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Internship Report

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Duties, Responsibilities, and Accomplishments

I completed my internship with McDoux Preservation, LLC. McDoux is based out of Houston, Texas, but has consultants across several states. The team all work remotely around a mostly flexible schedule. This is ideal since most of the all-women team are mothers with young children. This was a great fit for me since I also work full time and it was difficult to find an internship that I could align with those time constraints. Their primary clients are municipalities, but they also do work for special interest groups.

During my internship, I was responsible for research, producing marketing materials, an oral history project, and portions of many other projects. I attended weekly team meetings (via Microsoft Teams), city meetings where our projects were being discussed (via zoom), and workshops to improve my knowledge base. In my internship agreement, we outlined 3 activities. I completed research on the first as far as I could go without traveling to an archive in Oregon (see appendix B.3). The second activity was completed in part but abandoned for current projects once I had a template built (see appendix E). I chose another research project in lieu of the third activity (see appendix D). All in all, I accomplished the majority of tasks, but did many more that were not outlined. My actual logged hours followed the proposed timetable very closely. However, I split hours each week between 2-3 days.

I am proud of my accomplishments during this internship. I have chosen to write about four series of projects completed for or on Austin, TX; Corpus Christi, TX; Conway, AR; and New Orleans, LA.

City of Austin, Texas

This project is the one that was outside of original bounds of activities, but I was well suited to. Professionally, I work in marketing and communications. Therefore, I am naturally very comfortable creating campaigns to get information out to the public. The City of Austin contracted McDoux to conduct a survey and report concerning an expansion to their Heritage Grant Program. In order to get a high enough sample size of the community, we needed to encourage as many citizens as possible to participate. I reviewed all of the materials, researched the existing program, and talked to Kelly Little (the lead consultant on this project) about the program and survey. From this information, I wrote a press release for the city's website and distribution to news outlets (appendix A.3); created images, a timeline for distribution, and text for email blasts (appendix A.1); and images, a timeline for distribution, and text for social media posts. These communications served to tell the community about the opportunity to take the survey and all the options for doing so—online, via mail, phone, or by going to the public library. The survey was also available in Spanish, but since I don't speak Spanish so those communication were translated by a native speaker.

Corpus Christi, Texas

McDoux was hired to create a historic preservation plan for the city of Corpus Christi, Texas (CCTX). The last one had been completed in the 1970s and was very outdated. They initially conducted stakeholder interviews to act as a starting point. From there, Steph McDougal, the primary consultant and business owner, designed a survey for the citizens of Corpus Christi to weigh in on their concerns, desires, areas in need, and to tell us what mattered most to them. Once the survey was completed, we divvied up the questions. Survey

Monkey is very useful for collecting two types of data, but it can only analyze quantitative questions. For example, things like age range, gender identity, what part of town you live in—demographics can easily use multiple choice answers which are then automatically turned into statistics. Those still need to be analyzed by a person who can understand what they are looking at. You will see in appendix B.2 that I created a graph not only to show the ethnicity/race of respondents, but another that showed the demographics for the city so they data can be understood in context of being racially skewed. This isn't to say it loses value, but it sheds a different light. I sorted through the second kind of data for two questions—qualitative data in the form of hundreds of open end-ed responses. I lightly edited them for spelling and basic grammar and then organized the responses into usable categories. Question 9 was straightforward, asking, “Do you have a favorite building or place in Corpus Christi that you like to visit?” For this question, I group similar responses by neighborhood, concept, or area such as the waterfront, public parks, or institutions. Question 29 asked, “What else would you like us to know?” This question ranged all over the place, but I learned quite a bit about the opinions of Corpus Christi natives. For some of the more colorful ones, see the area labeled “Misc. subsection” in appendix B.1.

Once the survey process and research were complete Steph drafted the historic preservation plan. The staff came back asking for something more visually interesting, so I created graphics for the report, created a formatting design template, and made recommendation about the organization of the document. I think the case studies section particularly benefitted from the addition of color, images, and reformatting (see appendix B.2).

