

Dean H. Jeffrey. The Repository of Last Resort? Three-Dimensional Objects in Archives. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. November, 2005. 61 pages. Advisor: Timothy D. Pyatt

This study documents issues involved in the collection, use, cataloging, and storage of three-dimensional objects in archives. It presents the results of in-person interviews conducted with five college and university archivists regarding the issues of objects in archives.

Little has been written regarding collecting and managing objects in archives. This study summarizes the available literature on the topic and addresses some of the differences between museum practice and archival practice. The study finds that three-dimensional objects have value as objects for display but often have little other value to researchers in archives. If the acquisition of objects reflects the mission of the archives and adheres to a collection policy, the objects are more likely to have research value beyond their use in displays.

Headings:

Archival Materials -- Artifacts

Archival Materials -- Realia

Archival Materials -- Three Dimensional Objects

THE REPOSITORY OF LAST RESORT?
THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS
IN ARCHIVES

by
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Introduction

When most people think of archives, they usually envision collections of papers and manuscripts, things that are flat, sorted into folders and housed in boxes. Other items that are often found in archives are also relatively flat. Diaries, scrapbooks, photographs, film, sound recordings, and video are all things that usually can be stored in a records center box. Oversized but still flat items such as maps and posters can be rolled or put into map cases.

There are, however, three-dimensional items that find their way into archives, and they often don't neatly fit into the usual boxes. Some of these three-dimensional items may include clothing, uniforms, flags, and other textiles; trophies, plaques, and awards; plates, glasses, silver, and other tableware; dolls and toys; scale models; and any number of other shapes and materials. These items are referred to as artifacts, as specimens, as realia, and as three-dimensional objects. (For simplicity's sake, they will hereinafter be referred to as "objects." See the following section on "Terminology and Definitions.")

Objects arrive in archives in a number of ways. An object may arrive as a single item, in and of itself, such as a trophy from a sporting event. Objects may be mixed into other more "traditional" collections, such as a letter opener or fountain pen that arrives in the same box as a collection of letters. Objects may be part of collections composed entirely of objects, such as a collection of political lapel buttons. An archives may actively seek objects for its collections. It may also have a clear collection policy pertaining to the acquisition of objects. Alternately, an archives may not have a policy

concerning the collection of objects. It may acquire objects by chance, sometimes by choice, or sometimes attached to other records.

From the scant literature on objects in archives, it would seem that many archives do not have a specific collection policy regarding objects, and that objects often arrive in archives almost at random. Once there, objects are often not described or catalogued because they're "different" from the other items in the archives, presenting problems in description. Insufficient description, or a lack of description, leads to objects not being discovered and used by researchers. In addition to cataloging difficulties, the size and shape of objects may present challenges to the archivist in terms of access, storage, and preservation. Archivists, who have been trained to collect, arrange, describe, and preserve paper and a number of other types of materials, don't always know quite what to do with objects. How are archivists dealing with issues that are more commonly dealt with by museum registrars and curators? The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of the issues involved in the collection, uses, description and cataloging, and storage and conservation of objects in archives.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Terminology and Definitions

Chapter 10 of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules is entitled "Three Dimensional Artefacts¹ and Realia" and is devoted to rules covering "the description of three-dimensional objects of all kinds."² In the literature that exists on the topic, the terms

¹ "Artefacts," a variant spelling of "artifacts," will be found in this paper when used in direct quotations, usually from English or Australian sources. Otherwise, the form "artifacts" is used here.

² Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR, Anglo American Cataloguing Rules: 2004 Update, 2nd rev. ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 2004).

"artifact" and "realia" are often used to denote three-dimensional objects in archival collections. Richard-Pearce Moses, in his Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology, defines "artifact" as "a man-made, physical object." He notes, "Even though documents and other two-dimensional materials are artifacts because of their physical nature, 'artifact' is often used to distinguish three-dimensional materials from two-dimensional materials." Pearce-Moses also distinguishes between man-made objects (artifacts) and naturally occurring objects (specimens): "Artifact is often used to distinguish man-made items from natural specimens." He defines "specimen" as "an item of natural origin," noting that the term "is often used to distinguish biological, botanical, and geological materials from man-made artifacts." As this paper makes no differentiation between man-made and naturally occurring items, Pearce-Moses' definition of "object" seems more appropriate for the purposes of this paper: "An item that is tangible, especially one with significant depth relative to its height and width; an artifact or specimen." The term "realia," in Pearce-Moses' definition, is synonymous with "object;" he defines it simply as "A three-dimensional object." His definition of "object" goes on to note, "Object connotes something that has substantial height, width, and depth. While documents have three dimensions and fall under the broadest sense of 'object', they are often distinguished from objects because of their flat, nearly two-dimensional nature. In museums, 'object' connotes something manmade and is synonymous with 'artifact.'"³ Based on Pearce-Moses' definitions, it seems that "object" is the more accurate term for the materials being considered here. For the sake of simplicity and consistency, it is the term used throughout this paper.

³ Richard Pearce-Moses, A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology, 2005, Society of American Archivists, 26 May 2005 <http://www.archivists.org/glossary/index.asp>.

For the purposes of this study, "object" is defined as a three-dimensional item, as something with width, depth, and height, as opposed to nearly two-dimensional objects made of paper. Paper, the item found most often in archives, is, of course, technically three-dimensional. It has depth in addition to width and height, but its third dimension, that of depth, typically does not contain any useful information.⁴ The definition of "object" used here also excludes many objects commonly found in archives that are technically three-dimensional, such as phonograph records, reel-to-reel tapes, cassettes, and other types of sound and video recordings; maps, globes, and other cartographic materials; diaries, scrapbooks and photograph albums; and notebooks, journals, and books. Most of these items are in archives because of their ability to hold or contain or represent information. They are usually not collected in and of themselves but are collected for their informational value. A reel-to-reel tape is a three dimensional object, but it is also a container or carrier for a sound recording. A photograph album is a container for images. Conversely, a wedding dress, a school uniform, a pair of bronzed baby shoes, a trophy from a sporting event, or the desk on which a particular document was signed are not three dimensional items that are containers for information. They may convey information to researchers, a use beyond that for which they were originally intended, but they were not created as a means of storing information. Esther Green Bierbaum has defined "realia" (a term here considered synonymous with "objects") as "not a representation of the world, but part of the world itself."⁵ Writing about the uses

⁴ It may not contain any information, but the dimension of depth does, of course, contribute to its total mass and affects storage.

⁵ Esther Green Bierbaum, "Realia," Nonbook Media: Collection Management and User Services, ed. John W. Ellison and Patricia Ann Coty (Chicago: American Library Association, 1987) 301.

of realia in public libraries, the Children's Services Division Toys, Games, and Realia Committee defined "realia" as "actual articles and other three-dimensional objects that offer direct, hands-on experience," as opposed to "the symbolic representations of reality offered in words and pictures."⁶

There are, of course, instances where this definition becomes problematical. What if there is a Rolodex in an archival collection? Does it fit this definition of "object?" Presumably, the Rolodex is in the archives because it belonged to some person considered to be of importance by the archives. If it is being kept simply for the information that it contains—so that a researcher can determine the contacts of that important person—then the information in the Rolodex is textual, and its presence in the archives is for its informational value. It doesn't fit the definition of "object." If, however, the Rolodex is being saved in and of itself, because of its associations with the important person, then it is being saved for its intrinsic value and is an "object" according to the definition. Clearly, there are items that can have both intrinsic and informational value. An item could be valuable both for the information it holds and for its associations. It would seem that items having both intrinsic and informational value would fit the definition of "object" used here.

An instance where this definition of "object" might seem not to work is in the case of representational art. A drawing, painting, or sculpture can convey how a person or scene or object looks and could therefore be considered a container for information. However, it can be argued that representational art does not contain information in the same manner as a manuscript or sound recording, but is merely a depiction of the subject

⁶ Children's Services Division Toys, Games, and Realia Committee, "Realia in the Library," Booklist 73 (1976-77): 671.

of the piece. For the purposes of this paper, paintings, drawings, sketches, and other flat works of art are excluded from the definition (and from the study) as they seem to straddle the line between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. Unframed works seem closer to two dimensions; framed works, merely by virtue of having been framed, seem closer to three-dimensional objects but are not essentially different from their unframed cousins. Additionally, the issues surrounding the collection of artworks by archives seem to merit their own study.⁷

Other forms of art, such as a sculpture, bust, or bas-relief may also convey how a person or scene looked, but these objects obviously have three-dimensions. To exclude them from the definition of "object" used here, simply because they are representational, seems illogical. Sculptures and other three-dimensional representations, such as scale models, are (perhaps arbitrarily) included in the definition of "object."

Objects, as defined here, are the types of items (except for flat art) that one would normally expect to find in a museum rather than in an archives. James E. Fogerty of the Minnesota Historical Society says, "In my business artifacts are generally defined as those three dimensional things that populate the Museum Collections department, which does for items like furniture, political buttons, clothing, Indian beadwork, and farm equipment (for instance) what my department does for everything not classified as a museum artifact."⁸ If museums, as Fogerty implies, are in the business of collecting objects, the answer to the question, "What should we do with objects in archives?" would seem to be, "The same thing that museums do with them."

