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Authors

Bunderson, Eileen D
Van Mondfrans, Adrian
Henderson, Mark S

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The Baker Village Teachers' Archaeology Field School: A Case Study of Public Involvement in Archaeology

EILEEN D. BUNDERSON and **ADRIAN VAN MONDFRANS**, Dept. of Instructional Science, Brigham Young Univ., Provo, UT 84602.

MARK S. HENDERSON, Bureau of Land Management, Ely District, HC 33500 Box 150, Ely, NV 89301.

A public-professional partnership is essential to achieve responsible management and preservation of our cultural heritage. The Bureau of Land Management (Ely Nevada Office), in cooperation with the White Pine County School District (Nevada) and Brigham Young University (Utah) have developed an archaeological teachers' field school to increase public awareness of the significance of archaeological resources and the need to protect those resources. Teachers and students are participating, side by side with professional archaeologists, in an ongoing archaeological field project in Baker, Nevada. These experiences, augmented by the Project Archaeology Education Program, serve as a model for innovative, active involvement of archaeologists and educators in public archaeology.

IN recent years, archaeologists have stressed the importance of including the public in responsible management and preservation of our cultural heritage (Hatoff 1992). Hatoff (1992:53) maintained that "public involvement is not an addendum, an afterthought, or a luxury. It is the foundation of tomorrow's archaeology." Federal officials claim that the major damage to archaeological and historical sites results from unintentionally harmful acts by curious tourists (Spangler 1994). Lipe (1994:5) further emphasized that "The continuing loss of archaeological sites due to vandalism, looting, and development threatens the core value of archaeology as a means for gaining new information about the past through systematic field research." Archaeological resources are so scattered over areas so vast that "there is no possibility for adequate protection other than through our collective cultural conscience" (J. Hawkins, personal communication 1995). According to Morris (1994), the most critical action needed to ensure long-term protection of archaeological sites is im-

proved public education, including teacher training, curriculum development, and public archaeology programs. Over 20 years ago, McGimsey (1972) noted that archaeologists, amateur and professional, cannot expect others to preserve the nation's heritage if they, who by interest or training are best qualified in the field, do not assume a role of positive leadership and public education.

It has been nearly 30 years since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, whose purpose is to insure public enjoyment and appreciation for the rich diversity of past human experiences (Jameson 1994). Section 1 of the Act states that the nation's historic heritage should be "preserved as a living part of our community life" so that our "vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, [and] inspirational . . . benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations." Programs and directives to educate the public about archaeology, culture history, and site protection have grown dramatically over the past decade. For the past several

years, the Texas Archaeological Society has conducted a week-long field school as an opportunity for members to gain hands-on experience with archaeological field and laboratory work (Bruseth et al. 1994). Archaeologists from Bryn Mawr College and the Kodiak Area Native Association, with sponsorship by the Alaska Humanities Forum, have sponsored Kodiak Cultural Heritage Conferences to celebrate the richness of the Alutiiq culture (Knecht 1994). The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Public Affairs Committee and America Outdoors (AO), a national organization representing more than 350 outfitting companies and guides, are cooperating in a multilevel training program focusing on such topics as trip enhancement through archaeology, laws and ethics, multiculturalism, and Native American perspectives (Hoffman 1994). Day-long training with the national AO group would be followed by regional guide trainer workshops so that selected AO members could then serve as trainers of individual guides.

The *Archaeological Fieldwork Opportunities Bulletin*, produced annually by the Archaeological Institute of America, lists more than 250 excavations, field schools, and special programs worldwide. Representative of these programs is the Cerros Archaeological Development Project in Belize, at the Maya site of Cerros. Participants study Maya culture and prehistory in a tropical forest environment. The Toltec Mounds Archaeological Camp in Scott, Arkansas, emphasizes archaeology as a career choice as part of its program.

In May of 1989, the first SAA working conference on "Saving the Past for the Future" was convened at Taos, New Mexico (Lipe 1994). That meeting was viewed as a sign that many people in and out of the archaeological profession were ready to "do something" (Lipe 1994). One of the outcomes of the Taos conference was the formation of the SAA's Public Education Committee, which now mails a quarterly newsletter to more than 6,000 people, a

large number of whom are elementary, junior high, and high school teachers.

