing I notice is that it doesn't have a
rough break. It's rounded. Why would it be rounded? Well let's go to the cutting edge and have another look. If I look at this, what appears to be the cutting edge, I find that it's beat up along the edge here. I see that on one face it's got polish and striations that run the length the tool. On the other face on the other hand it's got that same pattern, except right here on the edge where the striations run crosswise, which is kind of unusual. So what's going on here? So, this other end, that's got rounded fractures suggests very strongly that it's been used on a soft material. Perhaps it's been repurposed after its breakage into a tool that was used for working a softer material. Based on all of these attributes, I would say, well let's see. This piece comes from Windsor, near the Detroit River based on the type of stone and the form of this, it's an axe. It's been broken and probably dates to what we call the Archaic period when they worked this really tough stone into axes. So maybe 4000 years old.

And now I'll tell you another story and the other story has to do about a young boy ninety years ago who was cycling home and for some reason stuck his hand down a fence post hole and found this. And he brought it home and his mother said yeah that's really interesting, but I think I'm going to use it as a meat tenderizer, which she did. And the young boy grew up and had a son and told this son about this mysterious thing. Called it a tomahawk. Now the young son was "wow, grandma's got a tomahawk, a pipe tomahawk, war of 1812! Man, this is gonna be great!" So when he eventually gets to visit grandma in Windsor, she points to the back garden and says it's out there. He goes out and he finds it finally amongst all the other rocks in the rock garden and is pretty considerably disappointed, not surprisingly. It's not a pipe tomahawk, it's not iron, it's not brass, it's just a piece of rock. But he realizes that, you know, it's probably real, it's probably made by a person. So he brings it back home and gets tree branch and wraps it around and tries to chop down a tree with it, with limited success, but he does manage to bash away the bit end fairly badly. Then he goes down to his dad's workshop and with a grinding wheel, tries to re-sharpen that edge, but with limited success and thereafter it sort of sits on a shelf for a long, long time. Now of course, that somewhat destructive young lad was myself. It was my father who found it, my grandmother who used it as a meat tenderizer. Was it owned by my grandmother? I don't think so. Or my father? No. Or myself? No. I don't think so. We remember our part of the story. But we don't own it.
EMILY: *Artefacts on Air* was created by William Fox, Heather George, Richard Hill, Jessica Hinton, and Emily Meikle in collaboration with Sustainable Archaeology McMaster. The Music included in the program is titled *Theresa* and was created by Melody McKiver and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported license. More of Melody McKiver’s work can be found online at soundcloud.com.

[MUSIC]
Appendix C: Promotional flyer for *Artifacts on Air* workshop
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