While this project is centered on Corpus Christi, it is a passion project and stems from a different client. The Friends of Old Bayview Cemetery is a local historic preservation group in CCTX who is trying to raise funds and get the proper work done to preserve the oldest known (non-indigenous burial place) cemetery in the city. It was created during the Mexican American War. Some of the first interred there died on September 12, 1845, when the steamship U.S.S. Dayton exploded killing 10 immediately, and at least three died at a later date for a total between 11–13 according to my research. The reports widely vary. One of the dead was only listed as an “unidentified colored deckhand” in the news reports that were known at the time. My task was to uncover the young man’s identity so he may be properly memorialized at Old Bayview where he rests. I dove in doing primary source research and was able to find previously untapped sources by searching further out in Texas. One report revealed that not one, but two enslaved boys had died. While the *Texas National Register* did not name them, it did give their enslavers names. They were listed only by ranks, initials, and surnames—Capt. Tichenor and Gen. G. H. Harrison. I was unable to find any documents leading to Gen. G.H. Harrison, but I found several documents that align a specific birth, military, and death record.

I believe the Capt. Tichenor listed in the *Texas National Register* is William Tichenor, born June 13, 1813 in Newark, New Jersey. His age, rank, and occupations align with the Capt. Tichenor listed, whereas no others by that name do. He went on to found Port Orford, Oregon. A collection of his “ledgers of personal accounts, lists of property owners at Port Orford, Michael Fox estate records, and materials relating to various ships...papers concerning the seizure of Tichenor at Port Orford at the order of General Irwin McDowell, 1864; description of the Port Orford fire of 1868; donation land claim records; and certificate of nomination for Frank B. Tichenor as representative of Curry County, Oregon, 1916” is in the archives at the Oregon Historical Society (closed for covid at the time of research).

This collection likely contains the names of individuals enslaved by Tichenor. He has descendants who might be contacted through the find a grave web page listed below. I reached out, without response. They may be reluctant to talk about a great great grandparent owning slaves. The next step in research should be to contact the Oregon Historical Society or someone in the area willing to do the archival research to comb the collection.

Conway, Arkansas

My favorite project by far was the African American Historic Context Study for Conway, Arkansas. This project was very close to my heart since Conway is my birthplace and where my grandparents have lived since the 1960s. My late grandfather opened a tire store/mechanic shop in the historic African American district that we surveyed, which serviced the community. At the onset of the project I researched sources to serve as the basis for the context and found examples of well done African American historic context studies from other places. I visited and met up with Kelly Little (the first time I met a McDoux coworker in person) Conway in March (after I had been vaccinated) and met with individuals who had lived in the Pine Street Community. They narrated a variety of topics as I conducted focused oral history interviews. I wrote the consent forms, took videos, and photographed. I assisted Kelly with the windshield survey of the neighborhood, which consisted of driving and walking around to see the extant structures and their conditions. We documented and photographed as we went. While we were out surveying, we met a few more individuals with whom we had informal conversations. One elderly woman named Elvira had memories of some locations which the city officials had lost track of. After Kelly and I parted for the day, I drove out toward Mayflower (just south of Conway) and between following the landmarks (curve in the road by the river) and talking to current residents, I was able to find and document where the buildings for the Lollie Bottoms

plantation had stood. Theodis and Elvira had also mentioned an African American graveyard near there, that the city officials didn't know where it was either. After driving around looking for a while, I stopped to talk to some farmers who gave me a vague area. I turned on to a small country lane and noticed a piece of wood nailed to a tree. When I slowed to look more closely, I could see daffodils blooming in the overgrown woods. One of the great things about daffodils is that they can often tell you where destroyed structures like walkways or fences previous stood. They are also not indigenous to Arkansas. When I got out of my car, I could also see tulip leaves, neither flower is found in the region without having been intentionally planted at some point. I followed the flowers and was able to find several graves in the woods, both those marked with headstones and those with simple uninscribed stones.

New Orleans, Louisiana

I took what I learned about administering surveys to create one on a subject of my scholarship that can be used by McDoux in the future when discussing potential opportunities for tourism in client cities. I started by finding every list of New Orleans tours I could, both from the NOLA department of tourism and private or commercial lists. From these lists, I created a spreadsheet of all of the tour services I could find. After writing a survey, I reached out with several rounds of attempts to contact individuals (just like we had done in Austin), and finally got enough answers to prove statistically useful. I took all of the information I was able to glean from the results and wrote a report on the practices, content, and offerings of New Orleans tours. Some of the findings were fascinating to me. For example, only 28.5% self-identified as including dark history offerings, even though over 90% of respondents indicated an inclusion of some facet of dark tourism content as traditionally defined. Likewise, the most puzzling finding

of the tour survey responses was that while 66.67% of respondents said their tours included the topic of slavery, but only 47.62% selected Black History as a topic. This indicates that 4 of the tour guides don't view slavery as a part of Black History. As a part of this project, I also put together data on the number of applications for tour licenses each year. This revealed that Hurricane Katrina brought in droves of tourists. There is a marked spike in the applications for tour guide licenses in 2005. The following years while the city was rebuilding go back to the previous lower numbers and then begin to climb again in 2012, peaking in 2019 and dropping again in 2020, likely due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Self-assessment