Great Basin archaeologists have recently developed a number of quality programs in order to stimulate public involvement with archaeology. Well over 100,000 visitors have hiked the Grimes Point Petroglyph Trail in western Nevada (Hatoff 1992). Operation SAVE (Save Archaeological Values for Everyone), sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Oregon, has focused on enforcement of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), public education and outreach through school presentations, extensive use of various media, and employee training within the agency. The Oregon BLM and the High Desert Museum in Nevada have developed stationary and mobile exhibits for a variety of audiences. Working with professionals, statewide archaeological societies in Utah and Nevada have developed Archaeology Awareness Week, involving the public in prehistoric technology demonstrations, public lectures, and tours of archaeological projects (Knoll 1992).

Many of these public outreach efforts began prior to the 1988 amendments to ARPA (P.L. 100-588), which required "each Federal land manager . . . [to] . . . establish a program to increase public awareness of the significance of the archaeological resources located on public lands and Indian lands and the need to protect such resources." Undoubtedly, the number, sophistication, and longevity of such programs have increased as a result of this legislation. In order to carry out this mandate, the BLM initiated its Adventures in the Past program (Brook 1992). As originally conceived, this program was intended to focus on a different regional theme ("tribute") each year. The focus for 1990 was on the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado, the first interpretive museum set up as part of a national effort by the BLM to house archaeological collections near the locale from which they were obtained.

In 1991, attention shifted to the Great Basin. The Great Basin Tribute included lectures, museum exhibits, technical and popular publications, and support of basic field research. One of these field projects was a collaborative archaeological field school between the Office of Public Archaeology, under the direction of Dr. James Wilde at Brigham Young University (BYU), and the Ely District BLM. The field school, located on the Baker archaeological site in Snake Valley (near the major access route for visitors to the Great Basin National Park), completed its fourth season in the summer of 1994.

By 1991, the Adventures in the Past program was joined by BLM's national Heritage Education Program. This program was designed to teach all young Americans to value and protect our rich cultural heritage (Tisdale et al. 1991). The most effective component of the national effort is Project Archaeology, a program designed for classroom use. It supplies teachers with the materials, training, and support they need to teach basic archaeological concepts, to expose students to conservation issues while encouraging them to propose solutions, and to connect young people to the past. Project Archaeology consists of quality educational materials, including *Intrigue of the Past: Investigating Archaeology (A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth Through Seventh Grades)*. The guide is distributed to educators through in-service workshops where they learn how to teach archaeology in their classrooms. An educator's network is maintained through printed updates that provide information on ongoing field and classroom activities, training, and supplemental lessons. Project Archaeology is fully operational in Utah and Oregon, where more than 800 teachers have been trained, and 15 additional states are currently developing individualized state programs.

The program was initially developed in Utah under the sponsorship of the Utah Interagency Task Force on Cultural Resources, which includes the BLM, the U. S. Forest Service, the

National Park Service, and the State of Utah. The Utah activity guide, *Intrigue of the Past: Investigating Archaeology (A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth Through Seventh Grades)*, is the prototype for Project Archaeology's nationwide guide, *Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades*. The latter, which is supplemented by state student handbooks containing local culture history and teachers' resource guides, has been published and is available through the National Science Teachers Association.

THE BAKER VILLAGE PROJECT

Three important recommendations from the November 1993 "Saving the Past for the Future" conference included reaching a wider and more diverse audience with archaeological education, developing strategies to include archaeology in school curricula, and encouraging professional development opportunities in public education and outreach. The Ely District BLM in Nevada, in cooperation with BYU and the White Pine Public School System (WPPSS), proposed to conduct an in-service teacher enrichment program, the Baker Village Teachers' Archaeological Field School, which would offer Project Archaeology to teachers nationwide. As an essential part of the program, teachers would participate full time in an ongoing archaeology research project and field school. The overall goals of this program were to make Project Archaeology workshops available to a nationwide audience, and to provide teachers with experiences in the field, including working with archaeologists, in hopes of fostering responsible and thoughtful actions toward our archaeological heritage.

Educators have consistently confirmed the value of participatory field experiences in making education a meaningful, self-motivating, and self-affirming experience. In a survey of studies on field education, Williams (1980) reported gains in academic achievement and in student at-

titudes toward school and learning in general. Goodwin et al. (1991) found that students in science classes questioned more freely and were more creative and fluent in their learning responses when an experiential approach was used. Palmer (1987:108) suggested that today's students "have always been taught about a world out there somewhere apart from them, divorced from their personal lives; they never have been invited to intersect their autobiographies with the life story of the world." As students and teachers learn in settings where what they are doing is important to them, particularly when they can learn alongside practicing professionals, as well as peers, this intersection may take place.