⁷ For a discussion of some of the issues of art in libraries, see Jane Kemp, "Art in the Library: Should Academic Libraries Manage Art?" *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 20 (1994): 162-66.

⁸ James E. Fogerty, "Balancing the Content and the Container: Defining the Role of Artifacts in the Digital Age," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 24 (2000): 252-53.

2.2. Museum Practice vs. Archival Practice

One may be tempted to say that archives should look to museums for the treatment of objects in terms of description, cataloging, storage, and preservation. Indeed, some archives have borrowed techniques from the museum world. A recent article about the Downtown Collection in the Fales Library and Special Collections of New York University (a collection documenting New York's art and literary movement from 1975 to the present) stated, "Part of the challenge for archivists in processing the Downtown Collection is its sheer variety of formats." The senior archivist said, "the blurring of the line between manuscript and object in the Downtown Collection has forced the library to borrow some techniques for managing and cataloging the material," and that the archives had "adapted museum-registration techniques to catalog and classify the objects within the collection, because I felt that the descriptive tools available within the archival community were not robust enough to adequately describe and manage the materials."⁹

However, museums, archives, and libraries, while similar institutions, have differences that affect their respective treatment of objects. Their missions vary, and the differences in mission will affect their handling of objects. Wallach points out some of these differences:

Many institutions, such as libraries, museums and historical societies, make it their mission to preserve and provide access to cultural heritage information. Because of the variety of institutional missions, however, each institution will define cultural heritage information and what kind of preservation and access it requires differently. Museums, for example, establish classification and description practices based on their mission of preservation and display of

⁹ Richard Byrne, "Filling in the 'Blank Generation,'" Chronicle of Higher Education 13 May 2005: A14.

artifacts. Libraries, on the other hand, have a mission of public access to information that influences their development of shared cataloging practices.¹⁰

There are similarities between museums and archives, in that they typically collect one-of-a-kind items, while libraries, generally collect and provide access to published resources. "At a very basic level, libraries have seen themselves as repositories of shared items; archives and museums, as repositories of unique items."¹¹ But besides their similarities as repositories of unique items, there are enough differences between museums and archives to render impractical any recommendation that they universally adopt the same treatment for objects in their care.

In many instances, museums and archives are not similarly staffed. While museums often have different personnel for the positions of curator, registrar, and conservationist, in an archives, one person frequently handles all three (or more) roles. At a recent workshop entitled "Basic Artifact Handling and Storage for Archivists," most of the recommendations made to the archivists were based on museum practice. Participants were taught how to create accession records based on The New Museum Registration Methods and were shown how to mark objects using museum techniques. One archivist indicated that she had a significant collection of clothing and textiles. While practicing sewing an identification label into a doll's dress, the archivist said, "Unfortunately, this is the first and last time that I'll sew a label into a piece of clothing; I don't have time to do this for every piece in my collection."¹²

¹⁰ Ruth Wallach, "Does Cultural Heritage Information Want to Be Free? A Discourse on Access," Art Documentation 20.2 (2001): 42.

¹¹ Bradley L. Taylor, "Chenall's Nomenclature, the Art and Architecture Thesaurus, and Issues of Access in America's Artifact Collections," Art Documentation 15.2 (1996): 17.

¹² Basic Artifact Handling and Storage for Archivists Workshop, Society of North Carolina Archivists Fall Meeting, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, NC, 6 Oct. 2005.

Museum personnel and archivists do not usually receive the same training concerning the items in their care. Archivists and registrars are taught to treat objects differently. One obvious example of the differences between the professions is the way archivists are taught to mark items only in pencil, while registrars are taught to mark items in a permanent, non-reversible manner. Archivists, usually well versed in the storage and preservation requirements of paper, photographs, film, and sound and video recordings, are often not trained in the preservation of the different types of materials one may find in a collection of objects. The workshop noted above was created to fill a perceived need for instruction in the handling and storage of objects by archivists.

One of the greatest differences between archival and museum practice is in the area of descriptive cataloging. Many archives are actively engaging in the creation of standardized and sharable records by creating Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) records or Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aids for their collections and by following content standards such as those found in Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS.) Objects, unfortunately, don't always neatly fit into EAD or MARC. DACS makes no recommendation for the description of objects, merely referring the user to the unimplemented Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO) standard.¹³

It might appear, then, that cataloging is an area where one might look to museum practice, but standards for cataloging traditionally have been less commonly employed by museums. In 1990, Hennessey wrote, "Unlike the library community where descriptive standards abound and nationally accepted subject classification lists have been in

¹³ Society of American Archivists, Describing Archives: A Content Standard (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004) 210.

existence since 1895, the museum community has few agreed-upon standards and even fewer shared vocabularies."¹⁴ The same year, Bierbaum noted:

Libraries and museums are alike in creating surrogate records to stand for the materials in their collections. Standardization of records is another matter. Thanks to the Library of Congress and its printed card program, library records have a long history of uniformity (at least for printed materials), while museum records have been largely local and idiosyncratic.¹⁵

In 1998, The New Museum Registration Methods provided "information about organizations that are currently involved in the development of standards in the museum community" but made no recommendations for one standard over another. Nor did it particularly advocate the use of structure, content, or value standards, merely saying that those standards exist and that using them may have some benefits. (The careful wording employed to avoid a stance either for or against the use of standards seems designed not to anger members of the museum community who have been using local practice.)¹⁶

There have been recent attempts at creating standards for museum cataloging. The Museum and Online Archives of California Project, for example, has been experimenting since 1998 with catalog standards for museums. Interestingly, it has been employing EAD.

One of the specific goals of MOAC is to explore the use of the EAD standard in museums as a way of allowing integration of museum information with archival and library collections in one online resource, and as a way of describing structure and relation between objects in a collection. Another goal is to test the use of

¹⁴ Christine Hennessey, "The Inventory of American Sculpture: MARC-ing Realia," Beyond the Book: Extending MARC for Subject Access, ed. Toni Peterson and Pat Molholt (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1990) 152.

¹⁵ Esther Green Bierbaum, "MARC in Museums: Applicability of the Revised Visual Materials Format," Information Technology and Libraries 9 (1990): 291.

¹⁶ Rebecca A. Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds., The New Museum Registration Methods (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 1998) 28-33.

EAD with object or item-level description (more common in museums than archives) and with images.¹⁷

There have been other standards created and explored as well, including metadata element sets such as the Categories for the Description of Works of Art (CDWA)¹⁸ and the Visual Resources Association Core Categories (VRA Core.)¹⁹ Potentially, these will soon be supplemented by CCO, a content standard for cultural works (although at this writing CCO remains unimplemented and is still in beta testing.)²⁰ CCO's creation would seem to imply that there is a distinct need for cataloging standards in the museum community.

In addition to a long-standing lack of standards, museum cataloging also serves needs within the museum community that are different from those of the archival community. Smith, writing of the differences between ephemera cataloging in museums and libraries, notes that a difference in mission leads to differences in cataloging: "The museum's distinctive mission to interpret its collections, above and beyond making them accessible, is an aspect of intellectual control that requires different criteria for cataloging

¹⁷ Richard Rinehart, "Museum Consortia, Digital Library Projects, Standards for Complex Multimedia Objects, and More Fun than a Barrel of Monkeys," Museums and the Online Archive of California Project, University of California, Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, 28 May 2005 <<http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/moac/standards/index.html>>. However, Baca has written that the MOAC "is a stunning example of an inappropriate use of EAD," in that it attempts to use EAD as "a 'container' into which diverse art museum objects, all with a different provenance and no hierarchical relationship" are forced. Murtha Baca, "Practical Issues in Applying Metadata Schemas and Controlled Vocabularies to Cultural Heritage Information," Cataloging & Classification Quarterly 36.3/4 (2003): 48, plus footnote on 55.

¹⁸ Categories for the Description of Works of Art, ed. Murtha Baca and Patricia Harpring, 27 June 2005, J. Paul Getty Trust and College Art Association, Inc., 28 June 2005 <http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/>.

¹⁹ VRA Core Categories, vers. 3.0, 20 Feb. 2002, Visual Resources Association Data Standards Committee, 30 May 2005 <<http://www.vraweb.org/vracore3.htm>>.

²⁰ Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and their Images, Feb. 2005, Visual Resources Association, 29 May 2005 <<http://www.vraweb.org/ccoweb/index.html>>.

than those employed by libraries."²¹ Interpretation, according to Smith, is where museums "have the charge to go beyond making the collections accessible."²²

Interpretation, in Smith's view, involves assigning themes to items (defined as "broad movements or concerns in American humanities, of an intangible nature" such as "westward expansion, immigration, racism, sexuality, commerce, politics, entertainment, humor, and rites of passage") and subjects (such as proper names, object names, classifications, "as well as any noun that can be seen or read on the object.")²³

Jan Blodgett, College Archivist at Davidson College, while not speaking directly on the subject of cataloging, elucidates this distinction between museums and archives:

In general, museums interpret; they create exhibits that show that culture has changed over time. Archives, in general, don't interpret. We try to give as value-neutral a description as possible. We let researchers look at these items and interpret, analyze, and combine as they see fit. We don't do it for them. Even when we create exhibits, they tend to be "Treasures from the Archives." A label in one of our exhibits will just say "1916 Yearbook." It won't say "1916 Yearbook that shows a trend toward..." or "Notice use of..." We don't do that.²⁴

Exhibits, of course, predominate in museums and are less likely to be found in archives.

