Transcript

Cissell:

OK. Today is Monday, November 6th, 2023 and I'm here with Jayne-Leigh Thomas. This is Madison Cissell and thank you, Jayne-Leigh, for being here. And so I first just wanted to start by getting a general history. So if you just want to tell me like. Where you're from. Your education.

Thomas:

My name is Jayne-Leigh Thomas. I'm originally from the Pacific North. West, I have a Masters degree in resource management from Central Washington University and a PhD in archaeology from the University of Edinburgh and Scotland.

Cissell:

And do you want to maybe talk about like the archaeological roots of your work or how you got into from public management archaeology to now? Sure. Yes.

Thomas:

Yeah. So I was actually a softball player in college and at the time didn't have any idea what I wanted to do for a career. I was a double major anthropology and liberal studies and after I graduated with my bachelor's degree, I still had no idea what I wanted to do. I went to my first field school, which was in the southern Idaho desert, digging in a paleo Indian cave. And I loved that. But in archaeology, there's something called a shovel bum, which is basically someone who, you know, just digs in the summer and sleeps in their truck and doesn't make a lot of money. And I thought, well, I really like this, but I don't really want to do that. I don't want to just be an ex summer excavator kind of thing. And so I went and got. I went to Central Washington University to get my Masters degree in resource management. Resource management is a program that is designed to look at either natural resources or cultural resources, and anything that could be considered a resource of information. You could do a P or you excuse me, a master's degree on so on the. So there was about 25 to 30 students in my cohort, but I would say 2/3 if not more, were on the natural side. So they were studying elk herds, fish populations, Beaver habitats, bird species. That was what they were studying. The rest of us on the cultural side. There was a gentleman who was writing a thesis on Powells. There was other folks writing about rock art, archaeological excavations and. I started focusing on studying skeletal remains, so I was taking osteology and at the time I couldn't decide if I was going to go into archaeology or forensics. Essentially, the time period didn't matter, and so I was studying both. And at that time, when I was writing my master's thesis is when I learned about the Native American Graves protection and Repatriation Act. And that was what kind of my thesis focused on was whether or not you could use secondary data from the past. To figure out any information about collections that were going to be subject to natural law. I got a scholarship to go to the University of Edinburgh and Scotland and so that obviously pulled me towards the archaeology side instead of forensics and after that I I didn't think I'd ever do Nagpur again. I study. 3000 year old cremations from Slovenia. And after I graduated, did a little bit of postdoctoral work over there and was trying to find a a job and and then the position at IU opened and I came here in 2013.

Cissell:

Yes. And do you maybe? Give some more context for Nagpra and the work that.

Thomas:

Sure. So the Native American Graves protection and Repatriation Act. Is a human rights law that was passed in 1990 after decades of lobbying by American Indian communities for the equal treatment of their deceased ancestors. Negra kind of came about first in 1971. There's a woman named Maria Pearson who lived in Iowa, and her husband was on a construction crew had found believe it was 24 year American burials. A Native American woman and child, the Native American woman's body and her child were sent to a museum for study, and the Your American people. Were given a respectful burial in a local cemetery and she was outraged by the hypocritical treatment of the Native American people. And so she started lobbying and the state of Iowa was the first to actually pass a state burial law protecting those graves. Nagpra is required by any institution, and an institution can be defined as a university, a museum and art History Museum, a police station, Historical Society, anyone that receives federal funding that has Native American collections. Is required to comply with the law. There are 5 categories that fall under the law, Native American and Native Hawaiian human remains associated funerary objects, unassociated funerary objects, objects of cultural patrimony, and sacred object. The law requires that these institutions work with. Communities to consult, and that's probably the most important part of Nagpra. Aside from the return of the collections, is consulting and creating relationships with the federally recognized sovereign nations. That are either affiliated or connected with the collections at an institution and. The communities I mentioned, federally recognized because specifically there are there are state recognized tribes and the law does not. Allow you to work with those communities, unless the federally recognized tribes are on. Board with it. So it gets a little tricky but. Yeah, that's basically the law.

Cissell:

Thank you. And So what does your work look like or I guess no? First I want to know your introduction to Nag Pro when you were a. Masters student, right, wasn't.

Thomas:

Mm-hmm. Yeah. So I my Nagpur mentor was and still is the bio archaeologist that works with the tribes that. Are affiliated to the ancient one or the Kennewick Man, and so my training? She's an osteology professor, and so she taught me a lot about nagpra and what it is and what it also isn't and. That was kind of my first introduction to Nagra was working with her and learning. The different parts of the law, and it was kind of, I guess, in a sense a brief 2 year introduction to Nagra and then I went overseas and the loss slightly changed in 2010. I was still living abroad and. Prior to 2010, collections of ancestral remains and funerary objects had to be affiliated to a tribe, but universities were using that as a loophole to retain collections by saying, well, these collections aren't affiliated with the tribe. So I guess we'll keep them. In 2010, the regulation changed. That said didn't matter if you couldn't affiliate, there was going to be a new requirement for Cy, or culturally unidentifiable collections, and that it didn't matter if you didn't know which tribe to talk to. And it didn't matter if you couldn't affiliate all collections of ancestral remains. We're going back.

Cissell:

Sorry, you mentioned that your mentor kind of taught you what Nagra is and what it isn't. So what? What is nagpra? What is?

Thomas:

I think a lot of people get really confused about, you know, what the law requires and what it doesn't. And it and and without going too far in the weeds about what the law is, which we could definitely do if you ever wanted to. The law requires. Consultation and that's really key, but consultation can be different things depending on the communities you're working with face to face consultation is is technically it is the best because it's hard to create a relationship with someone behind an e-mail or a phone call. But communities are working with so many different universities. Across the country that there just isn't the time to visit face to face. Even if folks wanted to. And so to some communities, an e-mail, a text message, a A letter that is sufficient for consultation. I think. I was trying to understand for my masters thesis. So in the 1960s and 70s there had been a lot of data collected on the collections and. I was looking at that data. I was not actually looking at any of the skeletal remains that was not part of my project. The idea was whether or not. From the 1960s or 70s could be used as a reliable source of information, so you know today we think, OK, researchers collect a ton of data, but 50 years from now, how do those people know that the data is reliable? The data are reliable. How do we? How do they know that somebody didn't mess up or or the the data are useless, essentially, and so I was using discriminant function analysis which is a statistical program to try to. Look at whether or not. Individuals were male or female, so it's it basically allows you to determine sex of the individual and. Received a little bit of pushback from folks because they were assuming that I was studying the remains, which is not what I was doing. And so I learned very quickly, you know, obviously how sensitive nature work can be. I also learned how research should not be done. On collections of ancestor remains without tribal involvement. So yeah, there was a lot in that two years for sure.