Offering workshops for educators is one of the most effective approaches to public education and archaeology. The exposure of teachers—and the students whom they instruct—to concepts such as site preservation and professional standards in archaeology should decrease the uninformed desire to destroy sites and collect artifacts. Moreover, teachers and students sensitized to archaeology may mention these concepts to family and friends, possibly limiting the negative impacts of those around them. As Nobles and Wurtzburg (1995:11) noted, "Individuals who understand the importance of archaeology and the heritage value of cultural resources also are likely to express concern about the issue of preservation, promote the passage of resource legislation, and provide greater support for archaeological programs and education."

The Baker Village Teachers' Field School involved 30 teachers from throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, master teachers from the WPPSS, and archaeologists from the BLM and BYU. This report documents the development and potential educational impact of the field school experience.

THE BAKER VILLAGE SITE

The Baker Village site (Fig. 1) is located in the heart of the Great Basin Desert on the Utah-

Nevada border, near Garrison, Utah. It was first referred to archaeologically in 1926 (Judd 1926). In 1936 and 1937, S. M. Wheeler of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles conducted excavations at the site, which resulted in this area becoming known as the westernmost variant of the archaeological Fremont culture system (Marwitt 1986). The BLM assumed protection responsibilities for the site in 1969. In 1983, an 80-acre parcel was allocated for scientific use as a part of BLM regional land use planning decisions.

In 1990, the BYU Office of Public Archaeology contacted the BLM requesting permission to conduct limited stratigraphic tests at the site. No excavations had been conducted on a western margin Fremont site since 1952 (Taylor 1954). BYU was particularly interested in the timing of the western Fremont frontier expansion, since radiocarbon dates from the earlier excavations were limited (Wilde et al. 1991). Preliminary excavations at Baker Village by BYU revealed undisturbed deposits, including quantities of well-preserved perishable charcoal and animal bone, in addition to evidence of adobe-walled architectural features not reported by Wheeler.

BYU received permission to establish an archaeological field school at the site in 1991, under the condition that they cooperate with the Great Basin Tribute effort to allow public visits and volunteer assistance. The White Pine Public Museum and the BLM cooperatively sponsored guided tours of the Baker site excavations and integrated volunteer excavators into the project operations. A visitor reception area and a 300-m. walking trail to the site were created. During the summer of 1991, over 1,000 visitors toured the site (assisted by approximately 20 volunteer guides), and approximately 30 volunteer excavators contributed over 1,000 hours.

Excavations outlined a central structure or "big house" surrounded by a group of pithouses (Wilde and Soper 1993). From 1992 through 1994, the BYU field school, assisted by volun-

