PRACTICES OF COLLABORATION: EXPLORING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AT THE LABORATORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2013

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Anthropology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2015

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Abstract

Collaboration is an important process for achieving partnerships between Indigenous groups and researchers working in the fields of archaeology and museum anthropology. Julia Harrison (2005) suggests that the unique culture of an institution should be considered a critical factor in developing successful collaborations between museums and communities. This thesis explores the idea of institutional culture further through a case study of the Laboratory of Archaeology at UBC (LOA). The purpose of this research is to examine the ways an archaeological repository can engage in collaborative work and to explore how institutional culture develops over time.

This paper draws on interviews, archival research and my own experience working at LOA. I first look at LOA’s institutional history to examine how its culture has developed. Instead of exploring one collaborative project, I discuss key events as part of a larger on-going collaborative process. This provides important context for LOA’s current approaches to working with communities. I explore a number of LOA’s practices and policies, analyzing how they address power asymmetry and facilitate sharing knowledge between communities and archaeologists. Finally, I examine how these approaches have become a part of LOA’s institutional culture through both practice and written policy.
Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work of the author, Kate Roth.

The University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board issued Certificate of Approval H14-01261 to undergo this study.
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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my supervisors, Dr. Sue Rowley and Dr. Jennifer Kramer, for their guidance during this project. I would also like to thank all of those I spoke to about the Laboratory of Archaeology for their time and invaluable input. I would especially like to thank Patricia Ormerod for the opportunity to work at the Laboratory of Archaeology and for all of her support throughout my time at UBC.

Lastly, I want to give a very special thanks to my family and friends for the many shoulders to lean on.
1. Introduction

Collaboration has become an important practice for achieving partnerships between Indigenous peoples seeking to assert claims over their heritage and researchers looking to redress the colonial histories of archaeology and museum anthropology (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:50). In both fields, collaboration challenges the authority of the professional (either curator or archaeologist) to tell the stories and histories of others. Collaboration is not an easily definable practice or set of steps but instead should be understood as a “range of strategies” that bring archaeologists together with interested communities (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:1). Key elements to these strategies are the sharing of knowledge and power in order to find “true common ground, in which scholars and interested community members treat one another as equals, in which each voice is heard and respected” (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:59).

While there are no universal prescriptions for engaging in collaboration (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010:59; Harrison 2005:195), Peers and Brown (2003:3) suggest that collaborative relationships between museums and communities are contingent on three things: the nature of the community; the political relationship between the museum and the community; and the geographic proximity between museum and community. Face-to-face interaction is important for building the relationships necessary for collaboration, therefore collaborations between geographically distant communities and museums tend to be more sporadic and difficult (Peers and Brown 2003:3). Geographical distance also relates to the political relationships between museums and communities, as Peers and Brown (2003:4) note that Europe has been slower to adopt community-based approaches than North American and Australia.

In addition to these three components, Harrison (2005) argues that we need to consider a fourth: the institutional culture of the museum. Institutional culture can be characterized as “the
melding of the voice of individuals into that of a larger collective, as it is shaped by institutional history, organizational structure, physical location, current circumstance, and legacy of leadership” (Harrison 2005:197). Outside of Harrison (2005), there is sparse literature on institutional culture as it relates to collaboration. However, if we consider collaboration a necessary process to address power asymmetries between communities and institutions, then institutions must develop cultures to facilitate building those relationships.

In this thesis I explore the idea of institutional culture further through a case study of the Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of British Columbia (LOA). I argue that LOA has developed practices that facilitate sharing knowledge and power, which is necessary for collaboration with communities. LOA’s relationships with communities have evolved over time and have grown out of discussions about ownership and conceptualization of the archaeological record. LOA now regularly works with communities to respectfully care for archaeological collections. I analyze how LOA developed an institutional culture conducive to collaborative practices by looking at its history, structure, location, personnel, and current practices. I use culture in the anthropological sense as “something organic, fragmented, ambiguous, if not contradictory” (Harrison 2005:198). Culture is not static, though it can be slow to change as it evolves over time and builds on its own history. It is therefore important to look at LOA’s entire history to understand LOA’s culture today.

In this paper I use the term communities to refer to Indigenous groups or those groups sometimes referred to as descendant communities (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:8). Where appropriate, I refer to specific First Nations or other organizations but otherwise I use communities as an inclusive term for groups that feel connected socially, historically and culturally to materials found in archaeological and museum collections.
1.1 Theoretical Context

In North America, museology and archaeology have beginnings that are closely linked. Archaeological research was frequently carried out through museums and archaeological materials populated museum collections (Childs and Sullivan 2003:5-6). Both disciplines have the same colonial foundations and were implicit in the “salvage” operations to catalogue “vanishing” Indigenous peoples (Cole 1995; Roy 2010). By the 1920’s, archaeology programs had begun developing at universities, moving archaeological collections away from the museum context. In the new academic context, universities tended have a greater focus on training archaeologists than maintaining and curating research collections (Childs and Sullivan 2003:12). Eventually the processes of making collections and caring for them became divided (Childs and Sullivan 2003:20). This separation is reflected in current archaeological scholarship, which tends to focus on the work that is done in the field and the analysis of those findings and less on the long term care of archaeological collections in repositories. It is important to note that museums and repositories are not the same. In their discussion of archaeological repositories, Childs and Sullivan (2003:4) define a museum as an institution that both collects and exhibits material, while a repository can encompass a range of different types of institutions that care for material. In Canada, archaeological collections are often found in museums (Winter 1996:21) and in British Columbia, the Royal British Columbia Museum is the main repository for archaeological work done in the province. LOA, however, is a repository but not a museum.

Literature about archaeological repositories is fairly limited, particularly in the Canadian context. Most of this work focuses on the “curation crisis” of archaeological collections as increased operating costs, decreased funding and shrinking space threaten repositories (Childs 2006; Childs and Sullivan 2003; Sullivan 1992; Winter 1996). Since archaeological literature
tends to focus more on fieldwork and how to interpret the past rather than on the work of repositories and collections care, archaeologists themselves fail to consider curation as an integral part of archaeological work and tend to not factor long term care of material into their projects and budgets (Childs and Sullivan 2003:1). Overall, the literature on repositories is primarily concerned with management of collections as archaeological data and does not discuss work with communities in any great depth.

Both archaeology and museum studies have focused increasing attention on their colonial histories and have turned to collaboration to amend past practices. Collaboration in all aspects of museum work facilitates sharing power and knowledge amongst museum and community partners (Ames 1999; Clavir 2002; Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010; Conaty 2008; Harrison 2005; Kahn 2000; Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2003:157). Zimmerman uses the term “scientific colonialism” to describe the historical relationship between archaeologists and communities that involves the asymmetrical production and distribution of knowledge (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007:61). Indigenous archaeology, Collaborative archaeology and Community archaeology are all models that have been developed to bring archaeologists together with communities that have a connection to and interest in the archaeological record (Atalay 2006; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Marshall 2002; Nicholas 2006). Much of the literature on collaborative archaeology seems to stop short of discussing the collections-related work that happens after the initial project is complete. Museum collaboration often happens in the development of exhibitions, but can also involve the development of storage and conservation practices (Clavir 2002; Peers and Brown 2003:7; Rosoff 2003). Theoretically, the archaeological repository sits at a nexus of archaeology and museology, involving the collecting practices of archaeology and the
collections care of museum work. It is therefore worthwhile to consider both archaeological and museological literature when examining the work of an archaeological repository.

1.1.1 A Note on Stewardship

The concept of *stewardship* in archaeology emerged in the mid-1990s in response to the increasing involvement of non-academic stakeholders in archaeological projects (Wylie 2005). Both the Canadian Archaeological Association (1997) and the Society for American Archaeology (1996) include stewardship principles in their ethical guidelines. Both suggest that stewardship is about caring for and conserving the archaeological record and as stewards, archaeologists are “both caretakers of and advocates for the archaeological record for the benefit of all people” (SAA 1996:451). More recently (and locally), the idea of an Indigenous stewardship has appeared in literature relating to archaeology in British Columbia (Hammond 2009; Klassen 2013). The concept of stewardship can be problematic because archaeologists are making assumptions about their authority by positioning themselves as stewards of the archaeological record (Zimmerman 1995). Zimmerman (1995:66) suggests that we need to consider all people stewards of the past and Atalay et al. (2014:9) add that stewardship should also constitute the present. Wylie (2005:65) suggests that stewardship needs to be approached collaboratively with “negotiated co-management among divergent interests (including archaeological interests) none of which can be presumed, at the outset to take precedence over others.”

While certainly many of LOA’s practices could fall under the “negotiated co-management” aspect of Wylie’s proposed collaborative stewardship, I am choosing not to use *stewardship* as a term. It is not a term that appears in LOA’s written policies or its procedures manual and for some LOA members it is “an uncomfortable term” (Rowley 2014). It can be
considered “uncomfortable” because, as Zimmerman suggests, there is an implied authority in appointing oneself as a steward. Furthermore, the general definition of stewardship relates to the management of others’ property and therefore may not be an appropriate concept for Indigenous peoples who do not view their cultural heritage in terms of property language. As I will discuss later in this paper, LOA carefully considers the language and terminology it uses to describe its practices. In that context, I follow Susan Rowley (2014) when she describes the work LOA does as *caretaking* as opposed to stewardship.