Cissell:

And so how is that, you know, the work that you started out doing? How has that evolved to today? I would imagine there's a lot more administration there.

Speaker 2

Yeah, well, when?

Thomas:

I when I came here in 2013, I originally came to run the lab, and so I was going to be working with the collections of human remains. And then I was moved into the administrative position, running the program. Not long after I got here, which of course took me out of that. And into more of the administrative role working directly with Communities, Consulting grant writing. And that was quite a change from what I had thought. I was coming here to do.

Cissell:

And UM. So I guess this might be a silly question, but like each university has like a NAG Pro director or someone. Or are they not always affiliated with the university and like?

Speaker 2

That's OK.

Thomas:

Yes, no, I mean. It's it's. Yes. Well, no so. Even though the. Law is 33 years old. There are stereo universities that have never done nigra OK, and they're scrambling and they're panicking. Yeah, I would say I think there's something like over 1000 museums nationwide that. Are doing nagpra now what that means is very subjective because unfortunately. A lot of universities don't want to do NAG Prep. It's can be a slow process. It can be expensive, and a lot of folks really see it as a negative thing that's drawing from resources, you know, and instead of looking at all of the the benefits that come from doing 9 per work and consulting with communities. I think that unfortunately, at a lot of universities, specifically, a young faculty member will come in who's on a tenure track and they're told, oh, you also have to. Do Nagra and they're like. I don't know how to do Nagra. I've never done it. I've never received any training. Plus I don't have time. I'm supposed to be doing a tenure dossier. And teaching classes and running a field school and the universities like, well, that's too bad. And so what's happening across the country is that. There's no training for Nagpra work. People are being forced into those positions who have no napper experience, and the universities are not putting resources towards it. You see that today a lot of places are advertising for a one year. $40,000 a year job and they're not able to fill the job because nobody wants to move across the country for a $40,000 a year job and then in eight months, they're going to have to put their, you know, CV out there again to try to find something else. And so a lot of universities. Or during to do it the cheap way. They don't want to pay for somebody full time, they don't want to pay for more than one person full time, so that work gets shifted on to museum curators or collections managers or faculty members when that's not really their job.

Cissell:

So in your eyes I guess, how does? To others.

Thomas:

IU has the largest not a team in the country, OK, and you know, it started out as just me and then I was able to get hourly help and then gradually graduate student help. And then one full time person, one full time and a graduate student, and then two full time and now we have. Six people that are full time dedicated to doing Nagra compliance work and we have a very strong budget that allows me to do the things that I need to. Do under federal law.

Cissell:

What else is there? I guess about your work with NAG Pro or your journey to where you are now. I guess through a work lens that I haven't covered so far.

Thomas:

I would just say that a lot of you know the relationships in the beginning, I you had a really bad reputation when I came here because. There had been 23 years since the law had passed, and IU has one of the largest collections in the country and there had never been a repatriation. And so of course, the tribes were rightly so very angry about this. And, you know, now we have developed such strong relationships with communities. That we. We are now able to do a lot of really great collaborative projects and grant opportunities, opportunities for students to work with tribes for conference

presentations and research projects. And there's just been this. Turn around compared to what was definitely not that situation. A decade ago.

Cissell:

So shifting gears a little bit, your introduction to papaws and.

Thomas:

Sure. So I'm from the Pacific Northwest originally where we don't have either. So I've always been very interested in flowers and gardening. And I think my first introduction to both was at the farmers market. And I had never seen either, and I was very curious to know what they were. The papaw is sometimes called the Indiana Banana, which also really confused me because I wasn't sure what that meant. And Papas have such a short. Two to three day span of being ripe, there may be only going to show up at. The farmers market. One time and then you're not going to see them again. And so that was actually my my first kind of introduction to to both of those and then being really interested to try to find out. OK. Where are Persimmon trees? What do they look like? What time of year do the fruits fall? Oh my gosh, don't pull them off the tree orange and eat them because that's really going to be a bad move, you know? And it took, I would say, a while before I was actually able to find Papaws to buy, you know, because like I said, I had seen them and heard about him. But it was like because of. That very short window. It's not like you can go to the grocery store and buy something that's pop-up flavored to try it. And so it was probably a little while before I had actually gotten to try 1.

Cissell:

So it sounds like it was kind of simultaneous your introduction to both fruits. Is that the same time?

Thomas:

Probably you know, I mean papaws are right a little bit earlier in the year and I when I moved here, I would say I was. I moved here past that point in the year. So I think Persimmon was actually probably the first thing I saw over a decade ago and it was like we're passing the tree and there's all these, you know what look like they're rotting fruits. All over the ground and it's like I don't know what this is. And you know, just being really interested in learning more about, you know, the new place I was living in and I had a lot to learn. I mean, I didn't know what humidity was. I didn't know what Cato was. You know, it was like, I don't understand why the trees are so loud. What is this thing in there that, you know? Of course, you can't see it either. So, yeah. There was definitely a lot of learning when I moved here.

Cissell:

Do you like the taste of persimmons?

Thomas:

I do. I do? Yeah. I mean, I've had Persimmon wine, and I think. It's awful. Which? Is really confusing because I really like persimmons. I like Persimmon pudding, but and so I was super excited about Persimmon. Wine. And I thought it was awful. And it's definitely an acquired taste, I think. But yeah, I do, really.

Cissell:

Like both? Was it just really sweet?

Thomas:

No, it wasn't sweet at all, which I was. It was more. It was more bitter. Which kind of threw me off because I would have thought it would have been. Very sweet. Yeah. And I was very disappointed that it wasn't so. But that was only at one winery, so not to say that it may be like that everywhere, but yeah.

Cissell:

Yeah, yeah. I've had a paw paw line and. It was really.

Thomas:

Ohh that sounds amazing. Where was that?

Cissell:

Actually like a winery or? Yeah. A vineyard like right by where I grew up in pawpaw wine.

Speaker 2

Ohh really?

Cissell:

Oh, amazing. I'll have to bring some back.

Thomas:

Yeah, please do. No. And we talked a little bit about this in the panel about, you know, fermenting paw paws and the possibility of doing things like that and. You know, I do have an interest in that just simply because of the archaeological. Work that we're. Doing and I know that you know Upland brewery here in town makes sour beers, and they're very, very fruit forward and I'm not sure if they have a Persimmon one they might. I don't know but.

Cissell:

Yeah, I was wanting to ask about that, so that. So maybe something I glossed over is your involvement with the Angel mounts. So if you maybe want to give background and context to that because it was going to be through the folks or the things you were finding there that you were going to maybe take on this. Permutation project.

