House Gift Unit cards, since that site will be getting their first shipment from the Gift Unit soon (they just became part of the federal system). It is good for professionals to have relationships with professionals at other sites so that they can help each other. There is a strong likelihood that a problem at your site isn’t new and another site has dealt with it before. By having contact and good working relationships with people at other sites you can learn how they dealt with the same issues you have and learn from them.

**Tuesday, July 01, 2008**

It is really amazing how background information can change how an artifact is regarded. I was doing full data entry on some portraits of Gerald and Betty Ford today. Many of them had thin files with small amounts of information. They all began to seem very much the same to me. Some were better likenesses than others, but none stood out as particularly special. Then I came to an interesting painting. I didn’t really think much of it, though, until I pulled its file and found that it was quite thick. It had letters back and forth from the donor and the museum as well as biographical information on the artist. Through reading the information I found that the artist was a prominent Indian immigrant. She considered herself to be a devout Christian and Republican and had painted this piece during Ford’s Presidency. Her sister’s foundation, which had held the portrait, contacted the museum to inquire if we would like it. I also learned through reading that the odd style that the portrait was painted in (she used triangles) was actually symbolic of the Trinity, which was cool. I would not have made that connection, but knowing that data made the piece more meaningful. Having this information on the artist and the background gives the artifact a story. This story is what makes the piece valuable and even exhibit worthy. When it comes to putting just a portrait of Gerald Ford on display or a portrait of
Gerald Ford with a great story to tell on display, I would choose the portrait with the story. Stories excite people and get them interested. This interest can then fuel education and understanding.

Wednesday, July 02, 2008

Public history careers, as well as any career, really, come with increased decisions for women. Usually when the first registrar, Robin, is mentioned in conversation it is followed by the phrase “but then she had a baby and decided to stay home.” It used to throw me, as if this was an important thing to note about her. This happened again today when I was looking through one of Robin’s files and noted how organized it was. Jamie agreed and said that she was a really good registrar and that the collection would be in better shape if she would have stayed. He added that he understands why she decided to stay home, though, because those early years of children’s development are really important. This is an issue that I’ve been thinking about lately. My sister recently faced the same question as Robin and chose a similar path. I’m not ready to start a family by any means, but would like to someday. When that time comes I know that I’ll have the same decision to face, whether I want to take a break from work or not. This could mean leaving a dream job that I’ve been working towards for years in order to stay at home with kids. I also think that it would be difficult to reenter the field after being away for a period of years. This isn’t really something that I need to worry myself with now, but I am aware that it could very well be an issue for me in the future. Although I think it seems odd that this should be primarily an issue for the mothers and not the fathers, traditionally it is the mother who would be expected to make the decision to stay at home.
Thursday, July 03, 2008

Jamie pulled a plastic artifact out of the cabinet today that had an awful odor. He explained that the plastic was from the 1950s and was degrading horribly. The odor meant that it was off-gassing and shouldn't be stored with the other artifacts because it could cause them damage. The artifact will find a new home in a box by itself. Nothing can really be done about its degrading, though. Apparently plastics and how they degrade is something that not much is known about yet. Jamie said that there are Barbies and other figurines from the 1950s that are called “sweating dolls” because liquid forms and drips as they degrade. New materials pose new challenges to museum professionals. There really isn’t any precedent to go by in how to care for certain artifacts. Apparently newer plastics appear to be better, but we still don’t know and there are still the older ones to deal with. This reminded me of an issue from the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library when the audiovisual archivist told us that CDs and DVDs aren’t archival because it’s not known how long they will last. There is no way of knowing how long some things will last or necessarily how to best preserve them. These are things that the current and future generations of professionals will have to tackle. For now we have to do what we can: simply remove artifacts that can cause harm to others and put them into a sort of solitary confinement. After that we have to wait for research to be done on how best to preserve the piece.

