

NOTE

In an Age of Heritage Signs, Encouraging Archaeological Sites to be Cosmopolitan Canopies

Uzi Baram

To mark history, governments authorize the erecting of markers, signs on the landscape meant to inform. While historical markers have a long tradition for identifying places with significant events and people, there has been an expansion on what and how to mark places and their heritage. Signs capture the attention and provide information for those interested in learning about where they are at the moment. They are in-situ teaching tools, open to anyone able to interpret the heritage for broad audiences, and can encourage places for cosmopolitanism, canopies for people to learn about the past and each other.

Introduction

Do historical markers do more than provide information?

Informal learning at heritage sites, or learning via participation at public places of historical or archaeological significance, offers the potential for deeper engagement with the past by furthering understandings on how the present came to be. And archaeologists, recognizing the privilege afforded the popular image of archaeological research, are increasingly in a position to spread heritage knowledge to wider and more diverse audiences. The fascination with excavated remains, the potential for learning something new by recovering artifacts from the ground, and the tangible results from archaeological sites that are visually engaging, compels more meaningful presentations of heritage. Increasingly, calls for change in the representativeness of heritage sites go beyond a need for accuracy and instead are moving toward a vision of social inclusion.

This article advocates reflections on the concept of a cosmopolitan canopy from the urban sociologist Elijah Anderson (2004, 2011), places where social divides do not limit social interactions. Archaeological insights into the past and social complexities can help to recover such places for the public, and archaeologists can facilitate the fostering of positive social interactions at heritage sites. The discussions of the politics of the past (e.g., Meskell 2009, Bernbeck and McGuire 2011, King 2012) and insights into the differences between official and unofficial heritage practices, those sanctioned by the state and those not guided by legislation (Harrison 2013: 14–15), are opening the way for a more inclusive representations of the past.

Starting with the recognition that all representations of the past have social and political implications, archaeologists have turned to engagement with historical interpretation (e.g., Little 2004). As Freedman Tilden (1957)

argued for heritage interpretation in the National Park Service, public engagement with history and place emerge through emotional connections. However, which emotions will be provoked is left implicit. With increasing numbers of archaeologists committed to social justice (see Little 2009, Stottman 2010, Shackel 2013, Atalay et al. 2014, Baram 2015), the emotional connection is still left implicit. Some are inspired by their lived experiences (e.g., Ferguson 1992), others by Black feminists (Battle-Baptist 2011) and Catholic teachings (see Leone 2010, 206); here, confronting racism and expanding inclusionary narratives are part of a cosmopolitan ethos (e.g., Appiah 2006, Held 2010) that can be shown and taught at heritage sites. This article offers a consideration of archaeology's general contribution to social justice, explains the concept of cosmopolitan canopy, and describes the author's efforts on the west coast of Florida, USA to encourage more complex and nuanced representations of the past that demonstrate the multiplicities of histories at a place and that encourage a more inclusive diversity for archaeological sites.

What Archaeology Provides

We live in a world of gross political, economic, and social inequalities. One expression of the long-standing optimism for human equity in archaeology is exemplified by a 1963 popular book by Glyn Daniel (re-issued as Daniel and Renfrew 1988: 152), when the archaeologist stated decades ago in *The Idea of Prehistory*: "Whether we are Americans, Russians, Indians, or Chinese we share a universal human historical heritage. I do not pretend, or imagine, that a recognition of this fact will alter present-day differences but if people really had an awareness of human history it should put present-day differences in a different perspective and one that made for tolerance."

This use of the past as an argument for more egalitarian understandings of the present is increasingly significant; for instance, the *Guardian* article on December 21, 2016 titled "Why Archaeology Needs to Come out of the Cave and into the Digital Age" concluded with "Our deep

history as a species has a lot in common with us as individuals: it's scattered with innovations that fluoresced and faded like supernovas, accidental explorations that trail-blazed then backtracked across entire continents, and myriad couplings under night skies. It's time that prehistory came out of the shadows on the cave wall, and reclaims our global heritage as one that emphasizes unifying love and trust over divisive fear and hate."