Thomas:

Kind of came about so. In 2016, the tribes requested that our main focus be on the repatriation and reburial of the Angel Mounds Collection, which was the largest archaeological collection within the state of Indiana and that is was housed at the former Glen Black Lab of Archaeology. Now the Indiana University. Museum of Archaeology and anthropology. That collection and that repatriation occurred in spring of 2021 and prior of course, because of that, I was learning a lot of information about Angel mounds and about the people who live there and the different. You know, cultural practices and like I

said before, I'm a really big gardener. I'm in the Bloomington Garden Club and I was really interested in learning. You know, some of this had come about from a Facebook group about gardening that I'm in and a lot of folks had planted squash and they had babied the squash for months and they were really excited. They had a lot of flowers and the squash started to grow and then a squash bore got to it and it killed the plant. People were complaining about how they had put so much work and effort and they only got 1 butternut squash the entire season and we laugh about that today because we can just go to the grocery store. But I was thinking in the past. What do you do if you baby your crops for four months and you get 1 butternut squash? That's not going to feed your family, and if you have a population of, let's say, 1000 people. What does it take to keep that community alive for a year? Also knowing that you can't eat your seeds in the winter because then you'll have nothing to plant the next? This year. Discovered evidence of Ridge and Ferro agriculture at Angel Mounds and some of the evidence. First evidence of the ancient corn landrace from about I would say 975 AD. And the archaeobotanical, who looked at some of the corn, said absolutely. That's what you have because corn back then looked a little bit. Different and so again, kind of the idea that. Archaeologically, at Angel Mounds, a lot of people, when they refer to diet, they said, well, they ate corn. Well, it's not that easy. Of course, if you eat just corn, you'll get a disease called pellagra. So. You can't just eat. Corn and even if you were to eat. Corn. How many? Bushels or acres of corn, would you have to plant in order to feed the people of your community? You also can't eat corn because you need protein and you need certain vitamins and amino acids and starting to think, OK, so OK, if we need X number of acres of corn. What are you going to do about pest control? Frost, drought. Too much rain. What if your crops fail? And again, going a step further and thinking, OK? How much protein do you need to keep a very active population alive for a year? If there are people who are. Fishing and hunting and managing agriculture. That's probably their full time job. To some extent, you're not going to be able. We know what, Angel. There's a lot of things like artwork and astronomy and artisan work. Those people probably also don't have time to do all the hunting. So. How much protein do you need? And then one more step is, what about things like calcium? There's no milk. So where is that population getting their calcium? Where are they getting vitamin C? Where are they getting, you know, the certain vitamins, minerals and amino acids that you have to have to keep a population healthy then thinking about? What the archaeological record tells us in terms of Archaeobotanical, but then thinking of what is available today, pawpaws and persimmons, I was just down at Angel a couple weeks ago and the Persimmon trees. Are are. Full. Yeah and. So the combination of thinking, OK. Papaws are only ripe for two to three days. That's a great source of vitamin C, but that's a very limited amount of time that you can use that resource. There have been studies done, I think, specifically Western Kentucky is looking at some of this that if you dry papaw into fruit leather per say, it actually becomes even more toxic. So it's not a resource of food that you can for stay dry and keep over the winter like persimmons. Persimmons. You can dry and they it's kind of like, you know, just dried fruit. You get to the store. They're amazing. Dried, but you can't really do. That so they say with with paw paws. They said the rest of the plant is also toxic, so having to be really careful about that. So looking back 1000 years. How can papaws be used if you have only in that two to three unit window and the same thing with persimmons and? Some of the evidence we have from Angel mounds in terms of the plants doesn't really explain how they were used and I think unfortunately archaeologists make it a lot of assumptions without any evidence or will they ate corn. Well, yeah, great. We know that, but that's that can't be all. And first of all, from a nutritional aspect, they didn't just eat corn, but when you're thinking of, OK, yes, they did eat a lot of corn, but it's so much more than that about your, you know, planting the seeds. And you might have to if your crops fail or if the wind cause corn is wind

pollinated, making sure that you get good pollination. What do you do if the crops? Do what they expect them to do. Corn back then was only about 3 to 4 inches long. It was cigar shaped with a lot smaller kernels, and so you're not talking that gorgeous giant GMO corn. Yeah, that we get today. You're talking very, very small cobs and kernels. And so the amount that you would need again to keep that population healthy year after year after year. And you know, so just kind of thinking. You know, a lot of people refer to, you know, they think of Native American gardening. They talk about the three sisters beings, corn and squash. First of all, it wasn't necessarily like that at all the time. Beans came in about 250 years later. The corn in southern Indiana, so you would not have had beans, corn and squash at the same time in the beginning. Also, we know what Angel there were squash, but it was actually gourds, not squash. It was actually more like those birdhouse gourds that you see. You know, you're not talking the acorn, beautiful acorn squash. That's not what it is. And those big ones, the the gourds. You can eat them when they're young, but once they get really big, they start getting really woody and you can't eat them. So again, if you let them get really big, they're great for storing things or making rattles or collecting water. But again, that's a food source that you're not able to rely on. So we know that. There are other archaeological sites kind of regionally that they are using certain plants for hallucinogenic properties, but that's never been looked at for Indiana. And so I'm really interested in that because, for example, we have evidence of morning glory seeds. At Angel. But what does that mean? Aside from the. Fact that they're morning glory seeds there. Morning glory seeds. If you chew them, you will hallucinate badly. I think a group of teenagers found out that it was in the. News. They are very toxic and. So were they used as some form of medicine? We know that at an archaeological site in northern Arkansas. I don't know if you're familiar with the Detoro plant. It's basically a really large. I have one at home. It's a really large. It's exceptionally toxic. You're not even supposed to touch like the leaves because the SAP can get on your skin and the flowers are enormous and they look like big trumpets, and they can be white or yellow. There is archaeological evidence for that plant residue being in shell cups. And in a Mississippian site. So the idea is that, again, that plant is being used as a hallucinogenic plant, a lot of plants. In large quantities or exceptionally toxic, but you in smaller quantities, they're great for medicines. And so you you have to understand that plants, properties, you have to understand, it's basically its powers and its limitations and be able to know that, for example, we know that a lot of Native American communities they. But I heard somebody referred to it as because you need to boil the leaves. It's like wet felt when you let it go too long and so it's not good. And so you have to, you know, milk weed needs to be eaten when it's very young and the leaves same kind of thing with poke weed, poke weed is not a plant you really want to mess around with. However, there are. Folks that use poke weed berries for medicines or actually used it. Danny Tittman from the Miami I heard her speak last week about that. I believe it was something that dogs were given those berries as a veterinary medicine. If the dog had, I guess, worms or something that would, it would help them so. That knowledge. Is not really talked about in the archaeological record. It's just these overarching statements of they ate persimmons. They ate papaws, they ate corn well. It's so much more complicated than that, and so much more amazing than that, really. You know, the the knowledge of of how to use papaws, how to use persimmons when they're ripe. What you can do with them, and I think there's been very little. Study into how. Papaws and persimmons were used at Angel. Were they? Fermented a lot of. Communities in the past, for example chicha, was a fermented corn beverage and and I think of Mexico and Latin America and. You know, we also have wild grapes here. Good wild grapes have been used in some sort of, you know, meat or wine, you know, with honey or something. So I think there's just a lot of questions I have in terms of. Food production and medicines and. Balance that you need, you know and again specifically thinking about

Paw paws because it's like they're so amazing, but you have to be kind of careful with them and you know. Yeah, I think there's just not been.

