

Daniel Mangigian comments below on his internship experience in an archeological laboratory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dan is a mature student retooling for a second career. His internship fulfilled a requirement for a degree in History from Rowan University in New Jersey.

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The English historian G.M. Trevelyan once said that "if historians neglect to educate the public, if they fail to interest it intelligently in the past, then all their historical learning is valueless except in so far as it educates themselves." This quote holds great bearing, especially in the field of Public History. As a History Major at Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J. my main focus had been on the process of research, reading, and writing. This summer I enrolled in a "Field Service History" course which included an internship at an historical institution. Going into it I did not know what to expect. Would I be doing research? Would I be writing papers? To my pleasant surprise part of my job was to talk with the general public about history.

My internship was done at The Independence Living History Center Archeology Lab on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Philadelphia. The lab is run through The National Park Service and is connected with The Independence National Historical Park. The lab itself processes and holds artifacts found at archeological digs in the Independence Mall section of the city. Pieces held in the lab date from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Along with my study of History, I am working to achieve a certification to teach at the secondary education level. Besides having one public speaking course, I had no teaching type of experience. The internship at the lab provided me with almost 100 hours of public speaking experience which I feel will help me tremendously when I transition to the teaching profession.

Talking to the public about the artifacts and the history of the area was very fulfilling for me because I felt as if I was contributing to the historical education of many people who may have had no prior knowledge of the events and pieces associated with it. This helped me realize how important public history is for our society. These are facts that a person may not necessarily learn in a classroom.

The pieces found at the dig sites, combined with the working knowledge of the staff, help educate the visitors on the historical facts. I spoke with many children visiting the lab and, being able to answer their questions, and to see the looks of interest in their eyes brought a great fulfillment to me personally. The lab itself is a wonderful outlet to show the public how people from the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries lived. Many people I talked to were not aware of how people 'back then' lived their everyday lives. From the most basic things (like what they used to comb their hair, to how they disposed of their trash), seeing certain pieces and associating them to their owners helped tell the story of these people. Most people come in thinking that the entire history of the area is 'The Declaration of Independence' and 'The Constitutional Convention'. But the most mundane things can tell the occupants' socio-economic status, their occupation, and perhaps their nationality. I think that the lab serves an important purpose in educating the public. I also feel that many visitors left the lab thinking differently than before they entered. My experience working at the lab has bettered me as a future history educator and I enjoyed my three month experience there tremendously.