Delving deeply and empirically into the human past can also help to challenge the Race concept (Smedley and Smedley 2011) and its divisive implications in today's society that legitimate social inequalities. But it is the ideas about the past that matter, not just the empirical evidence. As Kendi (2016) argues, racism and its separations come from ideas made into policy; resisting and combating divisiveness require ideas as well as information. The vastness of human history, from our early ancestors to the contemporary, encourages reflection on what it means to be human and offers alternative examples of social differences than our present. The archaeological focus on materiality provides the objects made and used by people to connect present to past, no matter the length of the temporal distance and raises the profile of particular places because of the history embedded in the landscape.

Archaeologists have shown interconnections among our species through the aggregate of thousands and thousands of projects around the planet, covering millennia of human history. Those efforts, in as much as they show the commonalties shared by humanity, can be used as evidence to bolster anti-racist efforts. Pick up any introduction to archaeology college-level textbook and the evidence for human similitude is laid out. But moving from the general conclusion about the equality of human nature to connecting these stories effectively through informal learning is a challenge. One approach to negate racism is cosmopolitanism and archaeological sites can be presented in a way that show the similarities and diversity of peoples through history, to offer alternative narratives at locations marked today by separation, and to encourage coexistence.

Places of Coexistence, Spaces of Separations

In 1982, Eric Wolf published *Europe and the People without History*, an ironic title for a book that showed the social implications of the flows of peoples and commodities since the 1400s that produce the contemporary world. Wolf (1982) is a history that included anthropology's subjects as agents in the global system, what we now commonly call globalization. Globalization is a complex concept and a multi-dimensional phenomenon, referring to the many ways in which people are being drawn together not only by their own movements but also through the flow of goods, services, capital, images, ideas, information, and misinformation. With increasing contacts and connections, especially since the late 20th century, the question of whether social differences can coexist or clash has become a pressing social and political concern.

Places of historical strife offer particularly rich lenses through which to imagine heritage. Since the 1990s, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two countries, Yugoslavia

descended into warfare that created separations, Cyprus continues to be divided into two communities, and many cities around the world face legal or socially-driven segregation. None of those divides are inevitable or natural. Examples of coexistence, during the same time period, include Toronto, Canada's large diverse city (Buchignani 2012), whose citizens speak many languages, dress in many styles of clothing, and worship in distinct houses of religious traditions, as well as display a myriad of other markers of cultural differences.

While Toronto has more than five million people in the Greater Toronto Area, and more than 140 languages and dialects spoken and a city government that continues to welcome refugees and other immigrants (Heritage Toronto 2018), Buchignani (2012) reminds us that social divides continue to be extant. However, these are differences from their USA counterparts where cities of the latter are less diverse and many times exhibit spatial demarcation of separation. The issue of cultural division versus diverse inclusion is one that haunts discussions of social relations and social inequalities, and have contemporary implications. For example, some archaeologists and historians explore our concern for the past (e.g., Rebecca Bryant 2016) as a lesson and legacy for the present. Moreover, some anthropologists (e.g., Hayden et al. 2016) argue that coexistence does not always imply peace; even when different faith groups share the same place and similar beliefs, those encounters can become hostile. The mechanisms for peaceful coexistence, for cosmopolitanism, for mutual appreciation of social diversity is complicated and complex.

And pressing. With greater globalization and the socially diversifying trajectories identified by Wolf (1982) accelerating, there are more concerns with how people from different group identities interact. Having locales where difference is celebrated, understood, and engaged matters. There are places where this is already happening and others where such possibilities should be encouraged for community well-being. Heritage places can be used for creating such positive cosmopolitan locales. One example comes from the west coast of Florida, USA.

The metropolitan statistical area of Sarasota and Manatee counties includes the cities of Sarasota and Bradenton and the 2010 census shows the MSA with a population of 702,281, with continuing demographic growth for this Sunbelt region. With increasing growth in populations with little to no genealogical, historical, or social connections to the area, many residents do not know the heritage of the region and little attracts their attention to its archaeology and history. In that way, Toronto is a useful comparison as Sarasota/Manatee has gated and other exurbia communities, a paucity of public places, and concerns over affordable transportation options that derail opportunities for interactions beyond one's social circles. This sustains separate social spheres and maintains legacies of segregation tacitly. In a 2008 study, Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE) concluded: the community has a "clear powerful difference in quality of life measures is based upon both race and income" and "Sarasota County is segregated by

both race and income" (Dutton 2008: 2). The landscape is marked by green signs authorized by Sarasota County near where events of dominant importance occurred or famous people lived or worked. However, there is also an increasing interest in marking the landscape with signs that make the past compelling for the present. Of urgency, in an age of social divisions and divides, is marking the landscape for cosmopolitan opportunities.

