Out of the Blue
Out of the Blue
Public Interpretation of Maritime Cultural Resources

With 81 Illustrations
Acknowledgements

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Introduction: Imparting Values / Making Connections

John H. Jameson, Jr. and Della A. Scott-Ireton

Very deep, very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?
– Thomas Mann

The spectacle of archaeology stirs the public interest like few other topics. Solving the detective story, finding the missing pieces of the puzzle, understanding an instilled sense of identity, making emotional and intellectual connections to resource meanings, entering global discourses and debates on heritage protection and conservation - all are part of the nexus of cultural values that define the meaning of archaeology to individuals and to the public at large.

Use of the term “value” is increasingly permeating public, private, and international discourses on heritage management. We hear about human vs. material values, tangibles vs. intangibles, moral vs. corrupt values, and religious vs. secular values. In many of our discussions, the word “value” is used interchangeably with other terms such as attribute, quality, and interest. But the term “value” is useful because it commonly connotes humanistic and emotional qualities. Values relate to tangibles and intangibles that define what is important to people. In all societies a sense of well-being is associated with the need to connect with and appreciate heritage values. In heritage management, we commonly articulate “values” as attributes given to sites, objects, and resources, and associated intellectual and emotional connections that make them important and define their significance for a person, group, or community. Site managers should strive to identify and take these values into account in planning and public interpretation efforts as well as physical treatments (Jameson, 2006).

As archaeologists and cultural resource managers, we endeavor to develop more holistic interpretations in which the values of sustainable environment and heritage are inextricably linked. We have recognized that multidisciplinary and inclusive approaches are the most effective. The sites we deal with are no longer limited to great iconic monuments and places, but can include millions of places of importance to sectors of society that once were invisible or intentionally ignored. These sites can play an important role in fostering peaceful multicultural societies, maintaining communal or ethnic identities, and serving as the indispensable theater.
in which the ancient traditions that make each culture a unique treasure are performed periodically, even daily. The values of these sites and features often are not readily obvious in the material fabric or surrounding geography, but they must be identified and they require a narrative for the fullness of their meaning to be properly conveyed to local people, site visitors, and the public at large. This is accomplished through processes of public interpretation and education (Jameson, 2006).

Because of the great adaptability of humans for thousands of years, patterns of human settlement and activity have reached nearly every corner of the globe. With fluctuating sea levels, some terrestrial habitation areas have become submerged, adding further complication to their archeological and depositional characteristics, descriptions, and interpretations. Archaeological sites of all ilks are located in public spaces as well as private spaces, on land as well as underwater. Maritime cultural resources encompass sites and associations of human actions, both within and bordering on navigable waterways. In many cases, sites are in close proximity to urban areas or can easily be reached by boat, although their visibility may be low or limited. This leads to special challenges for site management regarding conservation, protection, and enforcement of legal mandates for public education, outreach, and interpretation.

We believe that one of the primary purposes of public interpretation in maritime heritage management is to foster the understanding that cultural resources are fixed points or inalienable objects in the public conscious. The placement of inalienable objects in museums - behind glass, spot-lighted, or otherwise specially treated - signifies inherent value through the mode of display. Sites such as shipwrecks provide special challenges in that they are rarely entirely raised, conserved, and placed in an exhibit. The vast majority of shipwrecks and other submerged maritime sites that are interpreted at all are in situ at their resting place on the ocean floor. Thus, in order to be effective, archaeologists, resource managers, and interpreters must employ innovative and provocative interpretive strategies that go beyond traditional exhibition techniques in illustrating and emphasizing the heritage values associated with shipwrecks and other sites within the maritime landscape.