Cissell:

Enough work done. Yeah, I really liked. I underlined when you said medicine because I spoke with Darren, who's a farmer down in Paoli IN and he's just super knowledgeable about Papas and persimmons. But he was in. Some Facebook group. Where I think an indigenous woman, you. Know they were talking about. Because I guess the Facebook group was really heated on, you know, are they toxic, are they not? And she kind of imparted this indigenous wisdom, I guess, like something along the lines of papaw is a strong medicine and you need to use it accordingly. So yeah, that's like media. This null viewpoint or like just this knowledge that you know to sell more if you over consume it's going to be toxic but if you use it in a. Certain way, yeah. It can be medicinal. I just think that's so interesting. And like you're saying. That's not really like. Part of the record.

Thomas:

No and. And you know I, you know, working with a lot of the communities because of forced removal and genocide, a lot of the information was lost and. And so. The communities are also very interested in learning more about the plants that their communities relied on. Just from my experience and talking with them. But you know, I think again with thinking about angels specifically, and not only just Angel, but other sites throughout Indiana. There's another hallucinogenic drink called the black drink, and it was a yaupon holly, and it has an exceptionally large amount of caffeine and. Ethnographic, I believe records said that it was something that men would consume prior to battle or for war, and basically it would. It would make you hallucinate. Well, yeah, I guarantee you, if I had 50 cups of coffee, I would also hallucinate. You know what I mean? It's like it's that concentrated level of coffee where if you have One Cup of coffee, what is it going to do to your body? If you have 50 cup of coffee, what is it going to do? Your body same kind of thing with papaws. You know, if it is mildly toxic. Sick, but it it just depends on how you use it, and that knowledge you know because we we threw these general things of poke weeds poisonous. Well, yeah, it is. But you have to know how to use it. Rhubarb is also poisonous. You can't eat the leaves. It's actually the leaf that's the toxic part, not the stem. So it's it's trying to. Stop making these general assumptions about what people did in the past because. The level of genius in the past is not talked about, and having that knowledge and that generational pass down of that oral history and teaching people how to use the food, you know Angel was only really heavily occupied for about 150 years, which in archaeological time is quite short. But when we think about 150 years today, that's. A really long. Time to pass down generations or pass down knowledge to the next generations. And I'm really really interested in working with the tribal communities that are affiliated with Angel and looking more at. If there's a way we can figure out. How fruits, nuts, plants, berries were used rather than these broad statements of will they corn they eat Papas, they eat persimmons. OK, but was it so much more than that? And I'm almost. I mean I guarantee you it was, you know, but what does that look like? It's never been looked for. Yeah. And. And so that's also the point of frustration for me. And I think. I'm kind of the obnoxious one because this isn't my field of study and so I can kind of step back and take the 10,000 foot for you and be like. Well, how? Do you know they ate Papas? But how do you know? Can just because we have Papas today. Does that mean they ate them in the past? How do you know and and again forcing people to step back and stop making these generalized statements? About what

communities did or didn't do, and trying to really look at you know what? Other information is available, but of course also bringing the communities in to be part of that work, yeah.

Cissell:

It reminded me to this is like way off topic, but don't you have a cat? That's named Tom.

Speaker 2

I do. I do. Have a cat named Papa. Yeah, I can give you. I'll give you a.

Thomas:

Picture of him and.

Cissell:

Ohh yeah.

Thomas:

I didn't name him that because of the fruit. Actually. Yeah, a lot of people think that that was why and.

Cissell:

That's where I was.

Thomas:

He was a stray that showed up at my house one day and he's a Maine coone, so he has really, really big feet. And I just called him papaw because of his big feet. And I hadn't realized at the time about the fruit. So a lot of people assumed that his name is Papa because the fruit, but it's not. But it's always. It's always funny because.

Speaker 2

It's like, Oh yeah, I know all. About Papa, he's at.

Cissell:

Home. So yeah, and I guess. It would have the same spelling.

Thomas:

Yeah, Yep. Same spelling. And yeah, he's he's very, very big, very about 20 pounds, big guy and. Very well known in the neighborhood, and it's quite funny because and when I have to yell for. Him I'm like.

Cissell:

Papa. So yeah. Well, that's like we call my grandfather, Papa. So I feel like, yeah, but it would almost sound like you're. Like calling for an old man, yeah.

Thomas:

Yeah, I've lost my grandfather. Yeah. Somebody help me. Yeah.

Cissell:

Yeah. Well, I I just think like everything you just said is so interesting to me and you're talking about a bit of like the disconnection between like. The history and the knowledge that was there because of cultural suppression and genocide, but I'm wondering, you know, today the Community partnerships and the folks here working with maybe we could switch into you talking about like the network of people that you're working with or? The networks that you know of that are like doing.

Thomas:

This kind of work? Yeah. So I think I think that I'll start with that first, so. So repatriation. There's another term, and I I'm not going to go too far into it because it's something. You could probably look. Up because I don't know. I don't want to misspeak, but I think a lot of communities call it rematerialization. And the idea of. Getting heirloom or landrace seeds back into their community to grow the original. I know there are a lot of communities because of. High levels of diabetes and in communities, people are trying to create a lot of, you know, food sovereignty programs and a lot of tribes are looking at having seeds repatriated to them, a lot of humanities few seeds. As relatives and. So I think there's there's several reasons why communities are looking at, but also, like I said, the the food sovereignty programs and teaching from what I've seen on Facebook, a lot of the communities are, you know, they are going out and picking milkweed early in the season and teaching the younger generations how to do that and when to gather pop outs. When to gather per sevens black walnuts things to try to grow. Foods, but the problem is that because of, you know again GMO corn and GMO seeds, it's very difficult because corn is wind pollinated. So how do you control the wind? There's a Miami white corn and I found some seeds at a seed exchange one year. And I was talking with one of my colleague. And she said, well, you should plan it and see if it will grow. And she said. But just make sure it doesn't crop pollinate with other corn. I was. I have a cornfield behind my house, directly behind my fence is a cornfield. So it's like, well, that's not probably going to work. And so it can be difficult, I think. But trying to locate those seeds. You know, for example, there's a. There's this, I think it's called seed savers. It's a seed company that looks for seeds that have been around for hundreds of years and they have a lot of stories and their seed catalog about. For example. A woman brought the seeds with her from Czechoslovakia in 1835, and the family still have them, and now they're able to grow these these plants again. And there are some in the seed catalog that talk about Native American, like the Arikara, red corn. There's a Delaware blue corn. There's an Oklahoma black corn. There's a corn in the South. Class. That's very, very. It's about this color is amazing. And I had seen that I had been invited out to spend time with the community and be involved in some ceremonial activities. And I was asked to.