### 1.2 A Brief Introduction to LOA

LOA is a research unit within the Department of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. Founded in 1949 by Charles E. Borden, LOA is responsible for providing long term care for materials generated through archaeological excavations including cultural material, ancestral remains, archival documentation and matrix samples. LOA has a range of facilities including laboratories, collections storage spaces (including ancestral housing), offices and an archive. Physically, it is located both in the Anthropology and Sociology Building and in the neighbouring Museum of Anthropology (MOA). Though LOA has collections storage and workspaces in the MOA, it is a distinct entity from the Museum and the collections are separate.

LOA membership is comprised of all archaeology faculty members in the Department of Anthropology and representatives from the Department of Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies. The members meet approximately once a month during the academic year to discuss issues relating to the Lab. The LOA Director, who is appointed by the group on a biannual basis, oversees LOA’s general operation but decisions are made by vote and consensus. The LOA Manager is (currently) the only permanent LOA staff member and is responsible for the daily lab
operations and caring for the collections. The LOA Manager reports to the LOA Director, who in turn reports to the Head of the Department of Anthropology. LOA hires (primarily) undergraduate students through a University-wide employment program to assist in the Lab throughout the year. The number of available positions depends on funding, so the number of staff in the Lab fluctuates year to year.

LOA is not mandated by any repository-specific legislation and there are currently no federal or provincial standardized guidelines for archaeological collections care. In Canada, legislation regarding archaeology is left to the provincial domain (Burley 1994:78). In British Columbia, the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) legislates the protection of archaeological sites. The HCA does not contain many provisions for repositories, stating only that the permit holder must specify a repository for materials removed during the investigation.

The collections at LOA have primarily been generated through excavations done in the province by faculty and graduate students in the Department. Donations by individuals and, with increasing frequency, deposits from archaeology consulting firms are also found in the collections. LOA closed its door to new materials from the late 1980s until 2010 when it moved into new storage facilities. Since 1962, almost all material deposited at LOA has been collected under HCA permits and/or the Cultural Heritage Permits of Indigenous peoples (LOA 2014).

1.3 Research Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this research is to explore how institutional culture develops over time and to examine the ways an archaeological repository can be an active site for collaborative work. This paper fills a gap in the literature on collaborative archaeology by looking at the work that happens after the excavations and initial analysis have been completed. The long term care
of collections should be considered an important part of archaeological work in general and can also be an area for continued collaborative engagement between archaeologists and communities. Instead of focusing on one particular instance of collaboration, I look at an overview of projects throughout LOA’s history and discuss different key moments of collaboration as part of a larger on-going process. I also want to emphasize that LOA did not develop its institutional culture in isolation. The guidance and teaching done by the communities that have worked with and continue to work with LOA are fundamental to its development. Communities are working to achieve their own goals and their motivations for engaging in collaborative projects with LOA are varied. The details of these goals and motivations are beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I focus on how the outcomes of these projects have influenced LOA and shaped its practices.

To build LOA’s institutional history, I spent time looking through LOA’s own archives as well as the Charles Borden’s fonds at the UBC archives. Some LOA members also provided me access to documents from their own informal archives of desk drawers and computer folders. LOA granted me access to its meeting minutes dating back to 2002, providing me with important details about LOA’s development over the past decade.

I also conducted ten one-on-one interviews with LOA members, both past and present, between October 2014 and January 2015. The purpose of the interviews was to further explore LOA’s institutional history and also gather perspectives on the work LOA has done with communities. The interviews were loosely structured and focused on collaboration and community relationships while the questions I asked were particular to each person’s own history with LOA. All interviews were audio recorded with the interviewee’s permission and later transcribed. While an effort was made to interview all LOA members with relevant
experience in community collaboration and/or were involved in LOA’s early days, a few were unavailable or unwilling to speak with me. Both Moira Irvine and Joyce Johnson, who previously held the LOA Manager position (then referred to as the Curatorial Assistant), have sadly passed away. Their voices would have been valuable contributions and provided important insights into LOA’s development.

I had initially intended to speak with a number of people outside of the LOA group, from communities or those otherwise involved in working with LOA. Constraints of this project and other circumstances beyond my control prevented these interviews, except for one, from happening. While these voices are important to the collaborative process, I am positioning this paper as only one component of that process. As Peers and Brown (2003:3) and Harrison (2005) have suggested, there are many components that are important to developing collaborative relationships and this paper explores one of them.

I also draw on my own experience working at LOA from May 2011 to June 2014. Though my academic focus has always been on museum studies, my position as a student lab assistant piqued my interest in the curation side of archaeological work. During my time at LOA I witnessed collaborative work in the daily practices we carried out in the lab and in the interactions between people at LOA and community members. I draw on these experiences when I discuss LOA’s culture today.

In each of the three chapters concerning LOA’s history, I begin by outlining the archaeological context of British Columbia. British Columbia is an important geographic setting for LOA because the vast majority of collections come from the province. Few treaties have been signed with First Nations in the province and an official treaty process was not established in British Columbia until 1993 (Mckee 2000). Archaeology has become a part of these on-going
negotiations over land claims and resource rights (Klassen 2013:54; Nicholas 2006). It is important to consider the political climate of British Columbia and how it has been expressed through Indigenous action and changing archaeological legislation when exploring LOA’s development. These chapters also cover LOA’s changing structure, personnel and approaches to collections care. Each of these chapters also includes a section discussing LOA’s relationship to MOA, which has extended throughout virtually all of LOA’s history and has been very influential in LOA’s development.
2. LOA’s Beginning: The 1940s to the 1970s

The development of LOA is concurrent with the professionalization of archaeology in British Columbia, both of which were led by Dr. Charles E. Borden. Borden came to British Columbia in 1939 when he was hired at UBC as a German professor. Because of World War II and a German research library that “was still extremely poor for various reasons” he found it difficult to pursue his studies (Borden interviews 1979:4). This provided Borden with time to pursue archaeology, a field that had been of interest to him since his high school years in Germany and through his time at UC Berkeley prior to arriving at UBC. Borden began to carry out test excavations on land around the University with Dr. Philip Akrigg, a colleague from the Department of English. The first of these occurred in 1945 (Borden interviews 1979:4). It was at this time that Borden committed himself to pursuing archaeology and within a few decades had made important strides in developing the field.

2.1 Archaeology in British Columbia

Limited archaeological investigation occurred in the province prior to Borden’s arrival. Between 1890 and 1902, Harlan I. Smith and Charles Hill-Tout were responsible for most archaeological work done in the province (Carlson 1970:11). Herman Leisk worked as a self-taught “archaeologist” at the Marpole Midden between 1927 and 1933 (Roy 2010:105). Philip Drucker, a Californian anthropologist, conducted a survey of the northern Northwest Coast in 1938. Marian Smith, an archaeologist from Columbia University, excavated the McCallum site in the Fraser Valley in 1945.

Archaeology as a profession and discipline emerged in the province through Borden’s work. He significantly shaped archaeology in British Columbia as he introduced the concept of “salvage archaeology” to the province, pushed for meaningful provincial heritage legislation,
established a uniform archaeological site designation system for Canada (called The Borden System), and developed the archaeology program at UBC (Carlson 1970; Roy 2010; West 1995; Williams 1980).

The aim of salvage archaeology was to recover archaeological materials from sites that faced destruction. Borden conducted the first major salvage project in British Columbia in 1951 after learning that the proposed Kinney dam on the Nechako River was going to flood Tweedsmuir Park (Carlson 1970:12). In the face of increasing industrial development, Borden and his protégé Wilson Duff, campaigned for public support of continued salvage work at archaeological sites and pushed for legislation to protect archaeological resources (Roy 2010:129; West 1995:27). They were successful in 1960 when the province introduced the Archaeology Sites and Heritage Protection Act (AHSPA) along with the Archaeology Sites Advisory Board (ASAB). Though legislation related to archaeological sites existed prior to AHSPA, it was the first that provided significant protection for sites (Apland 1993:9). The Act required authorized permits for all archaeological work in the province and ASAB, which was comprised primarily of academic archaeologists, provided guidance to the government on archaeological matters.

The relationships between archaeologists and communities shifted through the 1950s, “characterized by more intensive fieldwork, longer-term working relationships, and the hiring of Native people on digs” (Roy 2010:133). For Borden, this began slightly earlier in 1947 when he sought to conduct research on Musqueam reserve land. Though initially resistant, Musqueam permitted Borden to excavate after he brought community members to his lab to show them

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1 The 1865 Indian Grave Ordinance enacted by the Colony of British Columbia was intended to prevent damage and looting of Indigenous graves but was repealed by the federal government in 1886 (Apland 1993:9). British Columbia introduced the Historic Objects Preservation Act in 1925, which primarily protected “mobile and rock-art sites and other objects or structures of
material he had recovered in previous excavations at Locarno Beach and Point Grey (Borden interviews 1979:37-38). Borden continued to conduct excavations at Musqueam throughout his career and formed a working relationship with community member Andrew C. Charles. Charles joined Borden’s dig at Marpole in 1955 and went on to locate the St. Mungo site (DgRr-2) later that summer (Rowley 2007:4).