The Challenges and Opportunities of Heritage Tourism

At an ICOMOS conference on heritage tourism in 2004, Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO regional advisor for culture in Asia and the Pacific, addressed the escalating impact of tourism on Asia’s heritage sites. According to Engelhardt, the major threat to heritage sites in the region is the rapidly growing tourism industry (Engelhardt, 2004). Engelhardt’s arguments strike a chord with those who have worked with indigenous and First Nations communities and have seen how tourism can hijack local community agendas. In this scenario, heritage “experts” and advisers see the role of heritage as a mechanism for local identity building, and, in some cases, as an aid to communities in protecting sites from exploitation and in buffering them from the juggernaut of tourism.
In heritage management, we are just beginning to realize and appreciate the effects of globalization. Heritage tourism, with its ties to the currents of rapidly evolving global economies, is causing increasing needs and demands for cross-cultural and international communication and interdisciplinary training. The emphasis is on transferable skills such as applying interdisciplinary approaches, writing for both academic and non-academic audiences, developing effective oral presentations, and gaining experience with multimedia packages.

Some resource specialists engaged in the heritage tourism industry start from the premise that tourism is inevitable and that tourism accompanied by some form of public interpretation is the ultimate outcome of the heritage endeavor. Those of us whose primary goals and interests are conservation should be determined that our values and standards are not compromised or diminished. The challenge is to ensure that high standards of skill and competency in heritage management are accepted, welcomed, and valued at local and community levels. A special challenge pertains to maritime and underwater resources that are particularly susceptible to sensationalism and exploitation by those whose primary motive is profit.

**Purpose and Content of this Volume**

Quality public interpretation and outreach can assist in managing and protecting archaeological sites in remote locations. They also are key elements in garnering public and institutional support for research and in monitoring “ownership” by local communities and frequent users who can assist in long-term preservation and public stewardship. The chapters in this book encompass both on-site and off-site interpretative efforts including heritage trails, virtual trails, museum exhibits, and examples of public interpretation as a management tool. Sites and projects from coastal, intertidal, fully submerged, and deep water archaeological contexts are presented to illuminate effective interpretive and management strategies. These include examples of maritime heritage trails and underwater parks, field schools, avocational training, classroom instruction, and innovative diver access programs, as well as exhibits, virtual visits, and educational programs at maritime museums.

The volume is organized into broad topical foci, beginning with introductory, broad-based discussions by John Jameson and Della Scott-Ireton, respectively. The editors explain that the primary goal of public interpretation and outreach at maritime sites is inclusive public access to accurate and non-sensationalized information. They point out that the cultural heritage values inherent at sites and objects are links to the past and stimuli for heritage tourism. They also explain the need to record public archaeology and public interpretation successes so that others will not have to reinvent the wheel. Another broad-based chapter by David Nutley follows with a discussion of the management and public interpretation strategies implemented in New South Wales, Australia, that has resulted in the development of a three-part plan. Nutley explains how elaborate partnerships allow the respective parties and interests to be identified, engaged, and empowered, ensuring that
the effective management of underwater cultural heritage is not reliant on the finite resources of one agency.

The introductory chapters are followed by three presentations about the brave new world of underwater and maritime heritage trials. Roger Smith tells how the Florida Division of Historical Resources’ Maritime Heritage Trail was conceived with an interpretive strategy of providing information rather than a marked route. The program also utilizes posters and brochures and a Web site to get the word out. Next, Margaret Leshikar-Denton and Della Scott-Ireton describe the Cayman Islands Maritime Heritage Trail Initiative’s goals of fostering stewardship and encouraging preservation, as well as how it enhances existing diver tourism and helps to relieve pressure on fragile coral reef ecosystems. Jennifer McKinnon follows with a description of an elaborate partnership strategy used to manage the sites and tell the story, using innovative interpretive guidebooks, of the 1733 Spanish Plate Fleet wrecks located in the Florida Keys.

