

March 6, 2023

Dr. Tyler Howe
Compliance Manager
Wisconsin Historical Society
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RE: Progress Update for *Memorandum of Understanding Milwaukee County Institutional Grounds Froedtert Tract (MCIG-FT) Ambulatory Care Center Project WHS #07-0878 (47MI527)*

Dear Dr. Howe,

I write to provide a progress update on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's on-going research, education, and curation efforts in support of its 2008 *Memorandum of Understanding with the Wisconsin Historical Society regarding Milwaukee County Institutional Grounds Froedtert Tract (MCIG-FT) Ambulatory Care Center Project WHS #07-0878 (47MI527)*.

I take each of the seven significant MOU provisions in turn:

Stipulation 1: The human remains and associated artifacts may be subject to analysis and research by UWM.

UWM has facilitated analysis and research of the Milwaukee County Poor Farm Cemetery (MCPFC) population by the:

1. Preparation of individuals, their associated grave goods, and cultural items for long term care.
 - The initial accessioning of individuals involved extensive stabilization and conservation efforts, including mold mitigation, removal of adherents and organic matter, and the reassociation of skeletal elements with individuals.
 - Individuals were carefully re-housed in custom designed archivally stable containers and placed within a 36 CFR Part 79 compliant facility with restricted access.
2. Preparation of field records for long-term curation.
 - Entry of field records into the collection management information system.
 - Stabilization and rehousing of field records and photographs for long term curation.
 - Digitization of 8,625 linear feet of paper records and photographs and

- storage in digital archives.
3. Creation of a Geographical Information System database.
 - The database contains spatial data (intra-site provenience) that links to attribute data, such as osteological biological profiles.
 4. Development and implementation of treatment protocols and analytical methods.
 - We created four manuals focus on general laboratory protocols and conservation: *Stabilization/Cleaning Protocol for Adult Skeletal Material*, *Stabilization Protocol for Juvenile Burial Matrix*, *Material Culture Processing and Stabilization Manual*, and the *MCPFC Protocol Guide and Laboratory Manual*.
 - Five manuals detailing protocols for bioarchaeological analyses: *Adult Analysis*, *Juvenile Analysis*, *Commingle Analysis*, *3D Scanning*, and *Burial Description Manual*.
 5. Development of biological profiles for each individual.
 - UWM is documenting age at death, biological sex (adults only), and pathologies for each individual, an important and necessary activity given the limitations of the biological profiles developed prior to 2008. The development of robust biological profiles is a prerequisite for generating provisional identifications.

Stipulation 2: UWM shall permit reasonable and appropriate research by students and other scholars from within and without UWM, shall grant reasonable and appropriate access to the human remains and associated artifacts to students and other scholars from within and without the UWM, and shall ensure reasonable and appropriate access to all individuals who currently have ongoing research projects involving the human remains and associated artifacts. In all cases, the Anthropology Department at UWM shall determine what constitutes reasonable and appropriate access.

1. UWM established a research access protocol to assess reasonable and appropriate research access to the population for all researchers and students (internal and external to UWM). Oversight and decisions are made through the ARLC Internal Advisory Committee.
2. External researchers have been provided access to the MCPFC population.
 - UWM hosted the *Midwest Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology Association* meeting (2017) to foster inter-institutional research initiatives and collaborative efforts.
 - The population has been the focus of three Ph.D. dissertations, one Ph.D. dissertation in progress, and one Master's thesis for students external to UWM.
 - Visiting scholars conducted research on the MCPFC population.
3. Internal researchers and students have been provided access to the MCPFC population.
 - UWM Student work to date includes eight Ph.D. dissertations and 11 Master's theses.
 - Support for Undergraduate Research Fellows (SURF) students facilitated long term care efforts for the population, including three students active in Spring 2023.

Stipulation 3: UWM shall ensure that the human remains and associated artifacts are treated with the greatest possible respect.

1. All work is guided by professional principles and standards including those of the *American Anthropological Association*, the *Society for American Archaeology*, and the *American Association of Biological Anthropologists*.
2. The protocols and manuals (noted above – Stipulation 1) ensure compliance with professional standards.

Stipulation 4: UWM shall notify the public if and when human remains are identified so that descendants of identified individuals may know that such identification has occurred.

1. Identifying individuals and reuniting them with their descendants is an important goal of UWM's work. However, there are numerous challenges to identification:
 - Identifying burial marker tags that link an interment to the record entry in the burial ledger were physically removed from the cemetery in the late 1920s. In advance of the construction of the nurse's residence in 1928, all tags were removed and the fence marking the cemetery was dismantled.
 - The burial ledger does not reflect a complete record of everyone buried in the cemetery. The burial ledger records information for approximately 5,000 individuals. This means that there are *an additional two thousand people* who were buried at the cemetery that are not recorded in the ledger.
 - Individuals cared for at UWM represent only a *small subset* of the people once interred at the cemetery. The Milwaukee County Poor Farm Cemetery (Cemetery 2) was in use from 1882 to 1925 as the final resting place of over 7,000 individuals.
2. Given these limitations, UWM developed methods to allow for the preliminary identification of individuals by aligning three discrete data sets: biological profile, intra-site provenience, and archival data.
 - The biological profile provides age at death, biological sex, and, possibly, distinctive traits (such as pathology with skeletal indicators). As noted above, biological profiles are 65 percent complete.
 - Select areas of the cemetery have been associated with discrete time periods making it possible to match individuals (based on date of death) with specific graves based on intra-site provenience.
 - Archival records listing individuals buried at the cemetery include the burial ledger and death records. Both sources have been digitized and made searchable by a student research project.
 - This process has generated six provisional identifications. Genetically, no one has been identified.
3. UWM is developing a protocol to identify (and contact) descendants of provisionally identified individuals and a process to allow the transfer of control and custody of identified individuals that is consistent with Wis. Stat. §157.70.