One of the consultants, Christina Osborn, led a cultural landscape primer workshop. Steph hosted a training session on survey writing, the use of survey monkey, how to analyze survey data, Spanish translation, best practices for illiterate audiences, and how to format data for clients in an easily digestible format. She also provided tutoring on using excel and technical writing. At McDoux, there is an emphasis on building up the employees with the intention of them taking over the business as partners when Steph retires. Because of this, there is also an emphasis on training about how to run a business. I learned how to best use Intuit T-sheets, Slack, and Monday. I had the opportunity to become familiar with their organizational methods. I also worked together with Steph to develop new service offers (see appendix E) to help generate new business.

I found the training on writing and administering surveys, along with the best practices for analyzing the data and combining it with research to be the most helpful for my goals. I created and administered a survey asking New Orleans tour guides and companies about their offerings, formats, and statistical information. The report I produced (see appendix D) reveals the broad range of tours offered in New Orleans, but similar attitudes about the “dark tourism” aspects which are my area of focus. Hopefully this scholarship can prove useful to McDoux in the future when discussing potential opportunities for tourism in client cities. This was primarily a solo project conducted under Steph’s guidance since she is the survey expert.

Steph provided career guidance through discussion of my goals and we also discussed opportunities in the field at various times. While the mentoring and training was overall helpful,

I unfortunately realized that professional growth and development is hampered by the state of the historic preservation field in general. She also gave me advice on structuring and writing my thesis.

Steph offered to take me on full-time after I graduated this December, but the economic reality made it too cost prohibitive. My current employment yields about \$65,000–\$70,000 in combined salary and benefits. For full-time work, Steph could only offer me about \$38-40k without health or retirement benefits. I went on the insurance marketplace and found that to replace my health insurance alone for my family of four would be about \$16,000. The most expensive plans don't even cover the prescriptions that I have to take daily for a chronic illness. One of the medications that I have to keep on hand (but not take daily) costs \$40 for a box of 10 with my current insurance but would not be covered under even the highest cost plan. Without insurance, that medication is \$1,800 for the box of ten- which would only last me 6-10 months. I would lose our life insurance and retirement matching (\$4,500 last year) as well. The American healthcare system is broken. Dependency upon employers to be able to afford insurance kills opportunity.

For me, taking this job would result in cutting my net income by more than 50%. I started my career in marketing and communications at the same time I entered the program. With the 3 prerequisites I had to make up- I have been working on my public history MA since Spring of 2014 one class at a time. In those years, I have become a mid-career professional. While a master's degree will certainly open new doors (qualify me to teach as an adjunct or instructor/ qualify me for director level positions at MTSU), I don't believe that I will be able to change careers to the field of public history without taking a significant cut to my income.

Analysis of Relationship to Previous Scholarship

Rather than just the historical research methods or just the types of architecture and preservation methods, one of the main things most impressed on me during my historic preservation and cultural resource management coursework was how we should interact with the public. In all of my classes with Dr. West, he constantly emphasized the need to interact with the community when doing historic preservation work by listening first and approaching the work with their needs and desires coming first. Steph exemplifies this approach to working with communities.

Likewise, she advocates for disenfranchised and underserved communities when approaching the city-clients. Keeping an eye to diversity and inclusion are key, even if that means leading clients by the hand. During my time at McDoux, Steph gifted me two books. The first was *How to Be An Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi, which advocates for racial justice in our society and walks readers through how the issues of racism are entangled with the concepts of space, gender, the class system, education—every facet of society. In order for anyone to affect change in the world, they must first do the work to see the wider picture. In a similar vein, but with an eye toward leadership, the other book was *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us* by Seth Godin. Tribes encourages leadership skills development and discusses the importance of why you as an individual should become a leader. He encourages readers to make the change to start walking in the direction they want to go in life. I feel like this reading was a valuable encouragement to develop as a leader.