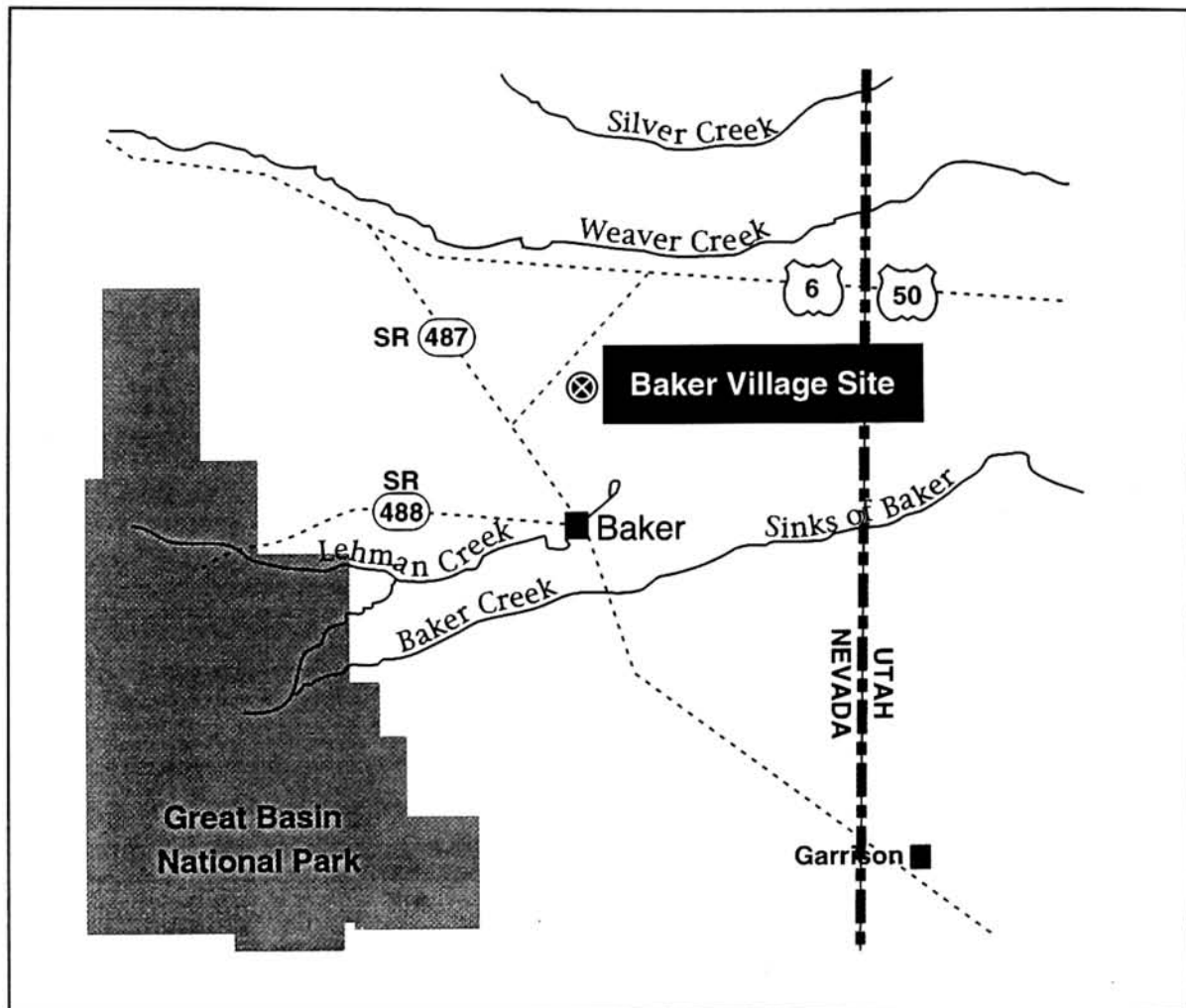


Fig. 1. Location of the Baker Village site.

teer excavators, further defined the intriguing settlement pattern of the Baker Village site, and interpretive guides conducted over 1,000 visitors through the excavations.

THE TEACHERS' FIELD SCHOOL

From past experience with the Heritage Education Program (Tisdale et al. 1991), archaeologists from the BLM and BYU recognized that the cooperative nature of the BLM-BYU Baker Village archaeological project presented a unique opportunity to integrate the field school with hands-on field work for teachers and students. By participating in the ongoing, day-to-day acti-

vities at the site, teachers would receive authentic research experience. They would not be placed in separate excavation units or assigned different laboratory tasks from university field school students, but would work side by side with practicing and prospective archaeologists.

A detailed announcement of the field school was sent to each state Office of Education throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Teachers were invited to apply for one of three week-long sessions to be held in June, July, and August 1994. The applicants were selected by a panel from the BLM and BYU. All expenses for the field school were paid by a BLM part-

nership education grant, with each teacher's local school district contributing \$200 toward transportation and other costs. Teachers lived in trailers or tents at the BYU field camp and ate their meals with the other field school students and staff at a campsite in nearby Great Basin National Park.

The Baker Village Teachers' Field School had three main objectives: (1) to introduce teachers to the science of archaeology and the issues surrounding archaeological conservation through a classroom workshop; (2) to supplement the classroom experience with hands-on participation in a research project in the field; and (3) to provide an effective means of preparing the teachers to teach archaeology to their own students and to their peers by using a series of archaeologically based activities and their own individually designed lesson plans. These objectives were intended to support the overall goal of spreading the message of archaeological conservation and stewardship well beyond the Baker Village Field School.