Tuesday, July 08, 2008

A new intern started last week and I’ve been spending time helping him to learn the ropes. It really interested me how excited he would get over pieces that I’d already done data entry for and didn’t think much of. Most of these were sports items, mainly golf and football.
The new intern, David, is a big sports fan and will start telling me all about these different people associated with these artifacts and why they're important. Eric has done the same thing, but with political figures and public policy. Neither of those things interests me as much as the personal stories behind the pieces and what they meant to the Fords. My interest is more in the family and the personality of the President. We all have different perspectives that get us excited and bring different things to the museum. It is good for David to do descriptions on sports items because he knows who the people are in pictures and can identify them. The same is true for Eric and political or policy oriented items. I can give a better description of something having to do with the First Lady or the family, however, because that is what interests me. So I guess what I learned is how the interests of the people working at museums can affect the institution and that it's important to have people with different interests to create a well rounded and complete institution. If you only had people interested in one area, the others might get ignored and each area is important in its own way.

Wednesday, July 09, 2008

In a lot of the files that I've gone through it seems like people have given items expecting them to be placed on exhibit. Some people ask to be told when the item will be on exhibit and many talk about coming to see it when it's on exhibit. The truth is that most things will never be exhibited. It is really amazing how many more items are in collection storage than are on display. The percentage that I usually hear is one to five percent of the collection is on display at one time. My dad once referred to collections storage as the "extra stuff," which I had to correct him. It's not the extra stuff, it is the collection. Not everything can be displayed, it's not possible. For that reason it is best not to accept donations with strings attached. The donor file
stipulates that the item may never be displayed and the donor has to agree with this. Having strings attached can just lead to problems down the road. Jamie explained that it’s easier for our museum to follow that rule than it is for art museums. I learned that if somebody wants to donate a ten million dollar painting they don’t want that tax deduction in just one year, so they work it out with the museum (and lawyers) to have the painting on display for part of the year and the donor will get so much in tax deduction for that year. For example, if an item is worth ten million dollars and is displayed over ten years, the donor will get a million dollar tax deduction every year for ten years. After those ten years the museum owns the painting. It seems complicated and like it would be a pain, but the museum does get a valuable addition to the collection. So there are exceptions to the “no strings attached” rule (as there always is an exception to the rule), but in general it seems easier to stick to the rule. If somebody wants to give you something but says that it has to be displayed, then it should be thought about very seriously before accepting that donation.

**Thursday, July 10, 2008**

We went upstairs to help set up some of the artifacts in the gallery that’s being redone. It’s amazing how far they’ve come since I last saw it (which was just a couple of days ago). They have four plasma television screens that play slide shows of the funeral and eight buttons to push to hear different eulogies. The old videos are still there, too, but instead of being on two different television screens they play on one and the visitor gets to choose which one to watch. Allowing the visitor choices is a way to be more “interactive” and more effectively engage the visitor. The push in museums now seems to be going towards being interactive. I do think that interactive exhibits are a good idea because then the visitor isn’t just walking through, they have
to engage with the exhibit. These aren’t truly interactive, but it’s an effort. The pictures on the plasmas are also incredibly crisp, which makes the entire gallery seem updated. The screens were already catching the attention of visitors who walked by; many even stopped to watch for awhile. The artifacts are lit by fiber optics, which I learned is the way to go with lighting. The power source for the light isn’t in the case, reducing the heat where the artifact is situated. You can also direct the light where you want it instead of just flooding the entire case with light. It looks really nice, too. It really makes the objects stand out and it’s better for them because they don’t have as much exposure to light. The gallery is going to look really great, which has started Don and Jamie thinking that the rest of the core exhibit is going to look shabby by comparison now. There are always more updates to be made.

Friday, July 11, 2008

We got a shipment today containing two French lithographs. A couple of weeks ago Jamie got a call from the State Department saying that they had found two French lithographs presented by French President Giscard d’Estaing to Ford during his presidency, which would make it a head of state gift. The question was, is this something that should be at the museum? The answer was, most likely. Jamie checked the records and found that there was a gift unit card for the items, meaning that they should have come to the museum after Ford’s presidency, but a note on the card indicated that they had been lost. I’m not really sure how a head of state gift gets misplaced for thirty years, but that’s what happened. Luckily the items were found, though, and we now have them. It just goes to show that you never know what will happen. Sometimes items that have been lost for thirty years will just show up. I accessioned them today and they are now part of the collection. Unfortunately, both prints show the damage that can be caused by
decades of poor storage. Better management earlier on, even before they came to the museum, could have prevented this damage, but it was out of the museum professionals’ hands.