The Cosmopolitan Canopy

In an article and expanded into a book, urban sociologist Elijah Anderson (2004, 2011) explains that in segregated Philadelphia there is a place that is open to many people without erasing their differences. In describing the Reading Terminal Market and its social dynamics, Anderson provides the image of a cosmopolitan canopy. Anderson (2004) bases the sociological interpretation of the locale on participant-observation at the market in Center City, Philadelphia, and its numerous shops, restaurants, and kiosks. Crucial to its cultural dynamism is the fact that Center City lies geographically between the white, working-class Kensington and black North Philadelphia. Today's market is the descendant of earlier marketplaces in the location, a longevity renewed in the 1990s (from <http://readingterminalmarket.org/about-the-market/history>). For Anderson (2004: 16): "The Terminal is a colorful place, full of hustle and bustle. Food is a major theme..." Eating together, exchanging comments in a civil manner, and being able to observe social differences are markers for cosmopolitanism in these early 21st century studies.

Scholars have highlighted the significance of cosmopolitanism in recent works. Archaeologist Lynn Meskell (2009) speaks of cosmopolitan engagement in the contemporary world; political scientist David Held (2010) delineates cosmopolitanism for global politics; philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) explores ethics that break down socio-political divides in a world of strangers. These studies are a reaction to both the positive strands of mixing from globalization and as an alternative to the nationalism seen in recent elections, democratic or authoritarian, around the world. Contemporary cosmopolitanism has several facets including the individual, a person who is multilingual, multicultural, at home in different milieus and has wide interests across cultural and national boundaries as well as a belief system and a milieu, which can be intellectual, artistic, or financial. The intersection of the individual with the global and the plural is a defining feature of the term. For this article, the focus is a cosmopolitan place, a positive and productive mixture of social differences and identities localized for a place that encourages tolerance and creative mingling of differences.

For Anderson (2004), the Reading Terminal Market is a place for observing, pondering, and acknowledging the new about the other, a location that allows folk theories about others based on behaviors in public space. "The denizens learn to get along and deal effectively with life in this setting, all the while expressing their own identities with respect to others present" (Anderson 2004: 22). The Market has the Jewish butcher, the Amish farm stall, Asian

fish counter, and Italian bakery; Zanzibar Blue (a jazz club) and Starbucks and McDonalds are places where complete strangers congregate and observe one another. People watching and eavesdropping in tight spaces allow strong impressions and stories about people's lives. The stories are not simply about the individuals, they are about the group the stranger represents (2004: 24).

Encountering differences does not, by necessary, lead to coexistence. Anderson (2004: 26) notes the cosmopolitan canopy has a "code of civility." Because "people are repeatedly exposed to the unfamiliar and thus have the opportunity to stretch themselves mentally, emotionally, and socially...the end result is a growing social sophistication that allows diverse urban peoples to get along" (Anderson 2004: 29).

Archaeology Recovering a Cosmopolitan Past

Following Elijah Anderson (2004), archaeologists can encourage heritage sites to be representing history for places in terms of multiplicities, the type of exposure that facilitates cosmopolitan encounters with history and with other visitors. Recognizing the political aspects of archaeology (e.g., Kohl and Fawcett 1995), many archaeologists seek to stress the diversity and complexity of social identities from the places they excavate. Sometimes the goal is recovery of variation and other times it is having the representations bring out the women and men, old and young, and different ethnic, gender and sexual, and other meaningful, for their time or ours, differences for the people who lived or passed through the place being described. Anderson (2011) offers keen sociological observations to highlight cosmopolitan canopies in Philadelphia. Since people – within particular circumstances – have created such places, this article asserts that archaeologists, with their archives of insights into coexistence and social differences, can encourage the creation of cosmopolitan canopies via empirical, scientifically accumulated insights into the past represented for the present.

Visitors to the Reading Terminal are consuming commodities, foods and experiences. For archaeological sites, the opportunity is to offer informal educational opportunities to visitors. These are different types of consumption but both have the opportunity to create places where social differences can be seen, experienced, and encouraged. Educating on differences will not change social inequalities but can contribute to challenging divides.