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In the Classroom

The workshop program was based on that developed by Smith et al. (1992). Since the Baker Village site is located close to the Utah state line, Utah's cultural history is applicable (the Nevada state student handbook has not yet been developed). Prior to arriving at the project, teachers were sent a copy of *Exploring the Fremont* (Madsen 1989) and instructed to outline a lesson with an archaeological theme that might be appropriate for a classroom setting. The first two days of the field school were spent in the classroom using Smith et al. (1992) to become familiar with America's prehistoric cultures, particularly with the early peoples located in the eastern Nevada-western Utah region. Teachers were introduced to the principles and analytical techniques used by archaeologists to decode and portray the life and behaviors of those cultures,

and finally they were asked to examine their own beliefs and values about life in the past. The classroom training was essential preparation for the upcoming field experience and was taught by master teachers from WPPSS and by archaeologists from the BLM.

In the Field

After spending nearly two days in the classroom, participants were anxious to get out to "the dig." They spent several hours getting acquainted with geographical and botanical aspects of the site, including an ancient stream channel which probably provided water for the early inhabitants. Following ancient adobe walls, they identified the central "big house" and located several granaries and pithouses. They learned site etiquette, which included finding a pot sherd—and leaving it in place! They were introduced to active excavation work by Mark Henderson, the directing archaeologist, who explained the importance of entering accurate records followed by hours of lab work with collected materials.

Then the teachers joined the field crew—digging, hauling dirt, screening for artifacts, surveying in excavation grid locations, keeping field notes, and labeling collection bags. Some staked out grids for new areas of excavation, determining elevations for their areas as they dug down through the different features. It was dirty, hard work in the 105° heat and strong afternoon winds. Predictably, in the end, the teachers responded with "I've had my fill of this, but I'm sure going to tell my kids what a blast archaeology is," and "I thought I knew about archaeology, but until you get out there and do it, you don't know anything." Many responded enthusiastically, "When we found something interesting it was really fun. We were there!"

Interspersed with field work at the site were opportunities to help U. S. Forest Service personnel repair petroglyphs, to attend a lecture on rock art, to make cordage, to knap projectile

points, and to learn to throw darts with an atlatl. The favorite activity appeared to be the obsidian knapping, although one teacher said, "I never knew it was so hard to make arrowheads." Everyone in the group voiced great respect for the prehistoric Native Americans, and agreed that it was "really neat to create something like the Fremont people did. Students will be amazed that [we] did it."

One day during each week, the group toured the Fremont Indian State Park, which gave them an opportunity to see actual Fremont artifacts which had been recovered whole or had been re-assembled. Teachers speculated on how the artifacts had been used as they viewed a life-sized model of a pit house and granary. The participants were better able "to see" the Baker Village site as it might have been centuries before, and they agreed that "now it all makes sense."

Curriculum Development and Practice

As teachers responded to *Intrigue of the Past*, they shared experiences and ideas about how they might use the materials in their own classrooms. In addition to comments about the content, a preservice teacher remarked that "the most important thing I learned was the tricks other teachers will use to get these great lessons moving smoothly and productively." All agreed that the workshop activities in the classroom had been necessary to make the rest of the week both possible and meaningful.

As a concluding activity, teachers prepared lesson plans for their own classes patterned after *Intrigue of the Past* lessons. Teachers were able to try out their new lessons on groups of 4-H youth from Ely, Nevada, who had been invited to the Baker Village site by the WPPSS and the BLM. Some teachers used a classroom at a nearby school in Baker, Nevada; others moved their 4-H students to field sites, including a burial cave, a pronghorn drive wall, and a rock art site. It was clear that the 4-H students were rapidly gaining a deep appreciation of archaeo-

logical resources and conservation efforts. Several students vocally reprimanded their peers for climbing on the drive wall. They did not want the original nature of the wall to be altered in any way by their group or others.

IMPACT OF THE BAKER VILLAGE PROJECT

In order to assess the impact of the field school on the teacher participants, two main activities were conducted by an independent evaluation team from the Western Institute for Research and Evaluation (WIRE) in Logan, Utah. Each session of the workshop was attended by one or more WIRE evaluators acting as participant observers, who not only experienced the impact first hand but who also collected comments from the other participants. In addition, the participants completed a short questionnaire regarding their reactions to the field school experiences. The participant comments came from these sources.

At the end of the field school, the teachers were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about their experience. Some of the comments included:

I found this week to be very enlightening about the field of archaeology. I had no idea about the true meaning of archaeology . . . The material can be used in all classes taught across the curriculum.

Actual experience has given me ideas for classroom extensions even beyond those covered in *Intrigue of the Past*.