Sunday, July 13, 2008

There was a special event tonight. Tomorrow is Gerald Ford’s birthday, so tonight we had presidential historian Richard Norton Smith (who was amazing) as a speaker, which officially opened the new tribute gallery. Right up until it was time for the talk work was going on in the exhibit. There were tests to make sure that the sound was right and that everything looked okay. Don and Bettina were also talking about what else could have been done, but both agreed that it was good. I thought that it looked great, but understand that after working on something for a year you really want it to look superb and are aware of what compromises had to be made. For example, one image was supposed to be life size but couldn’t be because of the resolution, but if this wouldn’t have been pointed out I wouldn’t have known it was changed. It was still large and looked like that was how it was meant to be. Once the talk was over people were allowed to go and walk around. The director told Bettina she should be up there basking in the glory, but I think at that point Bettina just wanted to go home. The staff seemed exhausted after putting everything all together and knew that it was going to be busy again tomorrow. I was surprised when Kristin said that she had been there for fourteen hours. I wasn’t aware of what long hours are sometimes required of museum professionals. I think the mark of a good professional might be that the public isn’t aware of this. Going through the exhibit I’m sure that most visitors won’t think about how much time went into it because they would be focused the content.
Monday, July 14, 2008

For the last few weeks Jamie has been saying that we need to clean collections before program review, but different things kept coming up. It seems like there is always something that keeps you away from what you were planning to do. Last week it was the exhibit and today it was the wreath laying and activities surrounding that event. But this afternoon I spent two and a half hours cleaning the collections storage, so it’s done. I really just focused on the floors, so at first I was surprised that it took so long. It makes sense, though, because it’s a large space and it’s difficult to maneuver because you have shelves, cabinets, and various other obstacles. It is amazing the difference it makes to collections to have the floors all nice and clean. It just looks so much better. It would be nice if it could always look that way, but that’s just not feasible. It took us a long time to find the time to do this and it was helped along by the fact that program review is tomorrow. There are always other day-to-day jobs that prevent such jobs as cleaning from happening more regularly. Plus it takes a big chunk out of the day when other things could be getting done.

Tuesday, July 15, 2008

I wasn’t even involved in most of today’s events, but it was still exhausting. People from National Archives came to check out the museum and make sure that we were following policy. Jim and Elaine took them around and showed them the museum and brought them into collections. One of the representatives then spent hours talking to Jamie and Don about how everything works. It seems like a lot of oversight. However, last year a similar audit caught a few sites in horrible shape. Perhaps some oversight is good to make sure that sites maintain basic standards, but at the same time too much oversight is constraining. I don’t know how
everybody had the stamina to answer questions for four hours and there is still more to go
tomorrow. Jamie seems to think that they will want us to keep even more records. They already
seemed impressed with our files, but Jamie said that they always want to see more. The federal
government does seem to enjoy paperwork and bureaucracy. That's just something you have to
learn to deal with in the federal system. You just have to try to find a way to still do your job
and not drown in it all.

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Storage space is obviously important in collections, but I never really realized how much
thought went into it. Jamie discovered that he had some money to spend, so he was measuring
back in collections. Interestingly, he's not sure where the money came from, but it's some sort of
appropriations thing. The federal system really is something. He went over some of the
different storage options with me. One was to get new textile storage cabinets for the back
corner because we’re maxed out on space for textiles. Another was to replace a row of old
cabinets with new ones. The new cabinets are bigger, which would take away from the cart path
on the side aisle, but there would still be room in the middle. Then, with the cabinets there are
different options with shelves and drawers. Drawers apparently are a good option for saving
space if it’s possible for objects to fit in them. The art racks could also be reorganized to fit
more in, since those are all filling up. All of these options are costly. I was shocked to learn
how expensive the art racks were and asked how smaller sites dealt with that. Jamie told me that
he made some himself once that were obviously not as nice, but they did the job. Each of these
new storage options would also take a lot of work moving and reorganizing objects. He
explained that he has to consider what we need in the way of storage for the collection now as
well as what will be needed in the coming years. Thinking about the future is difficult because there really isn’t a way to know what will come into the collection at a later point. At the same time it is important to consider what you will need space for when expanding or reorganizing. For example, when we organized the map cases we left two empty drawers for memorial items in anticipation of receiving more Gerald Ford and Betty Ford items. Some things can be anticipated while others are just educated guesses.