Pearce-Moses' definition of "exhibit" gets at the difference between museums and archives. "An exhibition generally includes materials such as artworks, documents, or objects that have been selected and ordered so that their interaction demonstrates an idea

²¹ Deborah A. Smith, "Intellectual Control of Ephemera—A Museum's Perspective," Popular Culture in Libraries 4.1 (1996): 63.

²² Smith 67.

²³ Smith 67. It could also be argued that the assigning of subject headings in the MARC records and EAD finding aids created for archival collections is interpretation, but that is an argument that is beyond the scope of this paper.

²⁴ This and all other statements attributed to Jan Blodgett, College Archivist and College Records Management Coordinator, Davidson College Archives, are from a personal interview, 19 Oct. 2005.

or theme for cultural or educational purposes."²⁵ Blodgett expresses the same idea: "There's an assumption of interpretation in exhibits in museums that isn't there in archives. If I show you a mug from the Davidson College Mid-Winters in 1972, it's about Mid-Winters in 1972. It's not about who made the mug, the design of the mug, or what the choice of mug style says about the group that chose it. In a museum, the mug would be placed in the much greater context of glassware. In the archives, we just present the stuff, and you figure out what it means."²⁶

In addition to matters of interpretation, there are other differences in museum and archives cataloging. Taylor contends, "Historically, museum records had been used by registrars or curators largely for on-site collection management, insurance, and appraisal purposes," rather than for providing means of discovery to patrons.²⁷ Bierbaum echoes this idea: "For the most part, the record systems have been internal, created to enable museum staff to describe, organize, and exhibit the collections, but not designed to make the information available to visitors or other museums." She notes the situation is changing but also asserts, "Proposals for imposing uniformity on museum records have fallen on stony ground; there being neither institutional incentive to share in the creation of records and exchange of data nor a mechanism, such as the libraries' bibliographic databases, to do so."²⁸ White also notes that museums and archives have different needs regarding the type of information that should be stored in an item's record. "Museums place great importance on researching and describing objects and regard changes to the

²⁵ Pearce-Moses.

²⁶ Blodgett.

²⁷ Taylor 17.

²⁸ Bierbaum, "MARC in Museums" 292.

object—its condition, its history of display—as valuable documentation."²⁹ An item's "history of display" is often of little use to an archivist.

Smith implies that museum personnel have a "preference for item-level control" that puts museum cataloging practice at odds with the archival practice of collection or series level description. It can be argued that objects lend themselves to item level rather than collection level description, but it would seem that an archives will be more likely to catalog a collection of objects as, say, "Collection of Political Lapel Pins, 1900-1964," rather than to describe each pin individually.

In 2005, even as an increasing number of museum descriptions and catalog records become available online, Bearman and Trant note that these records are often of little use.

Unfortunately, museum collections remain relatively inaccessible even when made available through searchable on-line databases. Museum documentation seldom satisfies the on-line access needs of the broad public, both because it is written using professional terminology and because it may not address what is important to—or remembered by—the museum visitor.³⁰

In archives, catalog records or finding aids are often the only means by which a user can access the collections. Most museum records, on the other hand, do not seem intended to facilitate patron access. Museums most often provide access by putting items on display (usually in a look-only, hands-off situation.) In archives, the means of access is usually a surrogate, a catalog record or a finding aid. If this surrogate does not exist or is not made

²⁹ Layna White. "Museum Implementation of Encoded Archival Description," Art Documentation 21.1 (2002): 19.

³⁰ David Bearman and Jennifer Trant, "Social Terminology Enhancement through Vernacular Engagement: Exploring Collaborative Annotation to Encourage Interaction with Museum Collections," D-Lib Magazine 11.9 (2005), 17 Sept. 2005
<<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/september05/bearman/09bearman.html>>.

available, then a researcher usually has no means of accessing the object (unless through direct contact with a helpful archivist.)

None of the foregoing discussion of the differences between museums and archives is meant to imply that archivists should not borrow from museum practice, but the differences in the missions and needs of the two institutions will result in different practices.

2.3. Literature on Objects in Archives

While one can find some information concerning objects in libraries, very little literature has been written concerning objects in archives. One of the few authors to deal explicitly with objects in archives is Cooke in her 1991 article, "What do I do with the Rowing Oar? The Role of Memorabilia in School Archives." She states, "All school archivists sooner or later find themselves having to deal with non-archival material of historical interest. These include the expected school uniforms, prizes, trophies and rare books but can also include such unlikely items as a barber's chair, rowing oars and playground equipment of great sentimental value."³¹

While concerned specifically with a school archives in Australia, she discusses issues of interest to all archivists with collections of objects. She sees two advantages to collecting objects (which she calls "museum material"):

- Donations of records and other materials related to her school usually have objects mixed in with the documents or photographs in which she has an interest. By having a collection policy that allows her to accept objects, she can take entire donations without having to refuse the objects and risking the ire or disappointment of the donator.

³¹ Anne Cooke, "What do I do with the Rowing Oar? The Role of Memorabilia in School Archives," Archives and Manuscripts 19 (1991): 57.

- Having objects on hand gives her easy access to materials needed to mount displays or exhibits at the school.³²

Cooke likens the collecting of objects to maintaining a museum within the archives, to "running a museum and an archives in harness." In order to "provide appropriate finding aids and storage conditions for a wide variety of materials" she declares that certain systems must be in place.³³ Her first priority is the writing of a collection policy for objects (although she refers to it as a "museum policy,") and she states that it will be similar to the archives' collection policy for any other type of item.³⁴ This thought is echoed in literature that addresses the collection of objects by libraries. The Children's Services Division states (rather obviously) that "criteria for the selection of realia should be based on the needs of the target group...."³⁵ Bierbaum states that libraries should evaluate the acquisition of realia in terms of "instructional or other objectives."³⁶ Whether an archives (or museum or library) collects objects should, of course, be based on the institution's mission. In asking, "Should libraries, archives, and research institutes collect art," Kam points out that the question "begs the consideration of the institution's identity and mission...."³⁷

Even with a collection policy in place, the acquisition of objects is often passive rather than active. Based on a survey that she conducted in 1985, Bierbaum concluded

³² Cooke 58.

³³ Cooke 59.

³⁴ Cooke 59.

³⁵ Children's Services Division Toys, Games, and Realia Committee 672.

³⁶ Bierbaum, "Realia" 312.

³⁷ D. Vanessa Kam, "On Collecting and Exhibiting Art Objects in Libraries, Archives, and Research Institutes," Art Documentation 20.2 (2001): 10.

that objects were most often acquired by libraries as donations rather than by being actively sought.³⁸ Cooke seems to feel that archivists may prefer passive acquisition, saying that after writing a collection policy, "we may well need to decide how actively we are going to collect for the museum. This will largely be governed by the space and time available, and most archivists will be content to sit back and wait for the museum artefacts to come to them."³⁹

The topic of a collection policy for objects in archives raises the accompanying issue of whether, as a matter of policy, objects should remain in the archives or be sent to a related institution. Following a 1970 survey on practice regarding the "Disposition of Nonmanuscript Items Found Among Manuscripts," Berner and Bettis found that "most manuscript collections are parts of a larger institutional complex such as a library or historical society and often have other special departments or units in which many of these record types will be normally acquired or wanted. Often in these institutions there will be rules stating to which units such materials are to be sent."⁴⁰

Brazier, an archivist in a natural history museum, suggests, "generally, archivists view the proper place of objects as being in a museum," but from her vantage point as a worker in a museum, she notes the separation of objects from archives "is often desirable for better storage and use. It is not that objects per se do not belong in archives but that generally, for reasons of space, storage requirements, use and access, objects are felt to best belong in museums." She later reiterates, "Storage and conservation requirements are

³⁸ Esther Green Bierbaum, "The Third Dimension: Dealing with Objects in Public Library Collections," Public Library Quarterly 6.3 (1985): 39.

³⁹ Cooke 59.

⁴⁰ Richard C. Berner and M. Gary Bettis, "Disposition of Nonmanuscript Items Found Among Manuscripts," American Archivist 33 (1970): 277.

often the major factor in the decision" of whether to keep objects in archives or transfer them to museums.⁴¹

The senior archivist at Fales Library, however, disagrees with sending archives objects to a museum. She states that in "traditional archives," materials are "split up, with 'the objects going to a museum, the media going to a film archive, books and printed materials going to a library, and the manuscripts, journals, and letters going to a literary archive.'" She remarks that that is not the practice at Fales, that her goal is to "to fully describe the totality of the archive because all of the materials are equally significant and essential to understanding" an artist's "entire creative output."⁴² Hadley suggests that this separation of items based on their genre or form can possibly lead to a loss of context.⁴³ (Although this practice routinely happens in some archives, not just those that collect objects, where photographs, sound recordings, videotapes, or other items are routinely stripped out of collections and put into other, "artificial" collections.)