Cissell:

Oh well, yeah.

Thomas:

To peel a corn and of course I'm, you know, thinking it's going to be yellow. And it was this most amazing emerald green I had ever seen. And of course, I was, like, totally shocked. And because that is more the the traditional colors rather than the just the yellow that we see at. The grocery store. So yeah, a lot of communities are really trying to locate those seeds, have them repatriated to the community and try to grow. I'm really interested in trying to find, for example, 1000 year old seeds and

to regrow them. The problem with that is, is that in the archaeological collections. The ones that are not nagpra the seeds that we have are burnt and carbonized. Seeds won't grow, so I would be so excited to try to grow. You know. Really old seeds, but so far.

Speaker 2

I haven't found any.

Thomas:

But so, and I think that you know, a lot of the communities that I work with for nagpra because of the relationships we have, they share a lot of information about the programs that they're running or things in their community and. The discussions then again. It it doesn't stop at nagpra. You know, when I go to consult, I talk about all of the collections that we have at IU, the different resources that are here, whether it's the archives of traditional music, whether it's some of the language stuff, whether it's books and the Lily, you know, things that the communities might be interested that IU also has. And then again, the conversation just goes into things that we're interested in, you know. Gardening and things and and and. So I'm really hopeful that we can continue the the kind of the investigation at Angel and the idea of the utilization of medicines, hallucinogens and, you know, different ways, you know, like has talked about fermentation. Is that a way that, you know, fruits and nuts and certain things were used? Yeah, I'd be really interested in that.

Cissell:

Are there particular like scholars or organizations that you're working with that are?

Thomas:

Not at the moment. Right now I am. It's this is related to. Corn estimation again and this kind of came out of this idea of corn that it's just everybody ate corn like OK, that's great. But I'm working with the tribal archaeologist for the Miami tribe of Oklahoma and a geography professor here. I think, you know, Dan, about these kind of nutritional. Estimates because a lot of diet studies of the past. Look at what people ate and they say, OK, yes, they ate deer. Yes, they ate fish. Yes, they ate. Squirrel but. When you combine that with the archaeobotanical ALS of OK, we know that there was wild grapes. We know that there was black walnut that's telling you what people ate, but it doesn't tell you anything about how they're procuring that material, how they're processing it, how they're storing it, how they're utilizing it. It just says. They consumed it, but it doesn't tell you much about it. And so I think first this, this study that we're working on. About the corn and the level of protein you need and the 11 of you know vitamin C and things like that, that's the starting point. You know, for further conversations of like OK well, we know that this is how much was needed. Now, can we go back and do do more information, get more information?

Cissell:

Do you want to talk more about the work you're doing with Dan and the Miami tribe or?

Speaker 2

I mean, well, yeah, that. Means this has kind of been I.

Thomas:

Mean again, it just. It came from me thinking of. OK, well, yeah. People ate corn. That's great. But you're not talking giant Cobbs that you would find at the store. Are you talking about smaller cobs? And how much corn would you need to keep a population of 1000 alive? For a year full well, knowing that if you need. 300 acres to grow your corn. You cannot eat your seeds over the winter, because then you'll have nothing to plant the next year. And so if you're talking about those much smaller cobs, again thinking how many acres would you need to plant and manage in order to feed people? And looking at that and being able to talk to the community about that, but also highlighting the level of organization and you know again the information that's passed down year after year after year, working with the communities on that. And then I think we we have already had discussions about taking it again that step further. Of looking for medicines looking for. Ways that plants were used. And then we're also kind of taking one more step from that and looking at pigment studies and colors and binding agents. And you know, you can use Persimmon seeds for tea you can use. Probably things for dyes and. Again, there's these generalized statements of ohh well people use this and it's like well, first of all you don't have. Any evidence, and I'm sure the evidence is there, but you just haven't looked for it, you know. And so kind of again, going one step further and thinking, OK. Plants are so important and a lot of people just kind of have a throw away attitude of. OK, well, whatever they present, no, they would had to have been so much more in terms of. Teas for medicines from the Persimmon seeds or being able to use black walnuts for dyes. And you know, I think we would really like to look at that in the archaeological record.

Cissell:

Yeah. And I I remember now, I wanted to bring it to Danny Tippmann a bit because I remember at the panel you all hadn't met before and it seemed like you were excited to meet. Her. And then you mentioned. Yeah, I. So I'm like, I was out of town when she visited, so I wasn't able to see her. Again, but it sounds like you were able to at least see her again, and I don't know if she's part of this project that you're working on.

Speaker 2

Yeah. So.

Thomas:

So yeah, so I am. Invited to the Miami tribe of Oklahoma's Winter gathering every January, and that is, and I'm sure Danny and I have been there at the same time, and I had heard a lot about her and a lot. Of the work. That she's doing. But I had never met her, so it was really exciting to actually meet her. We. Have a lot of same mutual friends. And again, a lot of the work that she's doing. In Fort Wayne area I'm I'm super interested in because and so we were able to talk a lot about again my interest in archaeology and plants and the amazing work that she's already doing in terms of. Collecting persimmons and using plants for medicines. And so it was really great to kind of touch base with her. We did talk a little bit last week briefly. Obviously she was exceptionally popular, so I only had. A few minutes to talk with her. Just. You know, I am very interested in working with her more. She's not involved in this. The Mathematical modeling project to determine the the amount of corn and things like that. But now I think knowing. Because we've been able to determine that as well, like how much vitamin C that you

would need to keep your population alive for a. Year so where? Are you getting that? You know, I think now that extra step. We are. We are going to be able to bring in a lot more. Hopefully if you know we can bring in more community members folks that are interested, you know more in terms of how plants are being used or dyes or certain things. So I think you know again some of these projects they start out very small, but I think we're starting to grow. And hopefully Danny will be be interested in partnering.

Cissell:

And I wanted to ask you, since you're a gardener yourself, are you growing any papaws or person?

Thomas:

I'm not and and I think persimmons. You have to have. You have to have two trees. From what I've been told. And I want to plant them both. I have a very small amount of land. But I do have the. The back of my property matches up with a cornfield, and so I'm thinking, well, maybe there might be a couple places that I might. Be able to plant a couple. Trees. I've learned the how to identify them in the winter, which is pretty cool. The the the tree that has. Have you seen the dark maroon flower?