In 1973, two representatives of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) were appointed to ASAB (ASAB 1973). The representatives, Della Kew from Musqueam and Ardyth Cooper from T’souke Nation, presented a number of recommendations from UBCIC to the Board on October 5, 1973. The recommendations included proposed changes to legislation (including increased fines and recognition of Indigenous ownership of artifacts) and permit conditions with the overall intent of providing Indigenous communities with greater control over archaeological research that pertains to them (UBCIC 1973). ASAB made a number of changes based on UBCIC’s recommendations, including requiring permission of communities before permits were issued and a recognition that excavated material be held in trust for Indigenous communities. However, ASAB never defined what “in trust” meant and remained unclear on issues of Indigenous ownership (Klassen 2013:57).

While ASAB made these important changes, archaeologists still seemed unwilling to share authority with communities over the archaeological process. Borden, for example, expressed resistance to some of UBCIC’s requests. In response to the request to increase the number of Indigenous members on ASAB from two to seven, Borden noted that replacing existing Board members “with well-meaning but uninformed individuals, could present a serious threat to British Columbia’s prehistoric heritage and to archaeological research in the Province”
(Borden 1973). So while communities at this time sought active involvement in the archaeological process, archaeologists such as Borden were reluctant to share control.

Through the 1970s, archaeology in British Columbia shifted from salvage archaeology conducted primarily by academics to conservation archaeology conducted by private consulting firms. Instead of excavating and “salvaging” as much material as possible, conservation archaeology focused on preserving sites for future research with minimal excavation (Lipe 1974). The conservation ethic and the growing field of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) necessitated new legislation (Klassen 2013:58). The Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) replaced the AHSPA in 1977 and the ASAB was dissolved. As a result, ASAB’s policies related to communities were rescinded and community involvement in the new legislation was “almost non-existent” (Klassen 2013:58).

2.2 LOA Structure and Personnel

Borden’s archaeological research first found a home at UBC in 1948 when Dr. Harry Hawthorn, impressed by Borden’s fieldwork, asked Borden to teach a part of a course on Indians in British Columbia (Williams 1980:23). At the time, Hawthorn had been brought to UBC to develop what would eventually become the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and to be the first Director of the Museum of Anthropology. The following year, Hawthorn asked Borden to develop a full time course on the archaeology of British Columbia, necessitating the development of an archaeology lab.

Borden founded the Laboratory of Archaeology (LOA) in 1949 when Borden discovered an unused room in the basement of the Mathematics (Old Arts) building. Borden furnished the

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2 When Hawthorn first arrived in 1947, it was called the Department of Economics, Political Science, Commerce and Sociology. By 1959, it had been narrowed to just the Department of Anthropology and Sociology (Whittaker and Ames 2006:158-159).
room, which had no ventilation and “smelled of vinegar and rotten vegetables,” with tables made of plywood and sawhorses (Borden interviews 1979:31). Borden eventually took over some additional space in the building as well as rooms in the Power Plant building, which were used primarily for storage. At that time, Hawthorn was concerned with developing the Department of Anthropology and Sociology so left Borden “pretty well to [his] own devices” (Borden interviews 1979:31). Borden taught “Archaeology in British Columbia” (Anthropology 420) and “Old World Pre-history” (Anthropology 320), offered in alternating years, while maintaining his position as a German professor. Anthropology 420 included fieldwork on Saturdays (Borden interviews 1979:36)

Moira Irvine began working for Borden in 1961 as a part time student assistant while she completed her BA in anthropology at UBC. In 1965, Irvine became the first lab assistant (Irvine 1968). In these early years, LOA was a very informal entity that served primarily as Borden’s personal workspace. Borden conducted fieldwork and led field schools for students while Irvine acted as Lab factotum. Irvine had clerical and curatorial duties as well as technical archaeological work, such as photography, drafting, maintaining field equipment, and taking part in some fieldwork (LOA n.d.).

In 1969, Cyril Belshaw became the Head of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, and awarded Borden a full time professorship as an archaeologist (Matson 2014; Williams 1980:31). As a part of the Department, LOA has no budget of its own and in the early days, Borden either generated funds through research grants or paid for things out of his own pocket (LOA 1969). LOA funded Irvine’s position (eventually referred to as the Curatorial Assistant) with “soft money,” though this changed in the 1970s when the position became a line item of the Department’s budget (LOA 1994).
The 1970s was a period of growth for LOA, as the Department began to hire more archaeology faculty. Richard Pearson was hired in 1971, followed shortly by R. G. Matson in 1972, and later David Pokotylo in 1978. Even with additional faculty members, Borden still treated certain lab spaces as his own. Matson and Pearson had access to facilities in the Power Plant building and Brock Hall, but the original Math basement space remained primarily for Borden (Matson 2014). Though Borden retired in 1970, he remained an active presence in the Department until he passed away in 1978. LOA had amassed over 70,000 objects and associated archaeological records and, with the growing faculty, was in need of new workspaces. At the end of the 1960s, the Department began drafting plans for new facilities including a building that would house both the Museum of Anthropology and provide new spaces for the Laboratory of Archaeology (Belshaw 1967). The new facilities opened in 1976, providing faculty with personal lab spaces embedded within collections storage and making the Lab more physically cohesive.

Borden’s work and the Anthropology 420 field schools on Musqueam reserve land were important for forming relationships between the Lab and the community. After Borden’s retirement, this connection somewhat lessened and a field school at Musqueam would not happen again for several decades as faculty research interests lay elsewhere in the province and across the world. The archaeologists working in British Columbia engaged with community members through fieldwork but generally without “sustained involvement after the fieldwork was over” (Pokotylo 2014). This is not to say that archaeologists and community members did

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3 Audrey Hawthorn, the Director of the Museum of Anthropology at the time, worked at length with the federal government to generate financial support for a new building. On July 1, 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the federal government would grant the Museum $2.5 million to build a new facility (Hawthorn 1993:78)
not form relationships at this time, but that they were not necessarily being expressed through the work done in the Lab.

2.3 Collections and Ancestor Care

For Borden, the lab was an important aspect of the scientific approach to archaeology. Analysis of the artifacts, laid out together in the lab with all the associated records, was crucial to understanding the significance of a site (Borden 1950:241). Faculty members treated the collections at LOA as scientific or archaeological data that supported academic research. LOA did not give ancestral remains (referred to primarily as “skeletal remains” or “human remains”) special consideration. LOA stored them amongst the rest of the collection and often used them for teaching human osteology (LOA 1969; Matson 2014). The attitude toward ancestor care at the time was “the collections were there, they’re secure, [and] no one’s inquired about them” (Pokotylo 2014).

2.4 LOA in the Museum

LOA moved into the new Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in 1976 but remained a distinct entity separate from the Museum. The move provided LOA with a new opportunity to interact with the public via the exhibition of archaeological material. A Curator of Archaeology position was created in the Museum for archaeology faculty on a two-year rotational basis. Pokotylo (2014) recalls that LOA and MOA “never explicitly defined” the exact role of the Curator of Archaeology but the position generally entailed a number of different activities including collections management, engaging in public archaeology activities such as school
programs and public presentations, coordinating the Volunteer Associates\(^4\) and creating exhibits. Matson developed a display on the archaeology of the Pacific Rim for MOA’s small permanent archaeology gallery using the collections at LOA. In 1978, Pearson brought in the travelling exhibit *Image and Life: 50,000 Years of Japanese Prehistory*, which he co-developed with the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan. Since LOA had no budget of its own, all exhibit funding was applied for through the MOA. The federal Museums Assistance Program (MAP) provided money for temporary and traveling shows so this became the focus for the Curator of Archaeology (Pokotylo 2014). This ability to utilize the Museum for creating public archaeology displays has been important in LOA’s development and will be explored further in the next section.

\(^4\) The Volunteer Associates are a self-governing group of volunteers that deliver public programming and aid in research at MOA. This includes educational programming about archaeology that is overseen by LOA.
3. **LOA Through the 1980s and 1990s**

3.1 **Archaeology in British Columbia**

In the 1980s the Heritage Conservation Branch (in charge of administering the HCA) introduced the “proponent pays” model, in which developers were responsible for hiring private archaeological consulting firms to conduct impact assessments (Apland 1993:12; Klassen 2013:58). This caused a rapid increase in the number of consulting firms in the province. To regulate the process, the Branch drafted guidelines for conducting impact assessments (Klassen 2013:58). Indigenous groups became increasingly vocal and pushed for greater consultation and representation in heritage legislation. In 1987, the Branch launched Project Pride, a provincial heritage legislation review process that sought input from communities, heritage organizations and post-secondary educational institutions throughout the province (Apland 1993:17; Klassen 2013:59). Through this process communities expressed the desire for stronger involvement in archaeological site protection and management (Apland 1993:18). The HCA was eventually changed in 1994 (and amended again in 1996) to include “provisions for agreements with communities” but did not address many of Project Pride’s recommendations including an increased role in the archaeological management process or resolving issues of ownership over archaeological material (Klassen 2013:60).