There has been some mention in the literature of cataloging needs of objects. Content standards for the cataloging of objects were included in the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules beginning in 1978. Bierbaum's 1985 survey of librarians, however, found that among her respondents, "Local code and practice prevailed as the cited basis for cataloging three-dimensional objects...."⁴⁴ A lack of standards for the description of

⁴¹ Jan Brazier, "Archives/Objects/Museums: Points of Intersection," *Recovering Science: Strategies and models for the Past, Present & Future*. Proceedings of a conference held at the University of Melbourne. Nov. 1992. ed. Tim Sherratt, Lisa Jooste, and Rosanne Clayton. 25 Feb. 1998. Australian Science Archives Project. 30 May 2005 <<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/confs/recovering/brazier.htm>>.

⁴² Byrne A14.

⁴³ Nancy Hadley, "Access and Description of Visual Ephemera," Collection Management 25.4 (2001): 45.

⁴⁴ Bierbaum, "The Third Dimension" 48.

objects, or a difficulty in using the standards that exist (such as AACR) most likely leads to a lack of cataloging or description for objects. Brazier, while not talking specifically about cataloging, says, "Objects are generally consigned by archivists to the 'too-hard' or 'not-enough-time' basket—along with ephemera."⁴⁵

The new CCO content standards may provide archivists with additional guidelines for describing and cataloging objects in their collections. Lanzi has stated:

CCO covers a broad range of cultural objects and their images. Museum objects, such as paintings, sculpture, prints, manuscripts, photographs, archeological artifacts and material culture objects, are incorporated, as well as architecture and other aspects of the built environment. The targeted audience is visual resources professionals, museum registrars and catalogers, library catalogers, archivists and others engaged in documenting cultural heritage objects and images.⁴⁶

CCO's focus, however, is on providing content standards for item level description. It remains to be seen if it will be adopted by the archival community (or any community, for that matter) and if its standards can be adapted to series or collection level description.

Recommendations for the storage of objects in museums can be found in The New Museum Registration Methods.⁴⁷ A Library Manager's Guide to the Physical Processing of Nonprint Materials provides recommendations for the storage of objects in libraries.⁴⁸ Cooke, however, seems not to be concerned with storage issues: "While museum artefacts need specialised treatment and storage, their basic requirements are

⁴⁵ Brazier.

⁴⁶ Elisa Lanzi, "Cataloguing Cultural Objects: New Guidelines for Descriptive Cataloging," Art Libraries Journal 29.4 (2004): 26-27.

⁴⁷ Buck and Gilmore 109-16.

⁴⁸ Karen C. Driessen and Sheila A. Smyth, "Three-Dimensional Artifacts and Realia," A Library Manager's Guide to the Physical Processing of Nonprint Materials (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995) 185-205.

almost identical to those of archives and a good storage environment will be suitable for your museum artefacts."⁴⁹ While outside storage may need to be found for large items, Cooke points out, "It is important to remember that the linkage between items in a collection is intellectual, not physical, and it therefore does not matter how disparate an accession may be."⁵⁰

Kam, writing about the collection of art by libraries and archives, sees a need for librarians and archivists to have knowledge of the conservation needs of objects in order to arrange adequate storage. She states that "many librarians lack adequate training or staff to organize and preserve art objects."⁵¹

Without adequate training or interest in art objects, librarians/archivists will experience difficulty in assessing the relative value of art objects or their value within the broader collection. They will lack an understanding of the physical properties by which objects in their collections were created, their preservation needs, and policies and procedures for their extended care.⁵²

While most archivists are probably not trained in the conservation of every conceivable type of object that may wind up in their collections, there are regularly updated sources of information on the conservation requirements of a variety of object types.⁵³

Issues arising from the collection of objects in archives show some similarities to those that arise from the collection of ephemera in museums, libraries, and archives.

There is a somewhat significant body of literature on issues of ephemera, including two

⁴⁹ Cooke 61.

⁵⁰ Cooke 59.

⁵¹ Kam 10.

⁵² Kam 10.

⁵³ One source for conservation information that may be useful to archivists is Conservation OnLine: Resources for Conservation Professionals, 29 Oct. 2005, Preservation Department of Stanford University Libraries, 31 Oct. 2005 <<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/>>.

issues of Popular Culture in Libraries.⁵⁴ Stanley, discussing the acquisition of ephemera, asks the basic question of just what to do with ephemera: "Once we had it, how did we treat it? How was it housed and how was it made accessible for researchers?"⁵⁵ Stanley finds that collectors of ephemera have the same questions concerning whether the appropriate repository for ephemera is a library, museum, or archives.⁵⁶ Stanley also sees the difficulties of cataloging ephemera leading to a lack of cataloging, thus leading to a lack of access.⁵⁷ Slate discusses the preservation and conservation concerns of ephemera.⁵⁸ Tschabrun writes on a subset of ephemera, the political poster, and discusses a number of concerns that are shared with collections of objects including problems and issues of cataloging and preservation.⁵⁹

The available literature allows one to make some assumptions concerning current archival practice with respect to objects in archives, but it does not give a clear indication of current practice nor the issues and challenges being faced by archivists with three-dimensional objects in their collections. In order to fill in some of these gaps, a study of archival practice in regards to objects was devised.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this research study was to learn about the collection, uses,

⁵⁴ Popular Culture in Libraries 4.1 (1996) and Popular Culture in Libraries 4.2 (1996).

⁵⁵ Linda Stanley, "The Stranger in Our House: Managing Ephemera at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania," Popular Culture in Libraries 4.1 (1996): 100.

⁵⁶ Stanley 94.

⁵⁷ Stanley 101.

⁵⁸ John H. Slate, "Not Fade Away: Understanding the Definition, Preservation and Conservation Issues of Visual Ephemera," Collection Management 25.4 (2001): 51-59.

⁵⁹ Susan Tschabrun, "Off the Wall and into a Drawer: Managing a Research Collection of Political Posters," American Archivist 66 (2003): 303-24.

descriptive cataloging, storage, and preservation of three-dimensional objects in institutional archives. It was assumed that:

- most college and university archives have objects in their collections;
- objects are usually not actively sought by most institutional archives;
- objects are often given little description or cataloging, or are given cataloging that is inconsistent with current archival practice, leading to a lack of use by researchers;
- objects are often separated from the collections in which they arrive; and
- objects often raise preservation, display, and storage issues that challenge archivists.

In order to test these assumptions, five practicing archivists at nearby universities in the state of North Carolina were interviewed: Dr. Jan Blodgett of Davidson College, Tom Harkins of Duke University, Gwen Gosney Erickson of Guilford College, Hermann J. Trojanowski of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG,) and Linda Jacobson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). College and University archives were chosen rather than special collections and manuscript collections because it was felt they were more likely to have objects in their collections. The schools chosen were selected to represent a cross-section of institutions: a small public school (UNCG,) a small private school (Davidson College and Guilford College,) a large public school (UNC,) and a large private school (Duke University.) Archivists at colleges and universities in close proximity were chosen so that interviews could be conducted in person and in the archivists' repositories, allowing collections to be viewed and inspected in person if doing so was relevant to the study. It was hoped that the archivists' responses, in addition to supporting or countering the assumptions, would reveal other matters of interest concerning objects in archives. The interview script, recruitment letter, and consent form are included as appendices A-C to this paper.

4. Interview Results

Participants' responses to the interview questions are summarized and presented around the themes of collections and collection policy, uses of objects in collections, description and cataloging, and storage and conservation, and then analyzed to find common issues and practices related to the collection of objects by archives.

4.1. Collections and Collection Policy

Asked for examples of the kinds of objects in her collection, Jan Blodgett, College Archivist and College Records Management Coordinator of Davidson College, stated that there are many textiles: a 1916 baseball uniform, class blazers, letter sweaters, marshall sashes worn during commencement, pennants that decorated dorm rooms, student made class flags, and t-shirts. There are also mugs, cups, bumper stickers, and other items commemorating college events, as well as trophies, a skull from a fraternity altar, and "a melted chunk of bell from the big fire in 1921." There are also a few items pertaining to local history.

The online mission statement of Davidson College states: "The primary purpose of the Archives is to collect, preserve, maintain and make available institutional records of administrative, legal, fiscal or historical value. The Archives also serves as a repository for manuscript collections which are related to the College and the town of Davidson, or relevant to the College's curriculum."⁶⁰ While objects are not specifically mentioned in the mission statement, Blodgett says they fall within the overall policy of collecting the records of the university, materials that support the curriculum of the college, and items of local history. The policy means "we'll take a mug that came out of a fraternity activity,

⁶⁰ Mission Statement, 1 Sept. 2005, College Archives, Davidson College, 5 Oct. 2005
<http://www.davidson.edu/administrative/library/archives/office_information.asp#Mission%20Statement>.

the t-shirt from the fun run, the desk drawer from the dormitory, or the antique pair of scissors from a local bank." Having a collection policy gives Blodgett the ability to turn down items that are not related to Davidson's stated collection interests. "If someone wants to give us an antebellum gown, we can say that unless the wife of the president of the university wore that, we aren't really interested."