The next seven chapters describe a variety of innovative programs involving partnerships for management and interpretation of maritime resources. In chapter seven, Jason Burns describes the successful alliance forged for waterfront revitalization in Georgia. Georgia’s maritime archaeology program revitalization projects, he explains, provide opportunities for connections between the past and the present through effective interpretations of cultural heritage resources, such as river towns, in ways that demonstrate significance and meaning. Programs that reach out to scuba diving enthusiasts are important in efforts to foster public stewardship of our irreplaceable maritime heritage. Joseph Zarzynski presents the challenges of public interpretation at Lake George in New York, where a rich military and maritime heritage spans several centuries. A variety of interpretation strategies have been adopted involving a partnership of underwater archaeologists, multi-media technicians, and avocationalists to “make shipwrecks speak.” Another very important and successful diver awareness program is outlined by Mark Wilde-Ramsing and Lauren Hermley from North Carolina’s Underwater Archaeology Unit. The program, Dive Down, is internationally recognized as an exemplary effort to maximize public educational and outreach opportunities involving the story of Blackbeard’s flagship, Queen Anne’s Revenge. The program is designed for advanced recreational divers and includes four educational modules focusing on maritime history, underwater archaeology, ecology, and geology.

Not all maritime cultural resources are located under water. Victor Mastone and David Trubey explain how the SHIPS program in Massachusetts fosters public stewardship by engaging the beach-walking public in the discovery of maritime archaeological sites and by helping them record and report shipwrecks and other historic resources located on the state’s beaches. John Halsey then describes public interpretation efforts surrounding beached shipwrecks in the Great Lakes. With furnishings, passengers, and crews spread all across the Great Lakes region, these shipwrecks provide the background and props for telling compelling stories of the crews’ and passengers’ lives and deaths, “the wonder and sadness connected with these Great Lakes wrecks.”
Maritime resources located in extremely deep water present a particularly
difficult challenge for managers charged with their protection and interpretation.
Dave Ball, Jack Irion, and Chris Horrell of the U.S. Minerals Management
Service tell of that agency’s deep-water shipwreck management and outreach
program that provides unique opportunities to educate the public about all vari-
eties of vessels operating in the Gulf of Mexico, their role in maritime history, and
their overall importance to the history of the nation. The WWII Japanese midget
submarine found in deep water near Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, is described by Hans
Konrad Van Tilburg. The vessel’s unique history is related, along with the impres-
sive orchestration of efforts involving three federal agencies and other partners to
study the vessel and its environment. Van Tilburg concludes with a thoughtful dis-
cussion of the challenges associated with preserving maritime cultural resources
in a harsh environment, and of presenting those resources to a public who will
never be able physically to visit them.

Next come compelling accounts of the discovery, recovery, and public interpre-
tation and outreach efforts associated with the internationally renowned
Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley, sunk near Charleston, South Carolina. The
extraordinary array of partnerships assembled for the project complements its
remarkable discovery, preservation, and research strategies. First, Dave Conlin
describes the National Park Service’s involvement in the H.L. Hunley project
through its in-house Submerged Resources Center and illustrates the ingenious
methods employed to raise the vessel intact. James Hunter then explains how the
Hunley project has involved a myriad of both public and private partnerships.
Ultimately, he explains, the Herculean international efforts to conserve H.L. Hunley
have laid the foundation for a much larger public outreach and education goal: the
creation of an international museum that will permanently exhibit the submarine
and its associated artifacts.

The final chapter by Gordon Watts and Kurt Knoerl points out the opportuni-
ties for public interpretation afforded by computer reconstructions and virtual
reality models. With today’s and tomorrow’s technology and the availability of
delivery modes afforded by the Internet, the non-diving public can be brought
into a virtual world of underwater archaeological research.

In compiling this book, we have attempted to bring together, in an easily
accessible manner, state of the art ideas, research, and scholarship associated
with maritime public education and interpretation. With few publications cur-
cently available that feature the public interpretation of maritime and submerged
cultural resources, this volume adds to a limited body of knowledge in a field
that is steadily growing. Because public interpretation of archaeological
resources on public lands often is mandated by law, this book should be helpful
to managers who are tasked with implementing public education and outreach
programs and who want to know what has been tried and tested, what has proved
successful, and what has not reached full potential. We also think this book will
be useful for those new to the field and for those who are experienced but want
to try new directions.
References