As communities pushed for greater involvement in the archaeological process, they also pushed for legal recognition of their land rights. After a number of cases over Aboriginal title went through the British Columbia Supreme Court, the British Columbia Court of Appeals, and in some cases, the Supreme Court of Canada, the provincial government announced it was willing to negotiate treaties with First Nations (McKee 2000). By 1993, the British Columbia Treaty Commission was established, comprised of members from First Nations and from all
levels of government (Mckee 2000:33). Through this treaty process, the archaeological record became an important tool for groups pursuing land claims (Nicholas 2006:356). The treaty process (on-going today) also involves negotiating the return of cultural heritage with two major museums, the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History). Though LOA was not similarly specified in the treaty process, it still saw an influx of inventory requests from communities who were “encouraged to discover what evidence they had for occupation of their traditional territory” (Matson 2014).

3.2 LOA Structure and Personnel

Through the early part of the 1980s, the LOA group remained small with Pearson, Matson and Pokotylo as the only faculty members and Irvine in the position of Curatorial Assistant. In 1986, Michael Blake joined the Department and at the end of the decade Brian Chisholm was brought in as an instructor. Chisholm (2014) recalls LOA was still fairly unstructured at this time, suggesting that LOA members met irregularly and informally (“discussions in the hallway”) and that Irvine’s work involved “whatever needed to be done to support the archaeologists.” Sadly, in 1989, Moira Irvine passed away and with her went an important body of knowledge about the Borden era and the early days of archaeology at UBC (LOA 1994). Joyce Johnson, who was completing her BA in Anthropology at UBC, was hired to fill the role of Curatorial Assistant in the same year (Thomson 2002).

With the rapid increase in CRM projects carried out by consulting firms, LOA was being named as the repository on permit forms more and more frequently. This necessitated more frequent communication between consulting archaeologists and the Lab and, as the designated

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5 Each Treaty Final Agreement contains provisions for either the return of the Nation’s material culture and/or respectful caretaking. For examples see the Tsawwassen First Nation or Yale First Nation Final Agreements.
repository for many of these projects, LOA also managed a larger amount of deposited archaeological material. In addition to CRM-related work, LOA also began to receive inventory requests from communities wishing to locate their cultural material and their ancestors. This resulted from the treaty process as well as to developments in the field of museology. In 1992, the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples published its recommendations, one of which focused on repatriation (Nicks and Hill 1992). Both the on-going treaty process and the outcomes of the Task Force meant LOA needed to focus greater attention on the collections in order to respond to these requests.

LOA members continued to conduct field schools in the province through the 1980s and 1990s. After receiving funding from the Dean of Arts in 1991, LOA began holding its field school in the Fraser Valley in collaboration the Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Council (LOA 1994). For several years, the Department ran a coinciding ethnographic field school in the Fraser Valley as well. Projects carried out at Scowlitz, Xá:ytem (Hatzic Rock) site and Spirit Camp site were important collaborations between LOA and Fraser Valley communities. Working with these communities, LOA members began to learn the role archaeology could play in connecting people today to their ancestors and the importance of conducting archaeology in a way that was respectful of a community’s wishes (Blake 2014).

By the end of the 1990s, LOA started to become more of an entity unto itself with roles and responsibilities that were distinct from the rest of the Department. It was through this period that LOA began developing official written policies, such as its first repatriation policy (Blake 2014). Johnson’s duties as Curatorial Assistant now expanded beyond the needs of faculty to incorporate a number of outside interests including communities and archaeology consulting firms. Additionally, many of those I spoke to noted that Johnson’s administrative skill set helped
guide LOA to a greater focus on collections management. In response to this increasing complexity, LOA members formed a committee with a Director in order to facilitate decisions about Lab processes by consensus (Pokotylo 2014).

3.3 Collections and Ancestor Care

LOA made a number of changes to its approaches to collections management through this period. The rapid growth of CRM work in the province through the 1980s resulted in a large volume of archaeological material being deposited to LOA and put a strain on its storage facilities. By the end of the 1980s, LOA made the decision to close its doors to new incoming material (Matson 2014). LOA did, however, continue to accept new material if it was part of a site already represented in the collections (meaning consulting firms could still make deposits), it was a faculty member’s own research or if it was the wish of a community “officially expressed in the form of a Band Council Resolution” (LOA 1995).

In addition to exercising greater control over what was coming into the Lab, LOA turned its attention to the material that was already there. Previously, LOA had not focused on ancestral remains, partly because it had no physical anthropologist on staff, but also because communities were not yet requesting repatriations. LOA engaged in its first repatriation in 1991 after a community contacted the Lab requesting an inventory of the ancestral remains from their territory. By the end of the 1990s, three repatriations had occurred. In all three cases, it was the community that approached LOA inquiring about ancestral remains and requesting repatriation. The recommendations of the Task Force brought issues of repatriation and respectful care of cultural material to the fore during the 1990s. Now LOA had to account for what and who were in the collections and it managed those collections. The manner in which LOA cared for the ancestral remains became an increasing concern as community members visited the Lab:
Members of the communities would come and visit the collections and invariably would be very upset seeing how their ancestors were being treated in our collection. I think for a lot of us that was a real major eye opener that “boy, there’s something really going on here that is wrong.” And it dawned on us, I think kind of slowly, that we had to do something about it (Blake 2014)

Ancestral remains were initially housed along with the rest of the excavated site materials. Communities expressed concern over a lack of security and seclusion for the ancestors. In response, LOA moved the ancestral remains to shelving units set apart from the other materials, covered them with plywood panels and secured the wood with a lock and length of chain. It was not until a visiting community group expressed distress upon seeing their ancestors put under lock and key that LOA realized that this was a disrespectful approach. These repatriations and the lessons learned through the collaborative exhibits discussed in the next section created important changes to the way LOA approached collections management and pushed LOA towards becoming more respectful in its caretaking practices.

3.4 LOA in the Museum

Through the 1980s, the Curator of Archaeology developed two exhibits. Pearson created Four Seasons: Food Getting in British Columbia Prehistory during his first (and only) rotation as Curator of Archaeology (David Pokotylo email communication, May 15, 2015). The exhibit looked at prehistoric subsistence practices and intended to provide “a more realistic perspective to the public of what contemporary archaeology is and does” (Pokotylo 1983).

In 1981, Pokotylo transformed Four Seasons into a travelling exhibit and sent it to various museums in British Columbia and Alberta. In 1983, Pokotylo curated Blood From Stone: Making and Using Stone Tools in Prehistoric British Columbia. The exhibit focused on stone tool technology as a way of understanding prehistoric cultural activities. Shortly afterwards, graduate student Ann Stevenson produced Changing Tides: The Development of
Archaeology in B.C.’s Fraser Delta in 1985 as part of her Masters thesis. Changing Tides aimed to foster awareness of archaeology for the public and present archaeological methods and goals (Stevenson 1985:5).

These early exhibits primarily focused on archaeological methods and interpretations and did not involve much, if any, collaboration with communities and there were no formal agreements with communities regarding the display of objects. Pokotylo (2014) suggests that at the time his own mode of operation was primarily to notify communities that material from their territory was going to be used in an exhibit. Otherwise, the Curator was largely in control on the content and process.

In the 1990s, the concept of collaboration emerged in museums as an important way to work with communities to develop exhibits. Through the Museum, LOA became involved in two important collaborative archaeology exhibits. From Under the Delta: Wet-Site Archaeology in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland and Written in the Earth both opened at MOA in 1996. Both projects involved lengthy delays due to intense negotiations with community partners over content and production processes. Both of these exhibits were important learning experiences for all of those involved regarding what it means to collaborate and were seminal events for shaping the way LOA and MOA operate today. There is not space here to recount all of the complexities involved in the production of each exhibit so my intent here is to highlight outcomes of the exhibits that relate to LOA’s development.

From Under the Delta (FUD) grew out of an archaeological salvage project from a number of years earlier. In 1989, construction of a new water hazard at the Beach Grove Golf Club unearthed some wet-site material (organic material, such as woven baskets, that is preserved in wet environments). The site, referred to as Water Hazard (DgRs-30), encompassed
overlapping territories of Musqueam and Tsawwassen First Nation. After discovering this unearthed material, the communities requested LOA and MOA’s aid in recovering any other wet-site material (Stevenson 2015). The Water Hazard excavation was significant for its direct community involvement, particularly from Musqueam, and this involvement would play an important role in the exhibit process to come.

Kathryn Bernick, the Field Director for the work at Water Hazard, had completed a survey of wet-site material found in repositories across the province and knew there was a large amount of wet-site material already in collections. The work at Water Hazard and the collections survey made it apparent that more material would likely emerge through continued development projects and that archaeologists should be aware of it and know how to conserve it (Stevenson 2015). The communities involved at Water Hazard wanted to raise awareness about wet-site material as an important cultural resource (Stevenson and Bernick 1993). Ann Stevenson, a MOA staff member who worked as the Field Supervisor during the Water Hazard excavation, worked with Bernick to develop a larger project on wet-site material involving a conference, exhibit and book. The conference (running April 27-30, 1995) and the book (released in 1998) share the title *Hidden Dimensions: The Cultural Significance of Wetland Archaeology*. The conference included a public forum, which brought community members and archaeologists together for open dialogue about archaeology. *FUD* was initially slated to open in October 1994 and then re-scheduled to open right before the conference in March 1995. In the end, *FUD* opened within months of *Written In The Earth* in 1996.

