

Elizabeth Bartman Museum Internship Grant  
Archaeological Institute of America  
Final Report

I began my internship in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology at the Smithsonian Institute by familiarizing myself with the collections held at the Museum Support Center and their cataloging system. My first task was to finish the inventory of the Hydrobiid collection that was started by a previous intern. This allowed me to get comfortable with the cataloging system used at SI, as there were over 5,000 lots to inventory.

Next I began working on my largest project, the cataloging of the Bereza mussel shell collection. This collection was donated to the museum a few years ago and researchers identified many of the shells shortly thereafter. The collection consists of around 1,000 lots and 5,000 specimens. I first did a quick inventory of the collection to get a better idea of what we had to work with. Next, I began cataloging each lot and preparing them for permanent storage. About 150 of the lots had not yet been identified, so I identified the shells in those lots and then catalogued them as well.

I finished the Bereza project earlier than expected, so I began working on the Brunson collection, which is a 50,000-count collection of gastropods. I inventoried each lot and cataloged them. Unlike the previous two projects, this collection was a dry collection, so I was able to learn how to curate both wet and dry collections for the Smithsonian.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Smithsonian and learned a great deal about curating large, diverse collections. I was able to work with shells from all across the United States and Mexico, introducing me to new species and updating myself on changing taxonomies. This will be very helpful as I begin analyzing the shell for my thesis this coming fall semester. I also enjoyed working with the cataloging system used at the Smithsonian Institute. Learning to use a computer cataloging system like the one used at the Smithsonian will surely be useful in the future. The friendships and connections I made while at the Smithsonian were definitely the icing on the cake to the knowledge I gained there. I am thrilled to be able to reach out to any of my colleagues or mentors there for support in the future. I am very thankful to the Archaeological Institute of America for the Elizabeth Bartman Museum Internship Grant that allowed me to pursue this internship without the worry of financial problems.

Thank you again for your support.  
Kate McKinney