An anthropologist could look for other cosmopolitan canopies around the world, places where these dynamics provide the opportunity for people to observe, learn, and engage cultural differences. Recognizing the active potential for such places for divided cities, archaeological research that reveals multiplicities can contribute to creating cosmopolitan canopies. Not in terms of people coming together to shop or to eat but for places of informal learning such as public or otherwise accessible parks. This is not to make grandiose claims over archaeology's influence on contemporary society but to recognize there are contributions to be made. The initial audience will be self-selected. Individuals, who might seek out cosmopolitan places and who situate themselves as global while being

of a place, might find cosmopolitan canopies and expand their social dynamics; public intellectuals, like public archaeologists, can encourage the process along.

Public Archaeology Facilitating Cosmopolitan Canopies

Starting in 2008, I was provided the opportunity to create a public archaeology program at New College of Florida. My goals included encouraging undergraduates to engage in archaeological research from background research to excavations through laboratory work to representation of the knowledge gained. In creating partnerships with community organizations in Sarasota and Manatee counties, the areas immediately near the college, I wanted to build up their capacity to sustain sites and the information gleaned from archival and excavation work. I also wanted to encourage the creation of interpretations that reach out to diverse social groups, particularly minority communities, preserving regional heritage to encourage contemporary residents to recognize the diversity of peoples in the region's past (Baram 2015).

Sarasota and Manatee counties, on the West Coast of Florida, are not known for their history. They are locations for retirees as well snowbirds, those who have their homes in Canada or the US Midwest and Northeast and visit the region for the winter months. It is an area known for baseball spring training, and other examples of temporal stays. Legacies of segregation and the mass influx of people for short-term stays or for retirement means there are separate social spheres. Many developments are gated communities and, as across the United States, people live near those like themselves. So, when and where can people engage those different from themselves? For Anderson (2011) the examples of cosmopolitan canopies include places of business, where people can shop for goods and

services (including the stores of the Reading Terminal Market, WholeFoods), places that are freely open to the public for leisure or recreation rather than consumption.

I have worked with community partners to ensure that the commemoration of the past includes multiplicities, in the hope that those differences through time encourage the diversity of the present to feel welcome. For example, one is a private non-profit, Reflections of Manatee, in Bradenton and the other is a county-owned park: Phillippi Estate Park, in Sarasota.

Manatee Mineral Spring

Trudy and Jeff Williams formed Reflections of Manatee, Inc. in 1997 to protect and preserve the history around the Manatee Mineral Spring in east Bradenton, on the west coast of Florida. Deeded three acres of land, including the historical spring, they engaged in community activities, living history, archaeological excavations, and plans for reconstructing a structure and building a museum. The land, a few meters south of the Manatee River, was an empty field (see **Figure 1**) with a small playground and gazebo. A sign laying out the plans for reconstructing Branch Fort, a mid-19th century house owned by Dr. Franklin Branch and used as a shelter during the Second Seminole War, a sign on the gazebo with the park's name Indian Mineral Spring, and a green historical marker telling of the 1841 founding of the Village of Manatee by the Manatee Mineral Spring were the only indications that the place surrounded by working-class houses had a deeper history.

A program of archeological excavations and community outreach on the search for an early 19th century maroon community but concerned with all the layers of history at the property (Baram 2011) encouraged using heritage interpretation signs to raise the visibility for heritage at the park. The panels mixed images and text for the