The Davidson College Archives does not actively seek to acquire objects for its collection. "We take them as they get offered" is a statement that seems in line with Cooke's statement that most archivists would prefer to have the objects come to them. The only objects actively sought at Davidson are items produced by a university office, such as an informational object or a gift given to staff members. In such an instance, Blodgett will "claim one for the archives, because we see those items as the same as the records being produced by that office." Blodgett does not actively pursue the objects produced by student organizations, "because they can produce enough artifacts in a single year to fill all our available storage space."

When asked what types of objects are in the Duke University Archives, Tom Harkins, Associate University Archivist, mentioned a bow and arrow, a shotgun, shoes owned by slaves, an ear trumpet, fraternity and honorary society pins, fraternity and sorority paddles, mason's trowels from the construction of the campus, textiles, hats, buttons, paperweights, ashtrays, beer steins, and a collection of World War II military unit patches that were donated by alumni that served in the war.⁶¹

The Duke University Archives has no formal statement of a collection policy regarding objects. The "About the Archives" web page states that the archives is

⁶¹ This and all other statements attributed to Tom Harkins, Associate University Archivist, Duke University Archives, are from a personal interview, 18 Oct. 2005.

"responsible for the collection and management of historically valuable records of the university. The Archives acquires files, reports, and other records created by campus offices and organizations, as well as material about Duke University."⁶² The "History of the Archives" web page states that the archives exists "to identify and preserve administrative, legal, fiscal or historical information that has long term value for the Duke community" and to make that material available. "The Archives receives the minutes, reports, departmental subject files, personal and official correspondence, sound and video recordings, film, photographs, and other significant records generated in the University's day-to-day activities."⁶³ Harkins indicated that while there is no collection policy that specifically addresses objects, they can be collected on a "discretionary" basis as long as they are related to or have a significance to Duke University.

Objects often come from alumni donations. Sometimes objects are accepted not for their value to the archives, but because the person is a regular donor, "and we don't want to offend them." Accepting objects that it may not necessarily want, however, opens the archives to having to accept objects that may not reflect its mission. "We don't really want to be the university memorabilia museum. That's not our function."

Many of the objects in the Duke University Archives are part of the Trinity College Historical Society collection. The society was formed in 1892, and the finding aid to the collection states, "The goals of the Society were to collect, arrange, and preserve written materials and artifacts illustrative of the history of North Carolina and

⁶² About the Archives, 1995, Duke University Archives, 5 Oct. 2005
<<http://www.lib.duke.edu/archives/about/>>.

⁶³ History of the Archives, 1995, Duke University Archives, 5 Oct. 2005
<<http://www.lib.duke.edu/archives/about/duahistory.htm>>.

the South, and to promote the study of Southern history through lectures and publications." In order to do so, "they made wide appeals for donations of historical materials and maintained a museum to house these 'relics.'"⁶⁴ These objects seem to have little to do with the history of Duke University, other than that they were collected by a society formed at the university. The University Archives seems to have "inherited" these items almost by default. The objects most likely should be saved, but whether the university archives is the proper place is up for debate.

While the College Archives at Davidson and the University Archives at Duke are the official archives of the schools, the archives at Guilford College serves a somewhat different purpose. It functions as the archives of the school but is primarily an archives for Quakers in the southeastern US:

The Friends Historical Collection of Guilford College is the repository for the records of most Friends meetings in the state of North Carolina and some in adjacent states. Around this core of unique records dating from 1680 is assembled a collection of books, periodicals, archives of Quaker organizations, private manuscripts, and artifacts related to Quaker families and Quaker history worldwide, with special emphasis on the American Southeast.⁶⁵

When asked about the objects in the collection, Gwen Gosney Erickson, Librarian and College Archivist of the Friends Historical Collection, said, "We have a pretty significant collection of Quaker textiles, mostly 18th century, including quilts, coverlets, dresses, hats,

⁶⁴ Inventory of the Trinity College Historical Society Collection, [1492?] – 1981. Sept. 2003, Duke University Archives, 23 Oct. 2005
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/dynaweb/univarchives/uahisttchs/@Generic__BookView>.

⁶⁵ Collection Policies, Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College, 5 Oct. 2005
<<http://www.guilford.edu/library/index.cfm?ID=110000950>>.

and samplers. We also have university objects such as debate society cups, plates, buttons, tools, and items from college buildings."⁶⁶

The Guilford archives has a written collection policy that specifically addresses the collection of objects:

Artifacts will be accepted subject to the following criteria: (1) association with a prominent Friend, particularly in the Southeast, (2) manufacture by a Friend, (3) state of preservation, (4) degree of rarity, (5) representativeness of Quaker culture, (6) aesthetic merit, (7) associations with Guilford College (New Garden Boarding School), (8) representativeness of the outstanding activeness of prominent Friends, and (9) ability of the staff and collection adequately to preserve and/or restore, care for, and exhibit materials. No promise in regard to exhibiting artifacts will be made.⁶⁷

Erickson, based on the policy, can and does refuse objects. When she refuses objects, she does so for one or more of the following reasons:

- the object is not relevant to Quaker history or the college's history.
- there is a lack of space to store the object.
- there is an inability to care properly for the object: "I like to maintain some standards here, where if we accept something, we'll be able to provide proper care for it."

She concedes that the archives will sometimes accept items that may not fit its collection policy in order to be able to accept accompanying items that she would like to have.

However, she will only accept these items "without any restrictions, so that if we want to, we can later get rid of them."

Similarly, Erickson is sometimes put in the position of deciding whether to accept an object for the archives with the implication that there may be a future donation (either monetary or of other items that the archives might find more acceptable) if the object is accepted. In this case, Erickson asks, "Can we really say no?" Sometimes these implied

⁶⁶ This and all other statements attributed to Gwen Gosney Erickson, Librarian and College Archivist of the Friends Historical Collection at Guilford College, are from a personal interview, 28 Oct. 2005.

⁶⁷ Collection Policies, Friends Historical Collection.

promises come from other departments, although there is a new, broader policy regarding gifts being developed at Guilford, which states that other departments may not accept items from a donor on behalf of the archives (or the library or the college art gallery.) Erickson does not actively seek out objects to collect. "It's mostly waiting for them to come to me."

The University Archives & Manuscripts department of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is "the official repository of the permanently valuable records" of the university. It contains "manuscripts, printed materials, photographs, microforms, audio/visual materials, artifacts, textiles, blueprints and maps."⁶⁸ Hermann Trojanowski, Associate University Archivist, mentions that there are plates depicting university buildings, mugs commemorating historical events, silverware, class rings, pins, medals, badges, ribbons, dining hall materials, silverware, gym uniforms, blazers, and other clothing and textiles.⁶⁹

Somewhat similarly to Guilford College, The University Archives & Manuscripts department of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro serves more than one distinct collection. Within the archives' overall collection of items relevant to the history of the university, there are individual collections, such as the Women Veterans Historical Collection and the Joseph M. Bryan Archives. The Women Veterans Historical Collection, which began in 1998, grew out of UNCG's origins as a women's college. Alumni who had served in the armed services had been donating materials to the

⁶⁸ Accessing the Archives, 22 June 2005, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 21 Oct. 2005 <<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/archives/accessing.asp>>.

⁶⁹ This and all other statements attributed to Hermann J. Trojanowski, Associate University Archivist of University Archives & Manuscripts, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, are from a personal interview, 28 Oct. 2005.

university, eventually creating a significant collection of items documenting women's military service. Although it is primarily documents, the collection has a number of objects as well.

The UNCG archives did not have a separate collection policy for objects until one was drafted in 2005. The UNCG collection policy states, "The goal of the artifacts collection is to preserve objects that contribute to the history of the university."⁷⁰ One reason for creating the policy was to enable the archives to limit the objects being accepted to items. Trojanowski said, "The value of having a collection policy is not so much that it states what you're going to collect, but that it implies what you won't take. It gives you the ability to refuse items." The collection policy says, "University Archives has the right to refuse any object it does not anticipate a use for or any object that requires excessive storage or conservation."⁷¹ Not only can UNCG base refusal of an object on use, it can also, much like Guilford College, base refusal on storage and conservation concerns.

Having to accept objects that are not particularly relevant to the history of the university has been an issue at UNCG. Trojanowski said that when faced with unwanted donations, "It's hard to say no to people who think they're doing you the biggest favor." Trojanowski also acknowledged the problem of accepting objects of no interest in order to receive other items: "Where we get into trouble is when we have to accept artifacts of very little value to get papers and manuscripts that are of value. Those objects are occupying valuable real estate in the stacks."

⁷⁰ Emily Symonds, Artifacts Collection Guidelines, University Archives, Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC, May/June 2005, 1.

⁷¹ Symonds 2.

Faculty or alumni donate most of the objects received by the archives. Collection is generally passive, although the University Archivist will occasionally buy items pertaining to the history of the university on eBay. Reasons not to actively seek objects, according to Trojanowski, are that the archives does not have the storage space or the expertise to care for objects.

The North Carolina Collection Gallery at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is unlike the other archives studied, in that it was specifically created to house objects, those that are collected by the university's North Carolina Collection archives. According to Linda Jacobson, Assistant Keeper of North Carolina Collection Gallery, the Gallery began when the North Carolina Collection's objects became so numerous as to require their own storage area.⁷² The Gallery now has 17,000 objects. Eight thousand of that total are numismatic items. There are also paintings, vases, buttons, clothing, typewriters, tools, phonograph record players, and anything else that might conceivably have something to do with the history of North Carolina and the South.