*Written in the Earth (WITE)* was initially conceptualized by Pokotylo (as the Curator of Archaeology) and Margaret Holm (who had just completed an MA thesis on prehistoric art on the Northwest Coast) in 1991. The objective was to exhibit art objects from many different
communities in the south coast region of British Columbia (Holm and Pokotylo 1997). Because the material was largely from sites associated with Musqueam, MOA applied jointly with the community to MAP for the funding. While the curators worked with a number of different communities for the exhibit, Musqueam took a “leading role in the project” (Holm and Pokotylo 1997:34).

At this point in the early 1990s, collaborative exhibits were a relatively new concept and the curators for both exhibits were unsure of what to expect. For WITE, Pokotylo (2014) thought the collaborative process would involve working with the communities to ensure their approval of proposed exhibit content. Similarly for FUD, the curators expected to conduct consultations over content and bring in community members to work on whatever aspects they could (Stevenson 2015). With this type of consultation, museums ask outsiders to provide support for museum-led projects but the authority of the curator is typically not challenged (Ames 1999:41; Peers and Brown 2003:2). What actually unfolded with FUD and WITE was a more meaningful collaboration in which communities had greater control over all aspects of the exhibit process. Instead of acquiring consensus on exhibit content, the collaborative process extended into issues of collections management, loan policies and security. Because LOA was supplying the majority of the material for both exhibits, the communities had questions about its collections policies including: what its written policies were (if any); how LOA conceived of ownership over archaeological materials; and how LOA approached access and security.⁶ In many cases, these questions had not been specifically considered by LOA previously, especially in relation to community interests. These questions expanded the scope of both projects as LOA was forced to

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⁶ After discussions with community representatives, Bernick and Stevenson sent a list of questions regarding LOA’s collections policy to Matson and Pokotylo in a memo on February 1, 1993.
consider how it was approaching caretaking on a daily basis and what its responsibilities to communities were. Communities did not want the exhibits to open until they felt their concerns had been properly addressed. As a result, both exhibits opened in 1996, one to two years later than initially planned.

A number of things came out of the communities’ questions over ownership. Existing legislation remains unclear on the question of ownership over archaeological materials (Holm and Pokotylo 1997:36; Klassen 2013:60), so LOA was forced to consider what it actually means to hold material “in-trust.” Through these exhibits, LOA learned to acknowledge the inherent ownership rights of communities over archaeological collections (Holm and Pokotylo 1997:36). In acknowledging this inherent ownership, LOA and MOA had to also recognize the issue of liability if these materials were damaged during the exhibits. MOA’s practice was to purchase special insurance for material on loan from other institutions but it did not do the same for material from LOA (Ames 1999:46). The relationship between LOA and MOA was fluid enough that material from LOA was not generally considered an official loan. Communities wanted these loans to be recognized and for the materials in the exhibits be valued and insured. The concept of placing a monetary value on the material was a challenge to the archaeologists who traditionally do not place values on materials to dissuade illicit sale and trade (Holm and Pokotylo 1997:38). Additionally, some communities did not want monetary values placed on their material. Museum staff researched appropriate valuations that would work within the parameters of UBC’s insurance and then negotiated the values with each community. Further, communities wanted it to be acknowledged that the materials were on loan from those communities themselves, since LOA was holding the material in-trust. Instead of loans being negotiated between institutions, communities were involved in granting permission as well.
Communities also wanted assurance of security during the exhibit run and how material would be stored once the exhibit was over, so these aspects of the exhibits (and beyond) had to be discussed and agreed upon as well. Protocol agreements between Musqueam, MOA, and LOA were drafted concerning both *FUD* (dated June 15, 1995) and *WITE* (dated September 6, 1995) to address issues of exhibit content, insurance, security and storage at LOA.

As Kahn (2000:58) suggests, many of those who write and reflect on collaborative projects tend to focus on the process as positive while ignoring the complications and messiness of bringing multiple voices together. Ames (1999) discusses some of the tensions and difficulties that arose in producing *FUD* and *WITE*. Communities fought to be heard and LOA was challenged to reconsider many of its modes of operation. Though it was not an easy process, LOA began to learn what it means to meaningfully collaborate, not just consult, with communities. LOA needed to recognize the ownership rights of communities not just in exhibit text panels, but also in the way it approaches loans, insurance and collections management. The process not only educated LOA on collaboration in general, but helped to further develop individual relationships with the community partners as well. While there had been somewhat of a hiatus of working on Musqueam reserve land since Borden’s time, the Water Hazard excavation and these two exhibits mark the reemergence of LOA’s direct engagement with Musqueam and provided an important foundation for LOA to build relationships with communities going forward.
4. LOA Through the 2000s

4.1 Archaeology in British Columbia

The HCA has remained largely unchanged since it was amended in 1996. It is entrenched with a conservation ethic that emphasizes heritage as a non-renewable resource that requires protection for the purpose of future study (Klassen 2013:61). The Archaeology Branch tends to cater to developers by “providing the regulatory mechanisms by which development projects can satisfy due diligence” (Hammond 2009:57). However, the increased involvement of communities in British Columbian archaeology has also “forced archaeologists to accommodate indigenous perspectives and interests” (Klassen 2013:87). Though there is no legislation requiring meaningful consultation or collaboration with communities, “associated First Nations are provided with an opportunity to comment” on archaeological permit applications (Nicholas 2006:356). Communities are continually working to assert authority over their heritage through protocols and agreements with industry and government, though this is largely outside of the Archaeology Branch (Hammond 2009; Klassen 2013; Nicholas 2006).

4.2 LOA Structure and Personnel

The 2000s were an important period of growth and change for LOA. Within the first few years of the decade, Joyce Johnson fell ill and took a leave of absence. She retired while on leave, passing away shortly afterwards and again, an important era of LOA’s history drew to a close with the passing of the Curatorial Assistant. Patricia Ormerod, who had worked with Johnson as both an undergraduate and graduate student assistant, took over as Curatorial Assistant. The LOA group continued to expand as the Department hired new faculty and invited

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7 Nicholas (2006:375) notes that though this is not an actual requirement, the Archaeology Branch tends to treat it as such.
other groups on campus with an interest in archaeology to its monthly meetings. The new members included faculty from Classical, Near Eastern, and Religious Studies (CNERS), post-doctoral scholars, and graduate students, and a representative from the Volunteer Associates.

Though LOA has increased in size and complexity since 1949, it remains a loosely defined entity. The need to more clearly define LOA roles and responsibilities is expressed throughout the meeting minutes in the 2000s and remains a topic of on-going discussion. Building off the work that had been done in the 1990s, LOA engaged in a number of projects that continue to build relationships with communities and further developed LOA as a repository.

Susan Rowley came to UBC in 2001 to take a position that was split between the Department and MOA (as the Curator of Public Archaeology). With her own previous experience working collaboratively with communities, Rowley brought important ideas about repatriation to LOA and developed a proactive repatriation project called The Journey Home (discussed in a later section). In 2005, Andrew Martindale joined the faculty and in 2007 brought a field school back to Musqueam reserve land for the first time since Borden. Other field schools had been taught through LOA since Borden’s time but none had taken place directly on Musqueam reserve land. Running for four years, the field school was a joint project between UBC and Musqueam.

Musqueam community members were involved throughout the project, from the development of the research design onwards. The return of the Musqueam field school also helped to strengthen the relationship between Musqueam and LOA (La Salle et al. 2007). Ormerod’s own interest in the collections and how they could be reconnected to communities helped to focus the Curatorial Assistant position on collections management that involved respectful caretaking.

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8 Though members of the CNERS faculty had sat in on LOA meetings for a number of years already, in April 2006 LOA had its first meeting that officially included the expanded group.
LOA also became involved in a large renewal project at MOA, titled *A Partnership of Peoples: A New Infrastructure for Collaborative Research at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology*. LOA focused significant time and energy into the project throughout the 2000s and as a result, *A Partnership of Peoples* has had a major impact on the way LOA operates today.

### 4.3 LOA in the Museum

In the late 1990s, MOA began to discuss the need for a renewal of its physical spaces in order to increase access to collections (Schultz 2008:18). An opportunity to apply for a grant from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) prompted MOA to develop a project that focused on community collaboration and innovative approaches to research. In 2001, MOA submitted the grant application for *A Partnership of Peoples* jointly with LOA and three community partners: The Musqueam Indian Band in Vancouver, the Stó:lō Nation and Tribal Council in the Fraser Valley, and the U’mista Cultural Society on the central coast of BC (MOA n.d.).\(^9\) The project was an important step for MOA toward developing meaningful relationships with communities by becoming “more welcoming, more useful, and more accessible, in particular for those whose cultures are represented by the museum’s collection” (Schultz 2008:5). *A Partnership of Peoples* involved a renewal of the physical Museum but also the creation of a digital research network that would link collections of Northwest Coast material from institutions all over the world. The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) would facilitate the sharing of knowledge between institutions, researchers and communities and be co-developed by MOA and the three community partners (Rowley 2013). The UBC’s Board of

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9 The CFI grant comprised a large portion of the projects overall budget, but it should be noted that funding came from a number of different sources including the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund, Canadian Heritage, the University of British Columbia, the UBC Faculty of Arts, MOA itself, and some public sector donations (Schultz 2008:19 n.10)
Governors granted the final approval of the renewal project in May 2006 and in 2010, MOA opened the doors to its new facilities.