Stipulation 5: UWM shall work with descendants of identified individuals represented within the collection of human remains, if it becomes possible to identify a set of remains as a specific individual related to those descendants, to allow the descendants to obtain and rebury those remains.

As noted above, UWM is developing a protocol to identify (and contact) descendants of provisionally identified individuals and a process to allow the transfer of control and custody of identified individuals that is consistent with Wis. Stat. §157.70.

Stipulation 6: UWM shall develop a Website that makes the information about the human remains and associated artifacts available to a broad audience. This aspect of the final disposition is critical in giving those individuals previously buried at the MCIG-FT an ongoing voice in their community and providing the public with current information on any research and analysis undertaken on the human remains and associated artifacts.

UWM maintains a website at: <https://sites.uwm.edu/milwaukee-county-poor-farm-cemetery/>

Stipulation 7. UWM shall continue its tradition of conducting the highest quality research and producing thorough and timely publication of the results of such research. Continuing this tradition of research and publishing excellence is key in affording the strongest possible voice to individuals represented from the MCIG-FT.

1. The population has been the basis of research for eight Ph.D. dissertations, one Ph.D. dissertation in progress, and 11 Master's theses at UWM as the degree-granting institution.
2. The population has been the focus of six organized sessions (40+ individual paper presentations) at regional, national, and international conferences.
3. Research has been published in peer-reviewed books.
 - *The Bioarchaeology of Dissection and Anatomy in the United States* (Springer, 2017).
 - A prospectus for an edited volume, *In Small Things Remembered: An Archaeology of Affective Objects and Other Narratives*, is planned for submission to Berghahn Books in 2023.
4. Faculty have submitted four proposals (budget value \$1.5 million) to the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.
5. A UWM internal grant was awarded 2017-2018 (budget value \$156,000) to support biological profile efforts. A second proposal for a UWM internal grant (budget value \$99,000) has been recently submitted.

As always, if there are questions regarding this summary, please do not hesitate to contact me at haasjr@uwm.edu or at (414) 251-8853.

Sincerely,

Jennifer R. Haas, Ph.D.
Director, Archaeological Research Laboratory Center

Attachment 1: Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding
Milwaukee County Institutional Grounds Froedtert Tract
(MCIG-FT)
Ambulatory Care Center Project WHS # 07-0878
(47 MI 527)

This Memorandum of Understanding, by and between the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System on behalf of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), shall become effective on the date of full execution by both parties.

Whereas, UWM is a research institution with academic programs in Archaeology, Forensic Sciences, Museum Studies, and Anthropology;

Whereas, pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 157.70 (6) and Wis. Admin. Code § HS 2.05 (6) and (10), the Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society has determined that all human remains, personal artifacts, burial hardware, field notes, and field images associated with excavations at the Milwaukee County Institutional Grounds-Froedtert Tract (MCIG-FT), (site # 47 MI 527) shall be transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) for final disposition.

Whereas, UWM has an interest in accepting in perpetuity the human remains, personal artifacts, burial hardware, field notes, and field images associated with this excavation for the purpose of research, education, and curation.

Now, therefore, the parties agree as follows:

1. The human remains and associated artifacts may be subject to analysis and research;
2. The UWM shall permit reasonable and appropriate research by students and other scholars from within and without the UWM, and shall grant reasonable and appropriate access to the human remains and associated artifacts to students and other scholars from within and without the UWM, and shall ensure reasonable and appropriate access to all individuals who currently have on-going research projects involving the human remains and associated artifacts. In all cases, the Anthropology Department at UWM shall determine what constitutes reasonable and appropriate access. In case a dispute over what constitutes reasonable and appropriate access occurs, the UWM shall contact the Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society to assist in resolution of the dispute.

3. The UWM shall ensure that the human remains and associated artifacts are treated with the greatest possible respect;
4. The UWM shall notify the public if and when human remains are identified so that descendants of identified individuals may know that such identification has occurred;
5. The UWM shall work with descendants of individuals represented within the collection of human remains, if it becomes possible to identify a set of remains as a specific individual related to those descendants, to allow the descendants to obtain and rebury those remains;
6. UWM shall develop a Web site that makes the information about the human remains and associated artifacts available to a broad audience. This aspect of the final disposition is critical in giving those individuals previously buried at the MCIG-FT an ongoing voice in their community and providing the public with current information on any research and analysis undertaken on the human remains and associated artifacts; and,
7. The UWM shall continue its tradition of conducting the highest quality research and producing thorough and timely publication of the results of such research. Continuing this tradition of research and publishing excellence is key to affording the strongest possible voice to the individuals represented from the MCIG-FT.

Signed:

Wisconsin Historical Society, by:

Ellsworth H. Brown
Ellsworth H. Brown
The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director

12/23/08
Date

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, by:

Rita Cheng
Rita Cheng, Provost and Vice
Chancellor for Academic Affairs

12-16-08
Date