Cissell:

I haven't.

Thomas:

No. Let me see if I can pull this up. If we have a a minute.

Cissell:

On Papa, I think I've like just recently seen a picture, but I've never actually seen it. Yeah.

Thomas:

I saw so it looks like this and I saw it for the first time this. Last winter, and because I have a hard time identifying A pawpaw tree out in the forest, but it was winter and so all that was on the tree was the flower OK? And so it was like, oh, I finally was able to identify it. I'm not and most of what I grow is plants for pollinators. A lot of flowers and grow some herbs. I am. I don't have a lot of sun, which is a problem. And so the back of my property is all shade, so it's difficult to grow some things I want to grow. Completely unrelated, but I really want to grow a giant pumpkin like one of those 500 pounders. But those need a lot of sun and I don't have a lot of that. And.

Cissell:

Yeah, yeah.

Thomas:

I would love to try. To grow, just like experimental wise, I really like to see like, OK, can I get it to grow? Can I keep it alive? Can I get it to produce fruit? Kind of things. Danny was talking last week about what's called a Miami squash. And I had never heard of that. And she was talking about it's this giant kind of reddish orange, lumpy squash. And I actually googled it, and I found that there is actually a company selling the seeds now. I don't know what the track thinks about that or not. I was more interested in just

seeing if there was a photo. And you'll have to ask her. There was a, I guess, an amazing story that I guess Thomas Jefferson had the plant at at Monticello, Monticello and. She. I guess again, I don't know. I don't want to say this. I might get it wrong, but I think she contacted them and they had seats. And I guess that. Yes, please ask Danny, but I guess a lot of folks have said, Oh yeah, there's this, this squash, you know, because I think there's a lot of history where people say, oh, well, that's, you know, this tribes corn and they're like. Are we sure you know? And you know, I think a lot of, unfortunately. Back in the day, and I can say this from the you know, when you look at the seed savers catalog, it's a a white guy who found the corn, who named it after the tribe, but it not wasn't necessarily something that their tribe used, if that makes any sense, you know, so trying to find the original. Heirloom seed.

Cissell:

Yeah, I think that's so. It makes me think again of my conversation with Darren, cause he was like, you know, the these Persimmon and Papa. Well, maybe not so much, Papa, but like the variations of Persimmon trees that we have. Like, there was definitely like breeding going on and like a very advanced breeding. To be. You know, it's so much of that is unknown today, but it could have, you know, I mean it's so tied with like settler colonialism too, that it's like at what point is it a white guy naming it this or saying he got it from here and at what point?

Thomas:

Yeah, yeah. And you? He said. Yeah, and there's a lot of people that claim the, you know, the, the, the classic Cherokee. Princess Grandma, you know I'm talking about where they sell my grandma. Everyone has a Cherokee Princess. Grandma. Yeah. My grandma was a Cherokee Princess, and so it's like, OK, and they say, oh, I got this from my grandmother, who was a Cherokee Princess. And.

Cissell:

Ohh yeah yeah, every white, every white person.

Thomas:

You're like, OK. Well, no. But you know, you know. And so you do get these these plants that are named after communities when the community never used them.

Cissell:

Well, that's. Both Papa and Persimmon, like their names, come from indigenous words. So I'm wondering, like, what is something about Papas or persimmons that you feel like most people don't know or? What's something that you found on that?

Thomas:

I think that most people don't even know what Papa exists. And you probably heard that before. You know, a lot of people. Again, I'm not from here originally, and there's a lot of people that are from the Midwest who have no idea what I'm talking about. And when I say, you know, the Indiana banana and they still have no idea what I'm talking about. And I think, why don't you know what this is? And on one hand, I'm confused. But on the other hand, I'm not because. If you're not someone that does a lot of gardening or goes to farmers markets anywhere in southern Indiana, again with that very short window when Papas are ripe, you're not going to see them. If you only shop at Kroger, you're not going to see

them. And so, and if you're not someone that goes hike in the woods, you're not going to necessarily know that that. First of all, it exists or second of all that it's a food resource kind of thing. And so I think that's what's surprising to me is that there are so many people that are from the Midwest that have no idea what a a papaw is because I'm like, well, wait a minute. I'm not from here originally and I know what it is. You know, I think also that a lot of people. You know, don't know how complex Papas are in terms of, again, that short ripe period. What you can do with them, the potential toxicity. Because of that is I think, why Papas are underutilized probably, which is why again, you don't see a lot of Papa flavored things at the grocery store. You don't see Papa jams or jellies, you don't really see that persimmons. I think you see a little. Bit more just because it's probably because they have a longer season where they're ripe, and I think they're, for example, down in Mitchell, there's the big Persimmon festival and because of that, I think there's a lot more information. And Persimmon pudding I've never heard of a paw paw dessert, but a lot of people will have heard of. For some, in putting, even if they don't necessarily. You know, like Persimmon or or anything like that.

Cissell:

Yeah, I have heard of a papaw sorbet. And then you know, if you like James or Julius and papaw butter, but yeah.

Thomas:

Yeah, you don't see that at the grocery store or anything like that. I think there's also because of the the Asian Persimmon, the really big one. If people hear Persimmon and they think if they know what a Persimmon is, they think of that and it's like, well, no, that's that's not. Quite it and. Yeah, I really like. I really like perseverance and I really like Persimmon pudding. And I did go down to the Persimmon festival this year and it was kind of interesting because, you know, it's I got down there and it was, you know, 9:30 in the morning and people are already eating Persimmon ice cream and eating Persimmon pudding for breakfast, you know, and there's the Persimmon, baking competition and the novelty.

Cissell:

Oh yeah, I. Missed it?

Thomas:

Making kind of thing and I tried to make Persimmon panna cotta this year, which was basically. Or panna cotta layered. I mixed in a little. I also make Maple syrup, or in town we tap the trees every February, so I had used a little natural Maple syrup, and I put some of the Persimmon pulp in, and it was amazing. It was so good and so. Again, it's. I think for me, I would love to find. Places where you know again, a lot of people, it's like the purpose summers just fall on the ground and nobody does anything with them and then they are just lost. It's kind of like wild blackberries. You know, if you don't pull over the side of the road and pick them, the birds eat them or they just rot on the vine or they just fall off, you know, it's kind of the same thing that. I would love to find a way to. Because I am also a I bake a lot, so it's like, OK, how do I find enough papaws to be able to try to experiment? You know, with recipes or, you know, different kinds of things and.

Cissell:

Well, I'll have to connect you with some. Of the folks that have.

Speaker 2

Yes, please do. That would be really cool.

Cissell:

Yeah. And I'm thinking if you wouldn't mind sharing, I don't know if you have like a recipe for that. Panna cotta that that.