The renewal provided LOA with brand new laboratories, including a new Chemistry Lab, and storage facilities. In order to provide content to the RRN, LOA also created a new object-centered database and photographed a large number of artifacts in the collections. The new physical storage units and the new database provided a precise system for recording and retrieving collections and equipped LOA with a greater ability to organize collections.

Meeting minutes throughout the decade show that LOA dedicated significant time and planning to the renewal project to ensure LOA’s needs were met. Rowley, whose position was three-quarters in MOA and one-quarter in the Department, played an important role in facilitating an open line of communication between LOA and the Museum during the renewal. MOA allowed Rowley to use her Museum time to act as the LOA lead on the project, which ensured LOA had a consistent presence in the Museum during the development stages of the renewal. LOA’s overall involvement in MOA had lessened throughout the 1990s with no new exhibits developed by the Curator of Archaeology after *Written In The Earth*. The initiation of the renewal project followed very shortly by Rowley’s cross-appointment strengthened the connection between LOA and MOA. Though the permanent archaeology gallery was removed due to funding issues, LOA maintained a public face in the Museum through the new lab spaces. Visible to museum visitors, LOA’s lab spaces allow the public to see archaeologists at work. The renewal also provided LOA with another opportunity to work collaboratively with Musqueam and other communities, including the means to re-conceptualize its storage spaces

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10 Though the Curator of Archaeology position still technically exists at MOA, it has not been filled since Rowley’s arrival (Rowley 2014). While the position provided the faculty member with a release from coursework, the production of exhibits was onerous and did not provide the same academic capital as publishing written work (Pokotylo 2014).
and database in conversation with those communities. Overall, the project was a significant guiding force that shaped LOA’s identity and by the end of this period, “the archives and the repository, which had been service providers for faculty teaching courses, became an important entity unto itself” (Ormerod 2014).

4.4 Collections and Ancestor Care

When Ormerod began, she became aware of how much of the material generated through decades of faculty, student, and CRM projects had “never been written about or described” and therefore was not being made accessible to the public (Ormerod 2014). LOA kept material on trays generally organized by archaeological site but individual object locations were not recorded. Researchers interested in a particular collection would sit in the storage space and look through trays until they found the material in which they were interested. There was little control over the location of materials as they could migrate from tray to tray each time researchers or faculty accessed them. The renewal provided LOA with the ability to improve both collections access and organization. LOA was able to hire a number of staff to create digital records and photographs of the objects while collections were temporarily stored during the renovations. As the material was unpacked in the new storage, tray location information was entered into each record. The new facilities were designed so that the storage area was a separate space from the researcher workspaces. With fewer people in the storage area, the risk of objects migrating from tray to tray was much lower. By having collections available through the RRN, LOA is able to make the collections more widely accessible. The ways that the RRN helps LOA share knowledge will be discussed in a later section.

LOA also became more focused on ancestral remains during the renewal project, placing them as a reappearing priority item on LOA meeting agendas starting in 2003. A major concern
was how the ancestors would be housed during the building renovations. After LOA failed to
develop appropriate housing in the 1990s, the group realized they “should just take advice from
and get guidance from people whose ancestors these are (Blake 2014). In March 2004, LOA
hosted members from several communities whose ancestors resided in the Lab. The working
group, titled the Advisory Committee on Repatriation Issues, discussed how LOA should
proceed with caring for the ancestors during the renewal process. The meeting presented an
opportunity for open dialogue about what LOA is and how it operates. LOA members explained
the Lab’s history and how ancestors came to reside there and community members were able to
ask questions about the ancestors (and other collections) and what work LOA does with them.
LOA showed community members the physical spaces that were potential options for housing
the ancestors during the renovations with clear discussions about the pros and cons of each
option. They also had the opportunity to speak about the needs of the ancestors and what they
perceived to be important aspects of the caretaking work.

What came of the meeting was a group consensus on how to proceed with temporary
housing during the renovation as well as plans for more permanent housing in the new building.
Because LOA resides on Musqueam territory, the group decided to follow Musqueam protocols
for caretaking. LOA was to look to Musqueam for guidance on the creation of the physical
housing for the ancestors as well as for appropriate protocols for the care and (when necessary)
handling of the ancestors. At the same time it was agreed that LOA also needed to be prepared
to accommodate additional requirements brought forward by other communities (Rowley and
Hausler 2008:206). This meeting was an important turning point for LOA:

There’s always been these moves on LOA’s part to try and be as respectful as possible
but I think [The Advisory Committee on Repatriation Issues meeting] was the first time
we actually sat down with communities and asked them what would be respectful
(Rowley 2014).
LOA continued to work with Musqueam throughout the renewal project on the details of the ancestral housing. A cedar room within LOA’s collections storage space now houses the ancestors. The enclosed space has open shelves and each ancestor is housed in a cardboard box with tissue and no plastic is used in any of the housing materials. Any materials associated with the ancestors (such as burial goods) are also placed in ancestral housing.

In addition to the ancestors and their associated burial goods, LOA recognizes there are materials in the collections that are culturally sensitive for communities. LOA designates materials as culturally sensitive on the advice of communities. While LOA has not built a special structure for culturally sensitive materials, these items are separated from the rest of the collections and housed together next to ancestral housing. Additionally, LOA restricts visual access to these materials by withholding all images of culturally sensitive items from the RRN.

In addition to working on ancestral housing, LOA also became more involved in the process of repatriation. After looking at the repatriations LOA had been involved in previously, Rowley became interested in the idea that an institution could be proactive in reaching out to communities. By becoming proactive, institutions may redress some of the power imbalance involved in the process, “where communities are placed in the position of supplicants when seeking access to information about their own heritage and, in particular, the repatriation of their ancestors” (Rowley and Hausler 2008:206). LOA had been responsive to communities’ requests for repatriation in the past, but in these instances it was the community approaching the Lab. In 2003 Rowley developed the Journey Home project with graduate law student Kristen Hausler. They began by making a thorough inventory of all of the ancestral remains at LOA and plotting find sites onto traditional territory maps of all relevant communities (bands, tribal councils and treaty groups). After seeking advice from Musqueam on the wording and content, Rowley and
Hausler sent out letters in November 2005 to 125 British Columbia First Nations (including bands, tribal councils and treaty groups) describing the project and inviting questions and discussion on further action. By March 2007, LOA had been in contact with over 75 First Nations (Rowley and Hausler 2008:207). Currently, LOA has completed seven repatriations and continues to get replies to the letters. A second batch of letters was sent out in 2007 and there is discussion about the possibility of sending out a third (Rowley 2014). These repatriations have been primarily of ancestors, though when burial goods were associated with the ancestor, those were repatriated as well. In one case, LOA also repatriated all associated documentation and paperwork.

What is apparent from these numbers is that engaging with repatriation is a slow process. Communities will be ready to repatriate at various times and some may never be ready. Additionally, there are remains that have little provenience information, making it difficult to determine where they should be repatriated (Rowley 2014). This on-going process makes the need for respectful ancestral housing and related protocols so important. Because of the ancestral housing that was developed through the renewal project, LOA has the capacity for long-term caretaking work while the process of proactive repatriation continues.
5. LOA Today

Over its history, LOA has evolved from a personal workspace for Charles E. Borden, to a complex entity that serves the needs of many different groups including local communities and CRM consulting firms. The lab assistant position held by Moira Irvine, Joyce Johnson and now Patricia Ormerod also evolved along with LOA. While the complexities of the job increased over time, the position itself remained classified as the Curatorial Assistant. LOA worked hard to change the position and eventually the Department of Anthropology received approval from the Dean of Arts to create a management position for the Lab. In 2013, Ormerod was officially hired as LOA Manager. Changing the position from a technical assistant to a management position “is indicative of the breadth of the responsibility and the role that the person in the position can take in moving LOA forward and carving out opportunities” (Ormerod 2014). The Lab itself has become something requiring full time management and the duties of the manager extend beyond serving only the needs of the faculty to expanded interest groups, especially communities.

The previous sections have outlined the milieu in which LOA developed, which Harrison (2005:198) suggests is important for understanding the character of an institution. It is also important to reflect on the experiences of LOA members working in communities while doing excavations. Many of those I spoke to reflected on his or her experiences in the field as influential to the work done at LOA. For some, it was realizing the impact archaeological work has on communities:

When you spend a few summers in communities you become aware of the rawness of some of these relationships, not just in archaeology, but sometimes the presence of archaeology really sparks it. You’re aware of it and yet you’re amongst wonderful, warm people. And they have opinions and you realize their histories have been stolen from them whether you are comfortable with the term “stolen” or not (Ormerod 2014).
Through these field experiences, Ormerod came to understand the significance of the material in LOA and the importance of reconnecting it with communities. Similarly, Blake’s experiences in one community helped him to understand the role LOA could have in connecting communities to their ancestors:

[The community] modeled for us the process of negotiating how to deal with ancestral remains in an archaeological site and then how to treat them and how to work with them. That was such a valuable experience because that then allowed me to think about how we generalize doing this with all of our archaeological collections that come from B. C. or anywhere else in the world (Blake 2014).