Best workshop experience I've ever had. I wish I could stay another week. I know more about the science of archaeology, and I respect and appreciate our past much more than I did before coming here.

Now I can see how things fit together. I've changed.

Statements such as these provided evidence that the field school had been successful in meeting its first two objectives. The participants had indeed learned about the scientific and cultural nature of archaeology, and they became very much aware of and understood the vital need to

conserve our archaeological heritage.

Approximately nine months later, teachers were contacted individually and asked how they had shared their field school experience with others. The great majority of teachers had used the material in their classrooms. Several reported in detail the enthusiastic response of their students to the curriculum and the activities. One group of students mapped the classroom, constructed a simulated dig, wrote stories on prehistoric cultures, and worked related math problems. Other groups studied Native American clothes, dances, and art work. Some created historical time lines or worked with clay.

Another class made its own original rock art. At the end of the lesson, students produced two huge posters of copied and original symbols. After the students had left for home, the teacher incorporated a suggestion from her field school lessons and defaced one of the posters with graffiti. The next day, the students were horrified at what had happened to their work. This was a powerful lesson for the students who then made posters campaigning against defacing rock art and similar cultural landmarks which they displayed locally.

Several teachers integrated the study of archaeology with science, art, and physical education units. Others emphasized cross-cultural understanding and respect for the past across several grade levels. Others reported sharing the field school materials with their colleagues through informal teaming and more formal in-service sessions. Still others are working with local archaeologists to create units about local prehistoric peoples. As anticipated by the program's last objective, the impact of the field school has been felt by hundreds of students and teachers in many classrooms and states.

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Simply providing public outreach programs and archaeological experiences does not guaran-

tee that those involved with the programs will develop a sensitive, responsible attitude toward ancient cultures or their physical remains. Experiences must be carefully selected, and participants must be given tools that will enable them to use the experience to promote understanding. The Baker Village Teachers' Field School is a model of how professional archaeologists and educators can couple sound instructional principles with quality hands-on learning in a real research project to build more positive attitudes toward conserving our archaeological heritage.

Central to the success of this project was the collaboration of the Bureau of Land Management, the White Pine Public School District, and Brigham Young University. Collaboration is not effective unless each component of the partnership participates in the planning, rather than acting unilaterally or approaching others with a completed program. Each of the collaborators involved in this project made significant input; their collaboration incorporated the strengths of each partner in order to foster public awareness of archaeological resources. Teacher/participants were able to use the partnership as a model for future projects involving the schools and the public and private sectors in acknowledging and preserving the nation's heritage.

The supervising archaeologists were seen as real experts—friendly, and deeply committed to their profession. One teacher commented that it was “refreshing to see a professional so in love with his job. What an example!” The teachers from the WPPSS were also seen as knowledgeable, enthusiastic advocates of the importance of preserving and protecting artifacts of the Fremont culture. The working relationship between the archaeologists and the master teachers provided an effective model for the participants, demonstrating how they might work with their local archaeologists to create similar learning experiences for other teachers in their home states.

Some archaeologists have taken the opposite view, making statements such as, “Amateur par-

ticipation in archaeology is about as appropriate as amateur participation in dentistry" (Poirier and Feder 1995:3). Although unsupervised excavations may convey the idea that anyone can be an archaeologist because all that archaeologists do is dig and find things, the field school participants received a more authentic introduction to archaeology. The classroom workshop, the field experience with professional archaeologists, individual lesson plans which they "owned," and visits to the Fremont Indian State Park were all part of the field school program, and enabled teachers to validate their classroom learning with work-based, real-world learning and a historical perspective. They connected in a very positive and productive way with archaeologists and the science of archaeology.

The ultimate relevance of public interpretation and outreach programs lies in the ethical responsibility among professional archaeologists to make the past accessible and to empower people to participate in a critical evaluation of the pasts that are presented to them (Jameson 1994). Cultural identity and a sense of shared heritage are what binds a society together (Knecht 1994) and "will encourage government agencies to recognize archaeology as a genuine component of the historical and social knowledge a country should have of itself" (Yacobaccio 1994). Participants in the Baker Village Teachers' Field School reported an increased respect and appreciation for America's cultural heritage, along with a strong desire to develop those same attitudes in their students. As such, the school serves as a model for innovative, active involvement of archaeologists and educators in public archaeology.

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