Thursday, July 17, 2008

When I started this internship I was under the general impression that collections and archives were pretty much the same, one with 2-D and the other with 3-D materials. I was thinking about what it will be like to be back in the archives in a few weeks and it hit me how very different they really are. The thinking is definitely different. The archivist looks for the information in artifacts and separates materials to aid research, whereas the registrar/curator looks for how it was used, wanting to keep the artifact as it originally was. For example, an archivist would take photographs out of frames, whereas a curator would want to keep the photographs in the frames if possible. The difference that really hit me, though, was how incoming materials are handled. In the archives the system for numbering and organizing is more complicated. In my experience boxes of papers come in and get a manuscript number or a record group number. I still don’t fully understand the record groups. From there they are organized into series, etc. It seems to take forever to get a new collection in order. When museum items come in the grouping gets an accession number, then each item gets its own number within that. It doesn’t matter if they stay together or not as long as you know where they are. You enter some quick data on each piece and they can be in the cabinet by the end of the
day. Museum accessioning seems much simpler. The materials dealt with in each area are also vastly different. Jamie once said that the library has the information, but we have the fun stuff. Both are essential, but it is important to remember that they are different and that they shouldn’t be approached in the same way. I think it’s hard to switch from one mindset to the other sometimes.

Friday, July 18, 2008

This morning we began with unpacking two incoming loans for the baseball exhibit. Jamie explained that he takes a picture of each step of the process so that he remembers how everything was packed when it comes time to ship everything back. Apparently the Hoover Museum actually videotapes the process. Each item is also photographed. Condition reports are done when items are received and when they are returned, and copies of those are sent to the owner. The condition reports show what wear and damage existed when the objects arrived and when they departed. The goal is to have no change to report. Later Don told a story that I related back to this. He said that once they received a painting that was poorly wrapped and it arrived with the frame in pieces. He took pictures and called the site that sent it right away. Because it was recorded that he received it that way and that its damage was due to poor packaging, he and his museum weren’t held accountable. Apparently many of the steps that are taken with incoming loans come more from the museum’s own standards and not the NARA’s. Jamie says that having these sorts of practices shows others that you are serious about the loan and enables the museum to get items from pretty much anywhere. Incoming loans are to be treated as if they are head of state gifts (the highest priority items) because they don’t belong to us. I was told several shipping nightmare stories today that taught me that you really do have to
be careful. When receiving loaned items make sure they all arrived safely and when sending things be careful what carrier you use (apparently UPS ground is bad) and make sure that everything is packed securely. I’ve seen Jamie pack things before and his rule of thumb is to pack it so that it can survive being thrown around because it probably will be.

Monday, July 21, 2008

I pulled an item off the art rack today to do data entry on and immediately recognized it as being a painting of the Indiana University Hoosiers playing basketball. The red jerseys with “Indiana” on them were a dead give away. I went to get the file and it had a White House Gift Unit card and an accession work sheet. Both said that it was the 1976 NCAA champs from Indiana State University and it was given by the governor of Indiana, whose mansion is in Evansville, Indiana. I knew that both of those things were incorrect, but that’s what was listed on both papers. I checked online just to make sure that Indiana University had won the championship that year, and they had. It became obvious that it was wrong on the White House Gift Unit card and that the registrar just had copied down what it said. The fact that they evidently had the capital of Indiana in the wrong place wasn’t really important for the computer entry, but since I knew which team was actually playing I could correct this when entering the data. This brought to mind the importance of fact checking. You cannot just take what you read at face value, but you have to do a little research to make sure that it’s correct. Just as in academic history, it is important to know what sources are credible and to make sure that information is accurate.