Archaeologists have tended to value ancestral remains and archaeological material as scientific resources for the study of past cultures, while communities tend to value archaeological sites and materials for their connection to people and “as entities that bridge past and present on a timeless cultural landscape” (Nicholas 2006:363). Through the 1990s, archaeologists began to work with communities to create interpretations of the archaeological record that incorporate both of these perspectives (Holm and Pokotylo 1997; Pokotylo and Brass 1997). Oral traditions and Indigenous perceptions of the past were being considered along with the more “scientific” archaeological explanations. Now spirituality, which is an important aspect of Indigenous knowledge (Yellowhorn 2002), is emerging as a new facet of archaeological interpretation (Martindale and Nicholas 2014:457). Through working with communities, LOA members have begun to understand the spiritual significance of their work:

We all say that we should approach everything with an open mind right? … So when we hear it from communities its like [the community is saying] “Of course, but you should approach it with an open heart and an open mind.” So the open heart, the empathy side of things, is actually something that in anthropological theory is really just being explored and thought about now (Rowley 2014).

The idea of approaching LOA’s work with empathy has developed through its work with ancestors. Witnessing the emotional impact and emotional investment community members
experienced during repatriation was not the kind of archaeology many of the faculty had been trained to do and, for Blake (2014), was a transformative process. LOA has come to understand the spiritual responsibilities it has to the communities in caring for the ancestors, which archaeologists previously may have disregarded as a meaningful category (Martindale 2014).

5.1 LOA’s Approaches to Caretaking

Zimmerman has suggested that archaeology has a history of *scientific colonialism* in its relationships with communities (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007:60). LOA’s growing understanding of the spiritual significance of its work is an important step towards redressing this legacy. Nicholas and Hollowell (2007:63) suggest that archaeologists need to embrace alternative worldviews as valid and recognize the power inequities between archaeologists and communities (including the distribution of research benefits) in order to begin moving beyond scientific colonialism. I argue that many of LOA’s practices and policies can be understood as addressing these issues.

5.1.1 Multiple Ways of Knowing

Through working with communities, LOA members have learned that there are more ways to view the archaeological record than just as scientific data for research. LOA has begun to understand the personal connections communities feel to this material. Though ancestors were previously treated as archaeological data and stored along with everything else in the collections (Blake 2014), LOA now understands the spiritual significance of the ancestors and their belongings. LOA’s practices for the care and (when necessary) handling of the ancestors now follow what Musqueam, as the host community, have taught LOA members. These teachings include methods and materials for housing as well as guidelines for the actions of faculty and
staff. These practices demonstrate respect for the ancestors as well as ensuring the spiritual health and safety of LOA members (Rowley and Hausler 2008:208). In addition building a cedar room for the ancestors, LOA also experimented with an alternative method for labeling the shelving within ancestral housing. The intent was to create a stronger connection to place by using names of indigenous plants, instead of assigning numbers to each unit. The shelves were given a category of plant such as “wetland” for the lowest shelf up to “tree” for the highest and, for example, each unit on the “tree” level was intended to have the name of a local indigenous tree. So far, the system has only partially been enacted as an alphanumeric system (for example, “tree” level, section 2 is recorded as “T2”) as individually named shelves made organization from a collections management standpoint somewhat difficult. Though the system was never fully put into place, it demonstrates at least a willingness on LOA’s part to reconsider even the smallest aspects of caretaking work.

This attempt at using local plant names instead of numbers was a potential way to avoid dissociating the ancestors from a sense of place. Avoiding the use of “dissociative terminology” has been another important way for LOA to incorporate different ways of knowing in its practices. “Dissociative terminology” is a concept used by Rowley et al. (2015) to describe language that distances communities from their cultural heritage by masking their affinities to it. For example, throughout this paper I have used the term ancestors to refer to the human bones excavated during archaeological work. While terms such as human remains or skeletal remains reference the biological nature of the remains, they do not speak to the way living communities are connected to them. Using ancestor acknowledges this connection and helps archaeologists to move beyond viewing remains only as archaeological data. While LOA applies the term ancestral to human remains, it also is aware of the connections communities have with artifacts.
as part of their cultural heritage. In recognition of this, LOA is also rethinking the language it uses to describe archaeological material. Through Musqueam’s work with Rowley, LOA has recently begun using the term *belonging* as a replacement for *artifact* or *object*. Understanding the collections as things that actually belonged to people in the past again helps to connect them to communities. Using a term like *belonging* begins to personalize the collections, instead of viewing them as just objects for research.

### 5.1.2 Ameliorating Power Asymmetry

Archaeologists often act as gatekeepers to the materials and the knowledge generated through archaeological research (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:230; Nicholas and Hollowell 2007:64). This position of control creates power asymmetries in the relationships between archaeologists and communities, whereby the archaeologist controls the location of and access to the archaeological record. LOA attempts to mitigate these asymmetries in a number of ways including proactive outreach and the use of accessible language in written policy.

The proactive outreach of the Journey Home project is important for addressing some of the power imbalance that exists in the repatriation process. In the early repatriations, it was communities who sought out their ancestors and had to make requests for their return. It requires a lot of work and resources on the community’s part to seek out their ancestors and request repatriation. By actively reaching out and offering to begin the repatriation process, LOA is establishing itself as a willing partner in the process. The proactive outreach also alerts communities that they have ancestors at LOA. Because LOA is a small entity, it may be overlooked by communities seeking out their ancestors, as was the case with one group who thought they had brought all of their ancestors home until LOA contacted them (Rowley and Hausler 2008:209). Another way LOA attempts to alleviate the difficulties of the repatriation
process is by having a repatriation policy written in as plain language as possible. This has been an ongoing revision process from the very first policy written in the mid-1990s that was bureaucratically worded and structured (Blake 2014). The policy lays out the typical work involved so communities have a sense of what the repatriation process entails. Though the policy is straightforward in the legal requirements of repatriation, it also emphasizes LOA will help each community to complete the work. LOA encourages communities to visit the Lab and suggests it will endeavor to follow each community’s protocols for the care of their ancestors.

LOA carries this practice of proactive outreach through most facets of LOA’s research policies as well. LOA ensures that relevant communities are notified about researcher requests for study or analysis of collections and communities must grant permission in order for any destructive analysis to take place (LOA 2014). Building off the outcomes of WITE and FUD in the 1990s, LOA also now requires permission from communities before any material is loaned to other institutions for exhibits. LOA extends this outreach beyond the cultural material to include other records generated during archaeological projects. For researchers wishing to publish photographs or other archival material, LOA again requires written notification to the applicable communities. This practice of notifying and asking permission creates a line of communication between LOA and communities and keeps the communities informed about the work going on at LOA. This practice is a step towards the “negotiated co-management” called for by Wylie (2005:65), where LOA shares the power to control access with the applicable communities. Because LOA’s practices guide researchers to contact communities, LOA has the opportunity to educate researchers on ways of acting and engaging with communities as well.

When discussing power inequities, it is also important to consider the tendency of archaeologists to claim rights of access to collections as their own research data (Colwell-
Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:230). In the new storage facilities, access to the collections is limited to the LOA Manager, LOA Director and student assistants. Prior to the move, faculty had unrestricted access to any materials and often worked directly with collections in the storage spaces. By enacting this policy, LOA is emphasizing that the materials do not belong to the archaeologists.

5.1.3 Sharing Knowledge

As a research facility, LOA also looks for ways that it can share archaeological knowledge with communities without necessarily imposing its own interpretations on that knowledge. For example, LOA’s chemistry lab provides the opportunity to help communities answer questions about their ancestors. Though Chisholm had previously been doing isotope research out of a space in the Department, the renewal facilitated the construction of a new chemistry lab with a greater capacity for isotope analysis. The construction of the lab, along with Chisholm’s impending retirement, enabled the Department to hire new faculty members Mike Richards and Darlene Weston in 2010 (Brian Chisholm, email correspondence, July 23, 2015). Richards’ expertise in isotope analysis and Weston’s in biological anthropology and osteoarchaeology, along with the new lab, has provided LOA with a greater ability to give communities knowledge about their ancestors. While some communities may not wish to have any analysis done on their ancestors, those with an interest can work with LOA to determine the questions they would like answered. Communities “can take that knowledge away and work and think through what that means. Because it doesn’t necessarily always mean the same thing [to everyone]” (Rowley 2014).

Being a part of the RRN is another way that LOA is better able to share knowledge with communities. Prior to the RRN, anyone wishing to look at collections would need to visit LOA
and look through trays of material. Now, most of that same material can be viewed on-line through the RRN and keyword searching makes it easier to locate material than the previous manual system. The RRN is also designed so users can share their own knowledge with institutions and other users by commenting and contributing to discussions around objects. Because the RRN was co-developed with the renewal’s community partners, it is easy to use and does not require extensive knowledge of archaeological or technical terms in order to search for records. One of the partners’ recommendations, for example, was that all object records be available without first having to enter any search terms (Rowley 2013:28). Participating in a network that is designed for a variety of users, not just academic researchers, helps LOA make the collections more widely available.