The North Carolina Collection is part of UNC's Special Collections, which encompasses two other departments: Rare Books and the Manuscripts Department. Policy dictates that all objects received by the North Carolina Collection, either separately or as part of larger collections, go to the Gallery. The Manuscripts Department, because it lacks the space and other resources to store objects, will often send its objects to the Gallery, even though there is no policy that requires it to do so. Jacobson said, "It's just easier for them to send their objects to us, where we're used to taking care of things

⁷² This and all other statements attributed to Linda Jacobson, Assistant Keeper of North Carolina Collection Gallery, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, are from a personal interview, 28 Oct. 2005.

like that." University Archives, which is part of Manuscripts, also sends most of its objects to the Gallery. "They'll keep the smaller things that they can easily store. Everything else they'll send to us."

The Gallery also accepts donations directly, without them having to be funneled through Manuscripts. Oddly enough, for an institution with such a large accumulation of items, there is no written collection policy. Jacobson said the department has talked about creating one, but "at the moment, our collection policy is in our heads." The lack of a collection policy may not seem important, as the Gallery receives many of its items from other archives, but those archives have no set collection policies either.⁷³

Jacobson also deals with issues of accepting less desirable or unwanted objects in order to gain objects that are more desirable. "We have someone who is a long time donor who's given us a lot of valuable things, but he also pretty much gives us everything. A lot of the items we don't really want, but because he gives us all this other good stuff, we always take whatever he gives us."

While many of its acquisitions come to it through the university's archival departments, the Gallery also actively seeks and purchases additions to its numismatic collection. Numismatics became a significant component of the Gallery in the thirties and forties, and a decision was made to build upon and expand the collection. Jacobson would

⁷³ The nearest the Gallery comes to a collection policy is a statement on its website that says: "Although the Gallery collects and preserves an array of artifacts, its current acquisition policy has four concentrations: university history, political memorabilia, natural history, and currency or 'numismatics.'" North Carolina Collections Gallery Collections, 18 July 2005, North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, 30 Oct. 2005 <<http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/gallery/collections.html>>. The Manuscripts Department and its constituent departments, the Southern Historical Collection, the Southern Folklife Collection, University Archives, and General Manuscripts, all have online statements detailing the strengths of their individual collections (too lengthy to quote here,) but none of them has a written collection policy (either on or offline.) See Manuscripts Department, 18 Oct. 2005, University of North Carolina, 30 Oct. 2005 <<http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/>>.

perhaps like to see more active collecting in other areas, but financial considerations and limited staffing inhibit the Gallery's ability to actively search for and collect other items.

4.2. Uses of Collections

Much like Cooke, Blodgett saw the primary value of objects in her archives as material for exhibits. Blodgett is responsible for three display cases at her college's library, and she noted, "Exhibits need things in them; paper exhibits, even with photographs in them, are boring."

Blodgett also saw a potential future research use in the informational objects produced by university departments. She thought these objects might eventually be valuable to someone studying communication in that the objects represent "a way that a university office was attempting to get information across" when other means of communication, such as email or printed memos, had failed. She thought other objects might show ways in which the college promoted itself to different groups, such as informational objects handed out to first year students, or the keepsakes and mementoes given to visitors. Blodgett also observed that objects might last longer than digital records. For example, a keychain produced to publicize a new phone number might last longer than the email that went out announcing the same thing. "I don't know that we have a copy of the email memo that describes all the new things being done by Information Technology Services, but we have the coaster, and the coaster says everything that was in the memo."

Harkins also mentioned the use of objects in exhibits. Harkins said that the collection of objects "falls into the archives' function of being the storytellers of the university," and that objects provide a way of illustrating the school's history. In addition

to their use in exhibits and displays, objects are occasionally used for reference purposes. Harkins recounted instances of the archives' collection of debating societies pins being useful in helping the relatives of alumni identify pins they had found. He also cited examples of the administrative value of objects. Harkins was able to answer an inquiry from the University Council about the use of particular insignia at a specific time by looking at school blazers with the university seal.

In contrast to all the other archivists interviewed, when asked about the uses to which objects can be put, Erickson's first response was not that they could be used in exhibits. She stated, "We're a study collection; we are not an exhibit collection." There are, in fact, very few objects on display at Guilford. Erickson was able to cite a number of research projects where objects in the collection had been used, including a book on samplers, a paper on the use of a particular type of loom during a specific time period, and an article concerning the influence of community connections on weaving styles. Erickson was also the only archivist to mention that objects in her collection have been photographed for use as illustrations in articles and books derived from manuscript research in the archives.

Erickson admitted, however, that she has some things that she keeps only for display purposes, such as a collection of political memorabilia—mostly campaign buttons and bumper stickers—that she brings out every four years. The objects were part of a faculty member's manuscript collection and were saved solely for creating a display during election year.

Trojanowski, like Blodgett and Harkins, said that exhibits were one of the primary uses of objects. He also mentioned a specific educational use for his exhibits. In the fall

of each year, he prepares displays, designed for incoming freshmen, on the history of the university. He feels that new students should have some sense of the school's past, and that exhibits, rather than text, may be a more engaging way to learn. Objects may bring history closer to the students. "There's no sense in keeping things in boxes. They should be on display to help the students here learn the history of the university. I'm sure that many of them who come here have no clue that this was an all women's college until 1963."

Trojanowski also mentioned the objects in the Women Veterans Historical Project, saying that they have been used by researchers interested in women's studies and military history, although most research in the Women Veterans Historical Project involves documents. Although the archives rarely gets requests for Women Veterans objects, it has, on occasion, loaned out objects and uniforms to other museums for display and to be photographed for various publications.

The North Carolina Collection Gallery maintains a number of displays and historical rooms in its space in UNC's Wilson Library. Jacobson stated that the objects are used for educational purposes in interpretive exhibitions about various aspects of the history of North Carolina. Besides display purposes, however, few of the objects receive much attention from researchers, although the numismatics (which make up nearly half the collection) receive frequent research requests. Jacobson also saw a public relations value in the exhibit space of the North Carolina Collection Gallery. Receptions for new exhibits, new collections, and talks and conferences held at Wilson Library are often held in the Gallery.

4.3. Description and Cataloging

Blodgett maintains an object database of about 330 items in an Inmagic database. It includes most but not all of the objects in her collection. Those that are excluded tend to be the large and ungainly items that are difficult to store, because in Blodgett's records, part of an item's description is its location in the archives. If the item is just sitting on the floor or constantly being moved from one place to another, its database entry cannot be completed, and it tends not to be entered in the database in the first place. In this instance, storage issues affect description.

An entry in the database usually physically describes the object itself, provides a date of creation, and identifies the creating department or event to which it relates.

Blodgett noted, "There's a whole other way that museums look at objects, when they record exact dimensions and the materials that something is made out of. I don't want to spend a whole lot of time on details that aren't going to be important to a researcher." An object in the Davidson College Archive is more likely to be useful for its relationship to the college, not for the materials used in its construction.

In discussing the cataloging and description of objects, Blodgett raised the issue of the informational value of objects relative to the informational value of other items in the collection. Blodgett said that when she first started working at the College Archives, none of it was cataloged.

We had lists of everything in the archives, but nothing was formally processed or cataloged. I spent a couple of years getting things under control and creating finding aids, first creating finding aids for those things that had the greatest informational content. So first we processed the records of the university offices, and then we did manuscript collections, then the audio and video collections. Artifacts were last, because they had less informational value; our artifacts have more exhibit value than informational value.

The object database is not available on the web, because she assumes that "most people don't care about artifacts."

The database is also not available on the web because Blodgett does not particularly care to publicize the collection, owing to the fragile nature of many of the items. "We don't want the textiles being handled. If we make the artifacts available, I don't want students coming in and trying on the beanies."

Objects that arrive as part of a collection are not separated from their parent collection. Most of the objects related to college history, however, come in one at a time, and are added to a single collection of objects pertaining to the history of the college.

At the Duke University Archives, there is a database of objects, although it has not been updated for a while, and does not include all the objects in the collection. It is also not available online to the public. There is an online finding aid to the Trinity College Historical Society Records, including a simple list of the objects in the collection.⁷⁴ Harkins says that access to objects is probably diminished by their limited cataloging, but that this lack of access may be insignificant, as many of the objects do not seem pertinent to the mission of the archives. Creating descriptive records for objects would merely take away from the time that could be spent creating records for items that are important to the University and its users. Objects are not separated from the collections in which they arrive, either intellectually or physically (unless necessary for storage purposes.)

⁷⁴ Inventory of the Trinity College Historical Society Collection, [1492?] – 1981, Finding Aid, Sept. 2003, Duke University Archives, 23 Oct. 2005
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/dynaweb/univarchives/uahisttchs/@Generic__BookView>.

Similar to Davidson and Duke, Guilford does not have any readily available cataloging or description of objects. There is a card catalog, created by a volunteer in the late 1980s or early 1990s, which "we aren't actively updating." There is also a box of accession sheets for some, but not all of the objects. Erickson said that she would like to have the objects documented, and that "the lack of an online database or even a comprehensive catalog inhibits researchers using the artifacts, because they don't know what we have." Currently, Erickson said, "It's mostly a shot in the dark. A researcher will say, 'We're researching Quaker communities. You're a Quaker collection. Do you have such and such?' Or they'll look on the website and see that we mention that we have Quaker artifacts and then decide to get in touch with us to see what we have."