Tuesday, July 22, 2008
The IO database has been acting up the past few days. It’s really more of an annoyance right now. It will freeze up so then you have to shut it down, open it up again, and hope that everything got saved. It’s still working, but it made me think once again about how much we rely on this database. There still are the hard copy files, but many of them are not as complete as the computer files. Perhaps once we have all of the data entered for all of the artifacts it would be a good idea to print off every entry for files since this hasn’t been done thus far. I’m sure that there are back-ups and that the IT staff could find a way to retrieve data, but it’s always scary to think about the system just not working. As easy as computers are to use and access information on, they are not always reliable. Programs do fail, so backing up things is always a good idea. Also, saving early and often has prevented me from having to redo work on several occasions.

**Wednesday, July 23, 2008**

“We’re making this up as we go,” Jamie told me today. There are still stacks of memorial items, condolences, and newspapers from Gerald Ford’s death over a year and a half ago. The problem is that there isn’t really any precedent on what to do with these items. Most museums don’t have the issue of their subject dying while they are open. Reagan died not too long before Ford, so that library is in the same situation. Apparently they have bigger problems to worry about, though, because they have a much larger collection. The last president to die before Ford and Reagan was Nixon and at the time his museum was privately owned. Prior to that, the last president to die was Johnson back in 1973. So, it really is up to the staff at the museum to figure out what to do with these items. The question is: should they be accessioned, simply stored at the museum or library, or sent to the family? Sometimes there really isn’t a clear-cut rule and it is simply up to discretion of the institution. What is decided is important,
Thursday, July 24, 2008

Polishing artifacts is rewarding. This is a new skill for me because up until now I’ve dealt with mostly preservation and not restoration. Today Jamie was removing an old number on an artifact because it was incorrect. Also, the number was written in ink over a white background, a practice that we don’t use anymore. I commented on how there was a difference from where the number was and the rest of the surface. The artifact was spotted black but where the number was there was a bit of shine. Jamie decided that it could use a good cleaning so he showed me how to polish metal artifacts. I put some gloves on and used special museum quality cloth and polisher. My gloves were filthy by the end and had to be thrown away. I really like the feeling of making something look new again. Before I polished the artifact it was practically black, but when I was done the gold plating shined. A problem I encountered, however, was that each time an item is polished some of the surface plating is removed. Therefore, items cannot be polished all the time and the right process should be used. Jamie warned me against using polishers you see advertised on television because it takes close to ten layers off instead of just one. I do enjoy the process of using a little bit of elbow grease and restoring objects to their former glory.

Friday, July 25, 2008

There were Secretaries of State in Grand Rapids today for a convention and they wanted to tour the museum and collections. While they were in collections storage Jamie told them that
it's actually beneficial to keep your collection small. This is something that I hadn't really thought about before. Having a small collections means that more care and attention can be given to the artifacts. It also makes storage easier and prevents you from running out of space as rapidly. This isn’t to say that collections shouldn’t expand, because they should. Just like the museum, the collection cannot remain stagnant and is always changing. The key to keeping it manageable seems to be always keeping your scope of collections in mind. The scope of the collection for the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum is anything having to do with the life and times of Gerald R. Ford, his presidency and family, as well as the presidency in general. If items do not fall into those categories then they should not be accepted. Museums can also limit their collection by not accepting too many similar items. I’ve heard Jamie turn down the August 8th and 9th issues of the 1974 Grand Rapids Press numerous times because “Those are already well represented in our collection,” meaning we already have too many. Collections staff not only has to maintain the collection, but they also have to make sure that the collection remains manageable.