Thomas:

Ohh yeah, OK, sure, sure. Yeah, it was really good. I I tried.

Cissell:

Would be so cool to put on. The I think.

Thomas:

I'm also really interested in recipes and more like vintage recipes or antique recipes. I've actually been doing some looking into 17th century recipes and I'm going to go off on a tangent just for a second to explain why that is so. I'm also a fiction. Author I write fiction novels and I my third novel is getting ready to be published in about a month. Thank you. But my 4th book is going to be talking about 17th century medicines in Scotland, and so I've been doing a lot of that, but I'm also.

Speaker 2

Oh, nice.

Cissell:

Let's see.

Thomas:

So that kind of interest in plants and medicines and recipes, and now I'm really interested in the Lily here, has really good resources.

Speaker 2

For that actually.

Thomas:

Because they have baking recipes from like the 1600s and so to me that would be really neat to try to. It's like, well, what did food taste like back 500 years ago or what did wine taste like 500 years ago you hear about, you know, the shipwrecks and they find a bottle of wine that's 1000 years old. It's like, what did that taste like? And so for me, it's a little bit again, it's it's combining my love of plants and archaeology and baking to figure out. OK. How were these plants and fruits used 500 years ago? Let's make that recipe and now you can taste history. Does that makes sense? It's kind.

Speaker 2

Of cheesy, you know, it sounds. Kind of cheesy, but it's that kind of idea of.

Thomas:

Like, OK well you. Know what did food taste like back then? And I found some really old. Recipes of baking. That and I have. There's a. A woman that I know of in Putnam County, not far from here, and their family has been in Putnam County for over 200 years. They arrived. I mean, they are probably some of the earliest folks that came and they have not left in 200 years and she has some recipes. They just sent me a butternut squash pie, which I would imagine we haven't baked it yet, but I would imagine it's very much like pumpkin pie. But of course, it's like, I really want to know. Like what are the vintage Hoosier recipes? What are the vintage, you know, 200 year old Indiana recipes? But then going back further and you know, what did these things, you know, taste like and some of the recipes are are are absolutely bonkers. They just make no sense. And you're like, I don't know that what I would eat with, but yeah. So it's it's kind of like. You know, trying to learn a lot about history in the past, it's like, OK. You know, you know, so I'm trying to be. I'm I would. I'm gonna. I've already asked her. We've asked her for her Persimmon recipe. Her her Persimmon putting. Sorry recipe. Because it does taste a little bit different. So you know everybody's.

Cissell:

Recipes are different, but.

Thomas:

Yeah, I'm kind of starting to collect. All these little little things.

Cissell:

Yeah, that's really cool. I could connect you with them, Kevin Carter, because I visited him at Conner Prairie. And he was. Telling me like they're trying to, you know, his as the food waste manager, you know, they're creating these historical recipes that they found in the record. And he just described them as being really tasty.

Speaker 2

That's so cool. Yeah.

Cissell:

He's trying. I think right now. He's actually, so you're going to make the paw paw beer and he's trying to make like a Persimmon beer. Some African American communities in Indiana. We're making, like, person.

Thomas:

Yeah. Well, I don't know that I'm going to make pop up beer. I would love to. I mean, I, you know, I'll be honest. I tried to, you know, make a. You know, I went and bought the like champagne yeast and all of the things. And you know, I tried to ferment something and it it gave me the worst headache I've ever had in my life. So I was like. OK, I did something drastically. Wrong and I don't know if I want to do this. Again, you know I have a a couple of friends that I that try to make their own beer or Mead or beer. So I might have to say like, hey, if I buy all the equipment for you, will you try this? But it's also can.

Cissell:

OK.

Thomas:

I find enough. Papaw's. At one time to to do it would be.

Cissell:

So cool, I think. Well, one of the folks in southern Indiana. Steve, I think he's trying to get into making Papa wanted. Yeah, yeah.

Thomas:

That would be so cool.

Speaker 2

I think I want to say. I don't know if Upland does a.

Thomas:

Persimmon, I haven't heard.

Cissell:

No, I don't. Know and I don't know if it was uplands, but I've had like a paw paw. Cider at the.

Thomas:

Was that good? Yeah. What did you say? Which room?

Cissell:

Room it was, it was. It was good. The orbit room orbit room OK. But I don't know if that was like you. Know seasonal, maybe if they still have says. About a year ago.

Thomas:

Probably, yeah. The I really like sour beers and so I'm really interested. So they have like. Peach black or they do have a pop. They have a pop-up sour. Nice.

Cissell:

I'll have to go.

Thomas:

Now I'm intrigued.

Cissell:

Oh, at the at the oh.

Speaker 2

Upland, just here in town. No way.

Thomas:

One of our most sought after beers, Papa is a Golden sour ale that was created by aging our sour blonde ale on fresh papaya fruit from Indiana. The Papa, also known as the Indiana Banana, is the largest fruit bearing plant native to North America. Due to the lack of commercial cultivation and the quick perishable nature of the fruit is a highly prized. I might have to go there.

Cissell:

Today, yeah.

Speaker 2

It's like, wait a minute. You made the beer that I've been looking for, and it's been right.

Thomas:

Here in my backyard. Yeah, they do all kinds of like, I also have a colleague of mine who did a lot of that actually. In Germany, he's kind of all interested in that as well and I think down at kind of creating beers using more. Like ancient yeast strains or things like that, I think cardinal spirits also did something similar to that at one point. Can't remember if they still do it, but because they use, they make an occhino, which is a walnut liqueur, and they use the black walnuts. And so I know in the past they've asked folks, hey, do you have black walnuts you don't want? Because we can turn them into a liqueur? And you know that and also the black raspberries from Indiana, which they do.

Speaker 2

A A look here that's after that too.

Cissell:

I'm I'm wondering, you know. Starting to wrap things up like some resources or texts that you've encountered if that. If that is true to like your experience of I guess reading I'm actually finding that like a lot of the folks. Yeah. Yeah, that's not.

Thomas:

It's not, I would say no, I mean.

Cissell:

A part of the way they're.

Thomas:

I have been looking at a lot of archaeological resources again for kind of literature review for, you know, again like looking at like I talked about the the deterrent and the Shell Cup from Arkansas or the different ways that black. Drink was used. Because you know, if we're finding that these hallucinogenic plant residues are in shell cups, if we want to do a study, we should look at shell cups and see if that same kind of practices being here.

Speaker 2

I don't.