5.2 Forming LOA’s Institutional Culture

How does respecting multiple ways of knowing, addressing power inequities, and sharing knowledge become part of LOA’s institutional culture? The actions and practices of LOA’s members have always been important for guiding what LOA is as an entity. LOA makes decisions based on group consensus, so the multiple voices of LOA members shape its practices. When LOA members bring their personal experiences from their own projects into LOA, they become teachers for the other members. For example, Martindale reflects that watching Rowley follow the protocols for respectful caretaking of ancestors “reminds us in a great, sort of informal way through practical doing of [the protocols]. Now we all do it . . . and that creates for us a much different way of dealing with ancestral remains. [Rowley] inhabits it as a member of LOA and we learn from her” (Martindale 2014). The introduction of the term ancestors similarly came through members learning it from communities and then using it and speaking it in their daily work. In my own experience working at LOA as a student assistant, I learned to think and
speak about the work we do with attention to the Lab’s relationships with communities. Ormerod takes time to not only explain protocols to new staff but really imparts why they are important to follow and respect. Talking to the ancestors before entering the housing or wearing red ochre become normalized practices but are also reminders of significance of the caretaking work.

LOA also has a number of written documents that guide its practices, such as a policy and procedures manual and a repatriation policy. Written policies or protocols generally emerge out of practice at LOA. Revisions to documents such as the procedures manual reflect the changing practices and use of language, instead of imposing change themselves. After the Journey Home project was underway and LOA was learning how it needed to proceed with the repatriation process, the repatriation policy was revised. LOA also has Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that have guided specific projects, like WITE and FUD, Martindale’s field schools at Musqueam, and the RRN. Though not a LOA-specific document, UBC also has a Memorandum of Affiliation with Musqueam in 2006.

I asked many of the people I spoke with about the importance of expressing LOA’s approaches to caretaking through written policy. I frequently heard that the practice and in-person engagement with communities was more important than creating policy documents that outlined appropriate actions. Working with communities builds personal relationships and fosters trust and that trust cannot necessarily be represented through written agreements. Working collaboratively to incorporate multiple voices in a project also requires flexibility, which, again, is difficult to capture in written policy:

People have a tendency, when something’s written down as policy, to forget that it’s policy, not law. And they sort of say, “these are our rules.” [...] My sense of nervousness over too much formalization is that [inflexibility] happening. And that doesn’t mean that
one shouldn’t be professional. That’s a different thing. Being professional in one’s practice is really important (Rowley 2014).

As an example, Rowley pointed to an old blanket statement policy regarding ancestral remains:

When I arrived here everybody was like, “there will be no bioanth [analysis] done on First Nations ancestors.” But when we’re working with communities, many of them want to know. It’s being open to those things and listening to what people are interested in and how they want to proceed and not coming in with assumptions that they don’t want to do any analysis (Rowley 2014).

However, LOA members also suggested that written policy does have an important role to play. Expressing these caretaking approaches through written policies become “formal recognitions that curtail power” (Martindale 2014). These documents can declare what LOA does and signal to others what LOA is doing which creates a legacy for LOA” (Martindale 2014). Written policy has a formality that might suggest these approaches are a part of LOA on a more structural level than daily practice. Ormerod (2014) would like to see “this way of engaging with communities passed on as the most significant aspect of the work LOA is doing” and hopes “it will be built on in the future.” For her, passing these aspects on entails written policy but also oral communication in LOA’s spaces among students, staff, faculty and communities (Ormerod, e-mail communication to author, August 5, 2015).

LOA’s approaches are first learned through working with communities, practiced and taught within the LOA group and then they are incorporated into policy. This emergent quality of policy emphasizes that written agreements should not mediate relationships between LOA and communities. LOA is not using written policy to create boilerplate solutions. For example, the term *ancestor* now appears in LOA’s most recent version of its policy and procedures manual (LOA 2014). The term has been in use at LOA for a number of years and over that time, it became apparent that it works as a term for many different communities across cultures (Rowley
Belonging is a more recent term that LOA has learned from Musqueam. While it is starting to be used more within LOA, both Ormerod and Rowley mentioned the importance of talking with different communities to see if belonging is a term that has traction, and if not, to see what other terms might be more appropriate (Ormerod 2014; Rowley 2014).

LOA has also changed old policy to reflect a more flexible approach. Up until 2004, the policy and procedures manual stated it would accept new collections if it was “the wish, officially expressed in the form of a Band Council Resolution or its equivalent, of interested First Nation groups” (LOA 2004). However, in practice Ormerod (2014) suggests, “if a Nation contacts us and asks us to be the repository for material then we always would say yes.” Reflecting this, the request for legal documentation has since been changed in the manual to say that “the interested Indigenous peoples have officially expressed a desire” to have LOA as their repository (LOA 2014). Instead of placing bureaucratic limitations on community requests by requiring formal documentation, the policy guides LOA to have a conversation with communities about their wishes. Written policy should promote conversation and negotiation when working with communities in order to be accommodating of different needs and approaches.

5.3 LOA Going Forward: Possibilities and Limitations

LOA continues to navigate its existence as a relatively informal and flexible entity that has increasing responsibilities. When I asked LOA members about LOA’s goals, most emphasized that LOA should remain committed to being a research facility. While I have focused on LOA’s developments of community relationships, it is important to state that LOA is still a facility “committed to the scholarly study of the material evidence of past cultures” (LOA
LOA is negotiating ways that research can be done while at the same time respecting the rights and wishes of communities.

To this day, there is concern over what LOA is and where its place should be within the Department, the University and the province. Particularly because of its size and informality, LOA’s reputation is in many ways shaped by the larger institutions with which it is associated. Many people, for example, do not make a distinction between MOA and LOA (Rowley 2014). MOA’s reputation for working collaboratively with communities (Ames 1999; Clapperton 2010; Shelton 2007) is therefore important to LOA’s own reputation. Additionally, UBC’s university-wide practice of recognizing the unceded ancestral territory of Musqueam contributes to how LOA is perceived. If MOA decided to completely change its approaches to working with communities or if UBC decided that it was no longer willing to recognize Musqueam territory, there would be a significant impact on LOA (Rowley 2014).

LOA is also bound to UBC in more structural ways. Repatriations and all legal issues go through the UBC legal department and LOA is covered by UBC’s insurance policy. Financially, LOA is part of the Department’s budget, so in many ways it is enmeshed in the bureaucratic structures of the University. Being within a larger entity such as the University provides LOA with security and a sense of longevity that small independent institutions might not have (Rowley 2014). It also places limits on how LOA can expand and what it can do. Instead of being an “appendix to the Department of Anthropology,” Blake (2014) suggests that it might be beneficial for LOA to become more of an autonomous institution like MOA.

A major roadblock for LOA is funding. Funding to adequately care for these materials is sparse, since the work of repositories is so rarely considered in archaeology project plans or budgets (Childs and Sullivan 2003). Archaeological work in the province is continually
necessitated by development projects, and the demands on LOA continue to grow. However, LOA’s funding from the University is small and makes it difficult for LOA to carry out all of its duties. Recently, LOA has begun charging consulting firms a repository fee to unpack deposits as well as photograph and describe material for the RRN. LOA spoke with communities and the Archaeology Branch about introducing the repository fee and all were supportive of the move. By charging consulting firms a fee to deposit material, LOA can begin to draw attention to the work involved in making these materials accessible on-line to communities and researchers. In the future, if the work at LOA can be built into project bids, the cost of maintaining the collections may not rest solely on the repository. The process is still brand new, having been applied to large deposits created by consulting firms only in 2014. How it will impact LOA’s operation and/or the archaeology project designs of consulting firms has yet to be seen.
6. Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored LOA’s development over time, demonstrating how an institution can evolve into a space conducive to collaborative engagement with communities. The geographical context and political climate of British Columbia as well as key events, such as the WITE and FUD exhibits in the 1990s and the renewal project, have shaped LOA’s approaches towards working with communities. I argued that many of LOA’s practices today address the scientific colonialist history of archaeology by sharing knowledge and power with communities. As collaboration requires flexibility and accommodation, LOA has learned to develop policies and practices that promote open dialogue with communities. These approaches have become a part of LOA’s institutional culture through daily practices and through written policy that emerges from those practices.

This thesis has presented only one component of the collaborative process. While LOA endeavours to engage in caretaking with respect and empathy, the next step in this discussion is to explore community perspectives on LOA’s approaches to more closely. Work that presents the viewpoints of individuals within communities, such as Fortney’s (2009) study of museum and community partnerships, is necessary to fully critique the collaborative process. Understanding these perspectives would benefit LOA as part of a continual effort to seek guidance from communities on how to respectfully care for collections.

Though there is extensive literature on the importance of collaboration in archaeological fieldwork and in the production of museum exhibits, the ways collections can be cared for collaboratively have been less explored. There is a lack of attention paid to archaeological repositories, both by archaeologists (Childs 2003; Childs and Sullivan 2003) and in academic literature. As a repository, LOA is a site of important caretaking work and relationship building
between archaeologists and communities. As this thesis demonstrates, archaeological repositories are an integral part of the archaeological process and should warrant further discussion.

Collaboration is a complex process that eludes prescriptions but is necessary for those wishing to redress the colonial histories of archaeology and museum anthropology. LOA’s practices and policies have emerged out of the individual relationships it has developed with local communities and are particular to its own history. The intent of this paper was to explore the role of institutional culture and how it can become conducive to collaboration. Institutions interested in building community partnerships should reflect on their own cultures and consider ways they can adjust both their daily practices and written policy to be flexible and accommodating of the collaborative process.
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