The rest of the readings in the course were primarily technical in nature, such as the “Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines,”

“National Register Bulletin 41: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places,” “Cemeteries in the City Plan: PAS Report 16” by the American Planning Association, or “Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries.” These were all instructive for preparing reports and provided me deeper understanding in an area of interest.

While sitting in meetings designed to shape the historic preservation plans for cities, I was happy to see the American Architecture coursework come in handy—particularly the technical terms that are thrown around. I also relied on this course’s foundation to assist in the historic structure survey we conducted in Conway, Arkansas. One of the assignments we did in class were creating mockup national register nominations. I didn’t handle any of these specifically while at McDoux, but I assisted on some of those projects. I was most interested in how the theoretical departed from the practical applications of working with an actual client who may have different ideas of what constitutes viable historical scholarship. While I heartily believe that anecdote and oral traditions are valuable in general, that sort of information is not the type that can be including in nomination forms. Seeing how that interaction played out was instructive.

I would be remiss to not mention my Oral History course. One of my largest projects during this internship included six formal and two informal oral history interviews. Much of the material we covered was specific to racial issues and the African American experience. I recalled from the course instruction on how to be an active and engaged listener, to be respectful of the person’s story while also getting the information needed for the project. I wrote my questions in advance and took only the most cursory notes so that I could actively listen and follow up and encourage further commentary when I thought they might have more to say. I learned

about the neighborhood and general attitudes from each and with each new interview I was able to ask better questions, questions that had been informed by the narrators that came before. Getting the information that we needed for the context and learning about the neighborhood were important goals—ones I kept in mind and accomplished. The greater goal for me was for each of these individuals to feel heard—for them to feel like their stories and experiences mattered.

My least favorite part of oral history (or journalist interviewing) was always transcribing. One spectacular improvement was McDoux's use of the program Otter for transcription. While you still have to review it to clean it up, it saves so much time and tedium. I really enjoy oral history interviewing and think that I have a talent for putting narrators at ease, not interrupting, but gently guiding the interviews. I would be happy to do it professionally if it were more lucrative and offered more stability. As it is, I will not be changing jobs until both of my children are through college.

I took an Advanced Projects section with Dr. Taylor-Polesky in which she focused on digital historical methods. In this course, we did extensive readings on universal design principles. Funnily enough, this small bit of scholarship that isn't entirely history oriented has been the thing I put into practice most frequently. Everything we put into the world, whether it is a website, thesis, article, promotional materials, should take universal design principles into account. Is this legible for the color blind? For the elderly? Can the functionally literate still navigate a public service? I took all this into account when creating materials for McDoux. When I finished my New Orleans report I asked a color-blind friend if he could double check (there are websites that can assist with this as well) and luckily the graphics I created were

labeled well enough and had high enough contrast that he didn't need the colors to differentiate the areas. It may seem like a small thing, but history should be accessible to everyone, and these principles offer great guidance on how to make it that way.

I also thought back to my digital practices coursework when it came time to digitize an original book from the early 1800s which contained valuable maps on the early days of Conway, Arkansas that were found nowhere else. I haven't done so yet, but I considered reaching out to the University of Kentucky library (where I borrowed the book from an interlibrary loan) and offering to give them the digital files for public access. The book was important to access for the whole team, but since we were states apart it needed to be digitized for ease of access.

Most every class helped me build primary research skills that I utilized in researching the Conway African American Historic Context source materials and the combing of digital databases to try to find the identity of the deckhands lost in the Dayton explosion. The courses that particularly honed my research skills were Dr. Myers-Shirk's Historical Research Methods and the Selected Studies reading course I did with Dr. West- both helped me dive into primary source and archival research in way that hooked me on historical detective work. Even though I wasn't able to finish the unidentified deckhand project, I poured myself into it because of the thrill I felt when I was able to find the names of enslaved workers on a plantation in present day Smyrna that had been previously forgotten to time. I remember holding what were essentially receipts for the buy and sale of human beings in a longhand cursive document in an archive and feeling deep sorrow over the injustice, but pride in my small attempt to restore some small amount of posthumous posterity so they wouldn't be forgotten when discussing the homes columns and windows. That sort of moment is how you get hooked on historical work.