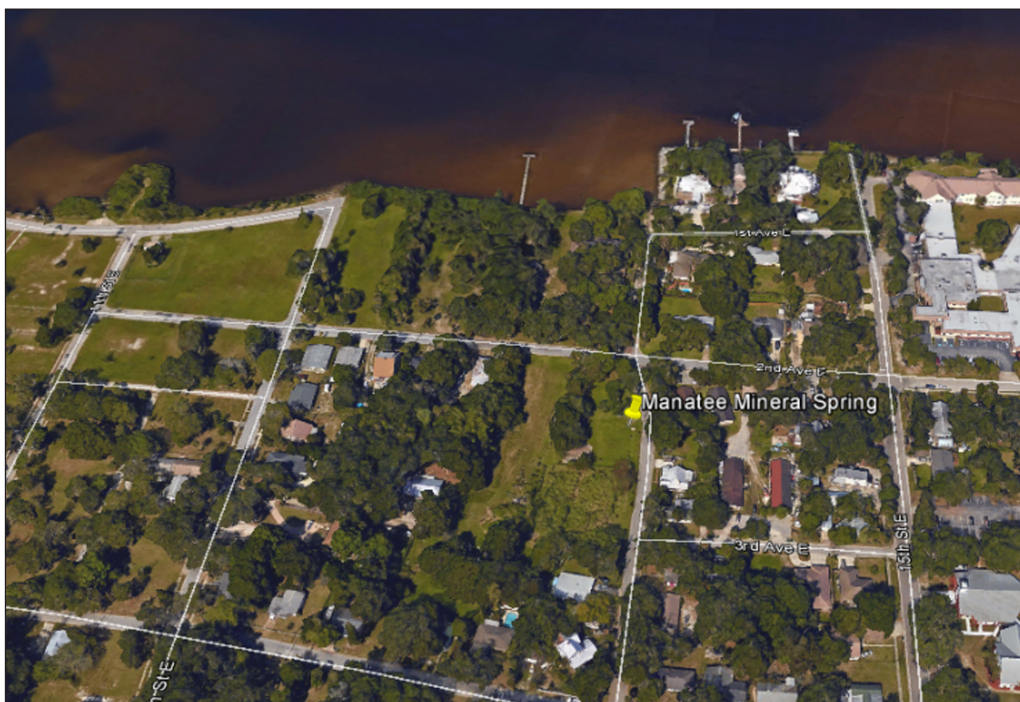


Figure 1: The Empty Field by the Manatee Mineral Spring, Bradenton Florida (Screen Capture from Google Earth).

heritage interpretation. Using the theme “The History of Manatee Flows from this Spring,” twelve signs provided images and information for:

- The Manatee Mineral Spring – the central physical feature of the property, a small spring that has been capped since the 1970s but whose waters were noted from the mid-19th century onward and provided a geographic identification for the original Anglo-American settlement
- Archaeology: History Beneath Our Feet – an explanation of the science of archaeology, the tools and the types of materials excavated
- Native Americans – the sites and the scope of history for the indigenous peoples of the region
- Spanish Exploration – the colonial information generated by the Spanish, providing the cartographers who mapped Tampa Bay and the region
- Angola: A Haven of Freedom – the archival and excavation evidence for the identification of an early 19th century maroon community
- Creating the Village of Manatee – the Anglo-American settlement that started in the 1840s, illustrated with land deeds and maps
- The Third Seminole War – Branch Fort – a key individual and his house during the 1855–1858 conflict between the U.S. military and the Seminole peoples
- The Civil War – the residents were Confederates, illustrated by images of two local residents and Judah P. Benjamin, one of the Confederate leaders who escaped the Union army via the Village of Manatee
- Curry Family – a family of merchants whose tremendous wealth in the 19th century is nearly forgotten today
- Gardens – the plants through the ages

- Sugar Cane – the crop that led to plantations on the Manatee River
- Community Flows from the Spring – the meaning of history for the region, illustrated by photographs of recent public festivals organized by Reflections of Manatee

The multiplicity of topics reflects the goal of presenting many histories, the complex past for the different eras, groups, and ways-of-life recovered by archaeological and archival research and meant to allow a broad array of people to find the connection to the place. The images engage, the text informs, with the goal of engaging the emotional connection to social diversity as a positive value. These heritage signs have proven useful for tours of the property, offering the information and images that guide presentations on the rich heritage for the property (see **Figure 2**). Visually engaging in an otherwise empty field, the signs have been attracting attention since they were installed in 2013; observations at the property suggest the signs encourage reflection on the past beneath visitor’s feet.

Phillippi Estate Park

Sarasota County owns and manages Phillippi Estate Park, a sixty-acre property on the south side of Phillippi Creek, a small river that runs through Sarasota, and adjacent to the busy Tamiami Trail (US 41). The property includes the 1916 Edson Keith Mansion, recognized by a green historical marker (see **Figure 3**). With the centennial planned for the building, the Sarasota County Archaeologist contacted me about raising the profile of three sites on the property, known since excavations in 1988, but having no visibility.

In 2016, Phillippi Estate Park installed four heritage interpretation signs:



Figure 2: Signs as a Tool for a 2014 Archaeological Tour of Reflections of Manatee (photograph by Sherry Robinson Svekis, with permission).



Figure 3: Edson Keith Mansion, before the heritage interpretation program, the only marked historic component of Phillippi Estate Park, Sarasota, Florida.