Thomas:

No, I mean, I aside from some journal articles about some of this stuff, most of the information I've learned is through Google. We're just talking, so sorry. Excuse me talking to people and. You know? Uhm. I think there's a lot of information out there that again like this, this lady in Putnam County, whose family has been there 200 years. The knowledge that she has and the information that's been passed down to her, that's not going to. Be in a. Book that's not. Going to be in a textbook or any something like that. And so you know, I would imagine she has so much knowledge of Papas and persimmons and and life in southern Indiana that have been passed down to her, but. I mean, who's gonna interview her? Who's gonna you know? And I've already. I've already talked to. Well, have already potentially talked to her because she's the one. I got, the butternut squash pie recipe from. And she said if I want to come up and visit her, she'll give me all the recipes. Want. You know, I'm just thinking from it's like, you know, just a history perspective. I'm sure she's so knowledgeable because her family's been there for so long and all that information passed down and they still farm and all of that. So yeah, I think.

Cissell:

Right.

Thomas:

UM. A lot of the information has just been chatting with people and and odd things like, you know, I said like Facebook posts where folks are talking about going out and picking milkweed early in the season and how some people really like it and some people, they think it tastes terrible and, you know, I've never picked milkweed to eat, you know, but it's learning through that kind of way, you know. Again, that kind of oral history or folklore, kind of, you know that that passing down of knowledge.

Cissell:

What happened? I've asked you that you wanted to talk about related or not related to.

Thomas:

I don't know. I'm all I'm already getting. Like I'm thinking how fun it would be to. Not that I'm saying you should do this or take this on because this would be work. But I'm just thinking how fun it would be to have. Like some sort of, you know, get the guy that you know from Paoli and get Kevin to come down and just have a like a day of like food study. Kind of if you could if we could incorporate the food studies program you know and have like bring in the like pop-up beer from upland and bring in the wine from something else and bring in having like recipes that are brought in. From different you know, I just think that would be just a really neat. I don't know. I'm like, oh, that would be so much.

Cissell:

Yeah. Thank you for that. I think that would be fun.

Speaker 2

Oh, I just was. Well, I.

Thomas:

Was just thinking also with like the panel you've had. You know to, you know, because a lot of it is again, you know, food sharing and community and and and and all of that. And I think it would be so neat if Danny could come down, you know and.

Cissell:

Yes, yes.

Thomas:

You know, kind of the same kind of panel, but where we could have, you know, maybe Upland would donate some of the the beer. You know what I mean or or be part of the program and talk about, yeah, you know, cause it'd be a promotional thing for them or you know. To combine it with.

Cissell:

I don't know.

Thomas:

I just think like something like that would be so fun. You know, I now I'm also super interested in seeing if I can find a really old Papa or 47 recipe, because I've been, like I said, I've been kind of going down these wrapper holes to looking for, like, really old recipes to try them and see what they taste like. And now I'm.

Speaker 2

Now you've got me really excited. I'm. Like, OK, I know what I'm doing tonight after work. I'm. Gonna have to go to upland and.

Thomas:

But now I'm also.

Cissell:

Really Google for recipes I'd be.

Speaker 2

Like OK, I need papaw and I need. This is for. This is for. Work. This is for beach.

Thomas:

Search I need to try your you know. But yeah, and I even.

Speaker 2

And the wheels are. Spinning got a lot of ideas.

Cissell:

Yeah, well, that's great that I could.

Speaker 2

Sorry you asked me if. I had more things like oh this.

Cissell:

Would be so. Cool. No, and I that's really good feedback to hear. I'm definitely interested in like, community archiving, but also like community building. And to hear that like. I I don't know. I guess I'm interpreting it it as the panel was, you know, a positive enough experience for you that you know you would want something, you know, a little similar to that.

Thomas:

I had a really great time. I mean, I, as I told you before, I mean, I was really like, I don't. I don't feel like I'm an expert in this. You know, I'm I'm not Native American. I don't do a ton of work in this, but I I thought it was a really great conversation. I really enjoyed it. It was great to meet Danny and the other folks that have interests and you know. Just like you said that the community, the knowledge that's passed down, but also that kind of outreach to talk about like. You know, you could have. You know, you could have somebody make a certain thing and make little, you know, and everybody could come in and try and it could be this really big thing or even something if it was. You know, canvassing the community to say, hey, we're looking for old recipes that we want to put into this thing because again, if. The woman in Putnam County, if her knowledge isn't written down and it's not passed down, it's lost forever. Yeah, and. And to some extent, I don't know that it's, you know, it's not the library's job. Obviously, to to do this, but it's like there's so much history out there that. UM. You know, we lose when our elders pass away. And if those stories or the knowledge is not written down and or passed down orally, it's lost forever. And you know, I think you know, I I definitely, for example, my grandmother had an amazing Raspberry pie. And I didn't think about it as a kid, and she never wrote it down because it was in her mind. And now I'm like, damn it. Yeah. Sorry, you probably shouldn't.

Speaker 2

Put that on your interview. But it's.

Thomas:

Like, damn, why hadn't I thought about that? Because you know, that's gone forever now, and that's not something I can get back. And so just also thinking like. Man, I wish I'd done that, you know. Yeah, I mean this work is is I mean again this has nothing to do, it was kind. Of funny because. This last spring, I presented in Portland OR on. This kind of corn research and and talking about vitamin C and talking about calcium and talking about proteins. And I had it was my Nagra mentor from my masters. She came up to me and she said what on Earth are you doing in an agriculture panel? And I laughed because I had I had like 3 papers in. This panel and.

Speaker 2

And I said she goes, you don't do agriculture. And I said, well, I do now you. Know and I think.

Thomas:

I think a lot of people and whether this by choice or their assumption, it's like they get into one niche and they only ever study this for their entire life. And I'm so interested in everything. And so when people like, well, you don't study ancient agriculture and like, well, you got to start somewhere. And I'm not an expert in it. I'm not saying that. But I do have an interest in it. And you gotta, you know, so it's like there's all. These things I'm like. OK, ancient Papa recipes. And you know, you know, I'm. Yeah, they just got a flower. I think that a seed was 32,000 years old. And they got it to flower. It was like in the permafrost in Siberia. Oh, and they were able to find the seed and.

Speaker 2

I was like. Oh my God, give.

Cissell:

It to me.

Speaker 2

I wanna. I wanna try it. You know, so yeah.

Cissell:

Well, thank you so much. For sure being here and everything you shared, it was really exciting.

Speaker 2

Good. Well, like I said, when you asked me, I was like again. I was like, I don't know that I'm very much of an expert. I don't. Know how much I'll be able to tell you, but yeah.

Cissell:

No, but I really like and that was something so beneficial to me about the panel with all these different like intersections and interactions and viewpoints. That kind of all come together around the same. Thing there's a.

Thomas:

Lot of overlap, yeah.

Cissell:

So that was really cool to. See and I think. You know, you just add like a a depth to that for this project so.

Speaker 2

I appreciate that.

Cissell:

I'll stop that.

Speaker 2

Thank you. Yeah, no problem porting now.