Before putting her collection online, an interim solution proposed by Erickson is to photograph the objects and "at a minimum, have a couple notebooks in the research room with the images and the information from the accession sheet. That way visitors can look through the notebooks, allowing them to initially examine objects without us having to haul them out of storage." Erickson notes that her collection is small enough that photographing every object is not an impossible task.

Regarding the separation of objects, Erickson says. "We do not separate objects from manuscript collections. We may put them in separate boxes for storage, but they remain part of the collection. If it's something that's small enough to fit in the box and doesn't have some conservation problem, we'll leave it in with the papers." Those objects are described along with and as part of the collections in which they are received.

At UNCG, objects remain in the collections in which they are received as well. Objects are not removed from collections unless they are unusually larger or have

difficult conservation concerns. Sometimes, for storage reasons, they are given their own boxes, but they remain on the shelves with the rest of the items in their respective collections. Toys that accompanied manuscripts from a children's author, for example, are in separate box but still on the same shelf as the author's manuscripts. Objects are described in the finding aids for their respective collections.

Objects that arrive separately, in and of themselves, pertaining to the history of the university, are added to a separate artifacts collection. The finding aid for this collection is available online.⁷⁵ A similar but separate finding aid for textiles is also available online, although the textiles are arranged in the finding aid by the name of the original owner (if known.)⁷⁶

In addition to the finding aids created by the archives, the library's cataloging department creates any catalog records for the archives' collections. None of the collections containing artifacts has received any cataloging, however. The general consensus seems to be that the cataloging department is used to cataloging books, and when given something unfamiliar, the department relegates that chore to the bottom of the pile.

Regarding cataloging at the North Carolina Collection Gallery, Jacobson said, "We accession an object in the way museums do. We fully describe it, measure it, and

⁷⁵ University Archives Artifact Collection, 1 July 2005, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 21 Oct. 2005
<<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/archives/miscdes/artifact.html>>.

⁷⁶ University Archives Textile Collection, 1 July 2005, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 21 Oct. 2005
<<http://library.uncg.edu/depts/archives/miscdes/textile.html>>.

give it interpretive subject headings." Subject headings are provided by Nomenclature.⁷⁷

The records created (accession records for each accession and item level records for each object) are kept in a Filemaker Pro database. The database is not publicly available, although the Gallery is investigating putting the information online. Jacobson would like to see the database available online because she would like to encourage the use of the collection.

4.4. Storage and Conservation

At Davidson, no one has received any special training in handling, cataloging, or storage of objects. When asked who tended to the various needs of objects, Blodgett said, "I'm it." In fact, no one at any of the archives visited, except Jacobson, had had any training in the storage and conservations. Blodgett repeatedly mentioned the problems caused by a lack of storage space. "I would like to have more objects, but I don't have the space for them." At her institution, the amount of available storage space affects acquisition: "We don't actively pursue alumni collections. I wish we did a little bit more than we do, but space is an issue."

As noted earlier, storage at Davidson also affects cataloging. Items that have not been described tend to be the large or ungainly items that are difficult to store, such as a dormitory desk drawer signed inside by every student that used the desk from the 1950s the 1990s. It was thought to have historical value to the college, "so I accessioned it, but now I don't know what to do with it. What do you do with a big wooden drawer?"

⁷⁷ James R. Blackaby, Patricia Greeno, and the Nomenclature Committee, The Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging: a Revised and Expanded Version of Robert G. Chenall's System for Classifying Man-Made Objects (Walnut Creek, Ca.: AltaMira Press, 1995). Jacobson remarked, however, that subject headings have not been consistent. Over the years, many students have entered many different subject headings for the objects in the collection.

The issue of storage space brought up the fact that the archives is often the repository for items that are of little archival value but which need to be maintained. Blodgett mentioned that she has many sporting trophies in which she sees no research value and which she does not particularly want. The College Archives also serves as the storage area for class flags. These are commercially made flags, ordered by the alumni department, carried at commencement, and displayed at alumni reunions. "They're not archival, they have no informational value, but they have to be stored somewhere."

At Duke, objects have been refused by the archives because of storage issues. Harkins relates, "Years ago, a lot of the dormitories had signs on them, made by the students, on four by eight sheets of plywood, and after they were removed by the administration, someone had the idea that they should go to the archives. We refused them because we didn't have any place to store them." The Duke University Archives also deals with the issue of being a repository for unwanted items. The objects of the Trinity College Historical Society Collection, a disparate collection of questionable value to the University Archives, are nonetheless stored there because no other campus department or organization will have them.

When questioned about issues of storage, Erickson stated, "We don't take furniture anymore because it's too big. All the furniture we have we inherited." Erickson also remarked that storage considerations come into play when deciding how strictly to follow her collection policy. "If it's some little thing we don't normally collect but that a donor wants to give us, I'm much more likely to maintain good relations with the donor and say, 'We don't usually do it, but if you'll sign this gift agreement and it's ours to do

with as we want, then we'll take it.' But if it's big, then we won't consider it. That's where storage comes in to play."

Trojanowski also said that size is a deciding factor in storage. "If we can't fit it on a shelf, what are we going to do with it?" At the time of his interview, Trojanowski felt that UNCG had enough free space so that storage would not limit the ability to collect objects, but he also remarked that acquiring one or two sizeable collections could easily wipe out the available free space.

At the North Carolina Collection Gallery at UNC, created solely out of concerns for the care and storage of objects, Jacobson said she could not recall the Gallery ever refusing anything. She stated that if it did, it would be because of size and an inability to care properly for an item.

5. Analysis and Conclusions

The suppositions on which this study was originally based were:

- most college and university archives have objects in their collections;
- objects are usually not actively sought by most institutional archives;
- objects are often given little description or cataloging, or are given cataloging that is inconsistent with current archival practice, leading to a lack of use by researchers;
- objects are often separated from the collections in which they arrive; and
- objects often raise preservation, display, and storage issues that challenge archivists.

All of the institutions examined for this survey were found to have objects in their collections (although it must be stated that some of the institutions, especially the North Carolina Collection Gallery, were chosen specifically because it was known that they had significant object collections.)

Other issues raised by the investigation of these suppositions are discussed in the following sections on the collection and collection policy, uses, cataloging and description, and storage and conservation of objects in archives. These issues often

interrelate, i.e., issues of storage frequently affect cataloging or collection. Some conclusions are offered concerning objects in archives, followed by some observations on the collection of objects as it relates to the mission of the institution.

5.1. Collections and Collection Policy

The fact that all of the archives engaged primarily in passive rather than active collection may be a reflection of any number of issues related to the acquisition of objects, including:

- the fact that objects are sometimes difficult to describe or catalog may make an archivist reluctant to acquire them
- a lack of storage space or an inability to care properly for objects may influence an archivist's decision to collect them
- a real or perceived lack of informational value in objects may cause an archivist to refuse to actively seek them out

Irregardless of the reasons, the fact that objects were not actively collected (except for numismatics at the North Carolina Collection Gallery and college artifacts at Davidson) implies that the archivists do not place as great an importance or value on objects as they do on their other types of collections.

When an archives had an object-specific collection policy, it seemed to be used primarily to establish which objects would not be collected. There seems to be some correlation between the existence of a collection policy and the use of the objects by researchers. Guilford College, the institution with the most explicit collection policy regarding objects, reported the greatest use of its objects for research. UNCG, which also has a policy regarding objects, also reported some use of its objects. The North Carolina Collection Gallery, which accepts nearly everything that is offered, and has no formal collection policy, reports little use of its collections for research.

All of the institutions, even those with written collection policies, reported taking in undesirable objects in order to be able to acquire other, more desirable items. Perhaps it seems like common sense to accept items in order to secure subsequent donations—doing so is one of Cooke's reasons for accepting objects—but taking in items with unique cataloging, storage, and preservation issues creates demands that many archives may not be equipped to handle. When the fact that most objects may be of lesser informational value is considered, the wisdom of collecting unwanted objects comes into question.

5.2. Uses of Objects in Archives

All of the archivists, except Erickson, cited exhibits as the most prevalent use for objects at their institutions. Beyond use in display cases, however, archivists often had difficulty in finding applications for objects. Blodgett, even though she feels there are some potential uses for objects in the future, does not consider them to have much informational value. Harkins came close to implying the same thing, saying that objects are rarely used. Trojanowski, while citing some uses for the objects in his archives, did not see much informational value in them beyond using them to present the history of the university. Erickson, who does not use objects in displays and saw the greatest research value in them, said that manuscripts are used far more often than objects. Even Jacobson, whose collection is solely made up of objects, said that the collection was rarely consulted by researchers.

5.3. Description and Cataloging

One of the suppositions of this study was that a lack of cataloging or description for objects would lead to a lack of discovery and a lack of use, but that does not seem to be the case. The existence of descriptive records does not seem to be a deciding factor in

the use of objects. Guilford College, which has little description for its objects, sees significant research use being made of them. UNCG, which has thorough online descriptions of its object collections, sees little use being made of them.