- Discovering History Through Archaeology – highlights the area as a midden, with explanations for the archeological epochs, showing stratigraphy, excavations, and artifacts
- Manasota Period at Phillippi Creek – named after the region, the Manasota is an ancient way of life marked by a coastal adaptation; a representation of people fishing, a replica fishing net, a ceramic vessel, and shells from the midden evoke elements of the place 2500–1300 years ago
- How Phillippi Creek Got Its Name – the park is named for Phillippi Creek, which comes from Felipe, or Phillippi, Bermudez; the sign explains the name and focuses attention on events in 1849 between the US military and the Seminole peoples, events that turned tragedy into coexistence, even if only temporarily
- Creating Phillippi Estate – to prevent the archaeology from only being focused on the distant past, artifacts from the early 20th century are shown with other elements for the modern history of the property, from its wealthy landowner to becoming a county park

Looking at Signs

The heritage interpretation signs, with their text and images, encourage visitors to observe, ponder, and acknowledge different histories and different peoples, and encourage community members to recognize similarities between past and present through themes that resonate today. The goal is engagement in the present as well as information from archaeological and archival research. With so few visitors and residents knowing the region's heritage of Native American lifeways, maroons, and fishing ranchos, informa-

tion provided to visitors interrupts current lack of knowledge about its diverse history.

Anderson (2011: 33) notices that a cosmopolitan canopy not only brings people from different social groupings together, but it also seems to encourage them to be on their “best behavior” engaging in “equivalent, symmetrical relationships.” For instance, while observing the crowded Reading Terminal, he interprets the act of consuming the food of others is a “social good” Anderson (2011: 33). The Reading Terminal is a capitalist approach to re-use of a large urban space and the resulting mix allows productive consumption of goods. Anderson's concept of eating diverse cuisine as a social good might be overstating the implications of consumptive practices but the intersection of such dynamics in segregated Philadelphia offers a place of hope in the challenging times of the 21st century.

How these places of diverse interaction are represented does matter. Signage for historic sites is not a new phenomenon. For Sarasota, the County has a commission that drafts, approves, and erects historical markers noting significant places and events. Contemporary visitors, and those passing by a location, seem to be drawn in by the images and text of the new heritage signage, as noticed by participant-observation at the parks. The new signage represent opportunities for informal learning, both for those coming to see the history at the particular place or those just walking by casually, as well as for guides employing the information as they interpret the locales. In our current age of heritage interpretation, the goal is to go beyond the listing of events to encourage a connection to a place. Moreover, signs generated especially through community engagement open up new opportunities for sharing information on the past and its significance.

However, for these opportunities that heritage signing allow, active use of them is necessary. And the signs are not meant to be forever: in another generation, other representations will be more effective means of transmitting historical information; increasingly, mobile digital technologies are available at historic sites. The key, though, is not the technology nor the signage or representation, but the avenue by which the information is gathered and shared. Community-based collaboration in producing heritage interpretation, and the unveiling of a multiplicity of pasts belonging to a particular space, remain the most relevant avenues for ensuring that signage connects with local residents even if the audience includes visitors.

Conclusion

The Historical Marker Database (<https://www.hmdb.org>) documents more than 100,000 at the start of 2018. Historical markers are seemingly everywhere, and the marking of the landscape has been increasing as a means to commemorate, inform, and proclaim information on heritage. Signs play various roles for archaeological and historical sights and what is stated and unstated in signage, what is privileged or ignored, is political and shapes perceptions of a place for tourists (Addison 2014) and residents. While historical markers have a long tradition, there has been an expansion on what and how to mark places and their heritage. Signs capture the attention and provide information for those interested in learning about where they are at the moment. They are in-situ teaching tools, open to anyone able to interpret the heritage for broad audiences and standing in for the scholar in a much more public manner than a publication. Heritage signs can be agents of inclusion; encouraging diversity in public places based on the multiplicity of the past. Looking at signs will not solve the world's problems but will help people reorient their perspective on their surroundings and hopefully on issues of difference in our globalized world. Places can be made to encourage encountering differences, in this case differences through time. The information and insights from archaeological research can generate accurate representations that facilitate productive cosmopolitanism for places where differences are otherwise separated spatially and socially.

Heritage signs are useful for the visitor to the site, to the educator using the archaeology and history to explain the past, and to the manager of public places to provide information. And they offer a means for the public archaeologist to encourage productive social interactions and meaningful social change especially in challenging locations. Heritage signs are tools to assist public archaeologists as a step for communities to reach goals of social justice.

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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