Oddly, the institutions that may have the most thorough documentation of their objects, Davidson and the North Carolina Collection Gallery, do not make those records readily available to the public. Jacobson says she would like to make her museum style accession records available online, but when that will occur, if ever, is unknown, and if they were to be put online, it is unknown how that would affect the use of the items in the Gallery. Davidson also has descriptive records that are not available to the public. One of Blodgett's reasons for not making records accessible is that she does not think any of her users care about objects. Her comment about the research value of objects is revelatory: objects have less informational value than the other items in her collection.⁷⁸

Another supposition of this study, that objects were often physically and sometimes intellectually separated from their original collections with a corresponding loss of context, did not appear to be a matter of importance. Except for UNC, where objects are physically removed from their collections as a matter of policy, objects most often remained physically and intellectually a part of their original collections. The problem of an object losing context through physical separation was minimal.

5.4. Storage and Conservation

Storage space also did not seem to be as great an issue as originally presumed. Repositories seemed to either have adequate storage space for objects (UNCG, the North Carolina Collection Gallery) or not to have it (Guilford, Davidson, Duke). Items that

⁷⁸ Interestingly, Blodgett may see the most potential value in objects, as is evidenced by her remarks on objects possibly outlasting digital records or being used in the future study of communication.

were too big to be stored properly were likely to be rejected at all repositories. In fact, the issue of storage seemed most important in its influence on whether an object was collected in the first place.

Storage practices varied somewhat from repository to repository, but for the most part, objects were identified in some way and merely stored on shelves, sometimes in boxes, sometimes not. Issues of conservation seemed to have an impact, but mostly in regards to textiles. Those archivists dealing with significant collections of textiles seemed to have investigated and determined the proper care for them. Jacobson, at UNC, was the only archivist who had received training in the collection, care, and storage of objects, having taken a course in collection management in a museum studies program. Owing to the fact that all the archives held objects, perhaps some schooling in object management should be a part of an archivist's training, or perhaps practicing archivists should seek further instruction in the issues of the particular objects in their collections.

6. Objects and the Mission of the Archives

For the most part, archivists do not always seem sure of their reasons for collecting objects. Acquisition often seems to be based on whether the archives can physically store the objects or on the supposition that accepting objects may lead to a concurrent or future donation. Sometimes objects are "inherited" from or pushed onto the archives by some other department. Objects sometimes find their way into archives because there just does not seem to be anywhere else to put them. Perhaps these sometimes murky and ill-defined reasons for the acquisition of objects come from unfamiliarity. While archivists are usually comfortable with the appraisal of paper-based

collections, they may not be as confident when judging the long-term value of object-based collections.

Once acquired, objects can serve to liven up displays and keep exhibits from being nothing but cases full of documents and photographs, but beyond their potential for display, many objects do not seem useful, either to archivists or to their patrons. If objects are not being used for anything other than display, does their exhibit justify the expense of acquiring, describing, and storing them? Most archives contend with a lack of storage space, a backlog in processing, not enough time, not enough money, and not enough personnel. Archivists with objects in their collections might do well to examine the role of those objects. Is there informational value in them? Is there information that cannot be gained elsewhere? Or are they taking up space and resources that could be better devoted to other collections?

The key to the value of objects in archival collections seems to be in Harkins statement about the Trinity College Historical Society Collection, where he said that "many of the objects don't seem pertinent to the mission of the archives." If the acquisition of objects reflects the mission of the archives and adheres to a collection policy, then the archives is more likely to acquire objects that actually have an informational value, objects that might be used by patrons instead of just serving as fodder for display cases. If the acquisition of objects is used to support the mission of the archives, the archives is much less likely to be the repository of last resort, the dumping ground of old unwanted artifacts. Erickson said that the relevance of an object to her institution's mission is the deciding factor in acquiring or keeping objects for the collection. "It's all old stuff," she said, "but there's some old stuff that you want to look

after, and there's other old stuff that's just old stuff." The notion that the items acquired by an archives should reflect its mission may seem obvious, of course, but it is particularly important in the collection of items, like three-dimensional objects, with unique and often problematical cataloging and storage issues.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Date

Name

Address

Address

Greeting

As part of the requirement for completing a Master of Library Science degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I am preparing a research paper on issues related to the collection, uses, descriptive cataloging, storage, and preservation of three-dimensional objects in institutional archives.

I would like to visit you in person at your archives and ask you a series of questions about the collection, uses, cataloging, storage, and preservation of three-dimensional objects at your institution. With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview. I expect the interview to last thirty minutes to one hour, with a possible follow-up by phone or by email for clarification of answers or comments. In my paper, your interview responses and those of the other participants will be discussed separately and then analyzed as a group to find common issues and practices related to the collection of three-dimensional objects by archives.

There are no anticipated personal risks associated with your participation in this study. You can refuse to answer any question and may stop the interview at any time. Withdrawing from the interview will not result in any negative consequences for you. If you are uncomfortable providing names of specific collections, donors, or other involved parties, special care will be taken not to include any identifying information. Due the small number of people that I am interviewing, keeping your participation anonymous would be difficult. However, no identifying information beyond your name and institution will be used.

If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact me at djeffrey@email.unc.edu. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my project; I know that your time is valuable. Two copies of an Informed Consent Agreement are enclosed with this letter. If you choose to participate in my study, please sign one copy of the agreement and return it in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Dean H. Jeffrey
Master of Library Science Candidate
School of Information and Library Science
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Appendix B: Consent Form

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants
Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study # LIBS 05-056
Consent Form Version Date: October 8, 2005

Title of Study: The Use and Treatment of Realia in Institutional Archives

Principal Investigator: Dean H. Jeffrey
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Information and Library Science
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-962-8366
Faculty Advisor: Timothy Pyatt
Funding Source: none

Study Contact telephone number: 919-821-4947
Study Contact email: djeffrey@email.unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researcher named above any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

As part of the requirement for completing a Master of Library Science degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I am preparing a research paper on the collection, uses, descriptive cataloging, storage, and preservation of three-dimensional objects in institutional archives.

How many people will take part in this study?

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately five people in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?

Thirty minutes to one hour, for an in-person interview, with possible follow-up by phone or by email for clarification of some answers or comments.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

I would like to visit you in person at your archives and ask you a series of questions about the collection, use, cataloging, storage, and preservation of three-dimensional objects at your institution. With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview. You will have the right to skip any question you choose not to answer for any reason. There is also the possibility that I may ask for clarification or more information after the interview by phone or by email. In my paper, your interview responses and those of the other participants will be discussed separately and then analyzed as a group to find common issues and practices related to the collection of three-dimensional objects by archives.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may also expect to benefit by participating in this study by learning how some of your colleagues are dealing with issues related to three-dimensional objects in archives.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

How will your privacy be protected?

Your name and the name of your employer will be revealed in my paper. Due to the small number of people that I am interviewing, keeping your participation anonymous would be difficult. However, no identifying information beyond your name and institution will be used.

Participants will be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

I would like to audio tape our interview. If you consent to being taped, you may request that the recorder be turned off at any time. The tapes will be for my use only, will not be shared with anyone, and will be erased once my paper is written. Any written transcript of the interview will be destroyed once my paper is completed.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?

You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?

There will be no costs for being in the study

What if you are a UNC employee?

Taking part in this research is not a part of your University duties, and refusing will not affect your job. You will not be offered or receive any special job-related consideration if you take part in this research.

What if you have questions about this study?

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researcher listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I give permission for the researcher to audio record the interview.
- I do not give the researcher permission to audio record the interview.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

Appendix C: Interview Script

For the purposes of this study, I define realia as three-dimensional objects, as artifacts, as something with width, depth, and height, as opposed to the nearly two-dimensional objects most often found in archives. My definition excludes some technically three-dimensional objects commonly found in archives such as phonograph records, reel-to-reel tapes, cassettes, and other types of sound and video recordings; scrapbooks and photograph albums; and diaries and journals.

Is there realia in your collections? If so, what are some examples?

Is there a part of your collection policy that causes or encourages (or discourages) the collection of realia?

Is there a collection policy specific to realia?

How have objects arrived in your collections? Are they actively sought? Are they received as part of larger (and more traditional) paper-based collections?

How are realia and objects used in your institution? How are realia and objects used by researchers?

Are there catalog records created for realia? If so, are objects described or cataloged at the item level, or are they included in larger collection level records such as finding aids?

Are objects, if they arrive as part of a collection, kept with that collection (at least intellectually)? Or are they separated and made part of some other "artificial" collection, the way photographs or sound recordings are often treated in archives?

Are realia that arrive in the archives maintained by the archives, or are they sent to another department (like a library or a museum) within your institution? If an item is sent elsewhere, is there an intellectual linkage kept between the item and the collection from which it came?

Do difficulties in cataloging realia (or a lack of training in the cataloging of realia) lead to the objects not being fully described or cataloged (or not being described at all,) thus leading to a lack of use by researchers?

Who is responsible for the care, accession, cataloging, etc. of realia? Does any staff member have specific training in the care of objects?

How and where are objects stored?

Are there any problems caused by the storage of objects?

If so, does this influence your decision whether to collect objects?