Monday, July 28, 2008

The exhibit process really fascinates me. Today we began exhibit rotation in the temporary gallery. You could tell that Jamie and Bettina had done this numerous times because they had a process. I went around with the special security screwdrivers and took out security screws on the cases. I never knew that these existed before, but they have two little points that fit into two little holes on the screw. While I was doing that Bettina was taking down the props and Jamie and David were taking exhibit cases off their mounts to remove artifacts. All of the artifacts were down before lunch and put back in their locations, with a location change done in
the database before the end of the day. There are two weeks blocked out for the whole process. Today was a big day for collections because we had to get all of the artifacts before stuff could be moved around. Tomorrow and Wednesday will consist of Bettina and the maintenance staff moving the walls and cases. Then the new the artifacts will come in from the Bush Library, where the exhibit was, and we will unpack and do condition reports. After that the new artifacts can go up--another big day for collections. It is important that each step is planned out so that people aren’t tripping over each other and so that things aren’t rushed. It seems to be better to plan for it taking a little bit of extra time instead of being down to the wire and getting sloppy.

**Tuesday, July 29, 2008**

The lesson learned by all today was to not work with another museum on an exhibit. It can actually work out well if done correctly, but horribly if not. The statement was edited by the museum staff to say, “Not with a museum with a new curator and registrar,” and “Next time we’ll get the exhibit first.” Apparently there has been some mix up over which artifacts are coming in the shipment tomorrow from the Bush Library and we might not have artifacts for all of the players. Normally the museum would have a list and they don’t seem happy about not having a definitive idea. A bigger problem is that a big lender pulled all of his stuff after he didn’t feel like he received a warm enough reception at the Bush Library. An important lesson there would be that some people expect special treatment and it can be beneficial to give it to those who could take their loaned items back. Some people have to be wined and dined. It was also not considered that the Bush Library does exhibits differently because they have different space; therefore, a lot of things had to be changed in order for the Ford Museum to take the exhibit and many of these changes have cost quite a bit. There seemed to be a lot of stress today,
especially on Bettina’s end. Jim and Jamie both said that this is what she is paid for and it’s why she’s so good at her job. If the exhibit specialist didn’t care then there would be a huge problem. It seems like something is always going to go wrong and it takes someone who is conscientious to fix those things. The exhibit will be fine and everybody has learned valuable lessons.

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Jamie gave me an article to read today titled “Why Historians Should Write Books Ordinary People Want to Read” which was originally posted on the History News Network <www.hnn.us>. The article touched on the fact that academic historians have the tendency to look down upon those “popularizers” who write for the general public. The author, IU graduate student Jeremy Cameron Young, argues that this is a detriment to the field and that historians should not be discouraged from interacting with the public. This point was reminiscent of learning in History 240 how oftentimes academic historians look down upon those practicing public history. I brought this up to Jamie who agreed that it’s out there. He added that there are some academics who are great, but others will look at your work and say that you are just playing history. Jamie reasoned that this doesn’t make sense because we are the ones caring for the artifacts. Later, Jamie had a letter complaining that our exhibits weren’t “kid-friendly” enough. He pointed out to me that if they made it more kid-friendly then academic historians would attack the museum for not being “presidential” enough.

Presidential museums are also often attacked for being too sympathetic towards their presidents. From an academic stand-point I can understand this concern, but after working at a that Ford Museum I also understand the attachment to one’s subject that grows. There are also additional factors involved for the public historian. For example, Caroline Kennedy is a big
benefactor of the John F. Kennedy Foundation. She would not appreciate seeing her father portrayed as a flagrant womanizer who had limited political experience. Therefore, the museum will avoid that representation in exhibits. The people who work there would also probably have too much respect for Kennedy as a person from decades of caring for his artifacts and through knowing his family. I believe that academic and public historians face different concerns. However, I believe that both can learn a lot from the other and that communication should be open. I will also have to accept that some academic historians may look down upon my work, but I will just have to continue doing my best work and grow a thick skin.

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Today my work consisted of condition reporting. It is amazing how in depth each report can become. What’s important is to know terms such as “accretion,” “embrittlement,” and “discoloration” in order to correctly describe items. There are also different terms for different items. I’ve found that it gets easier when you’ve seen a number of similar items because you learn where to look for damage. After several baseballs I could more quickly tell the level of discoloration and knew to look at the lettering for wear and the signature for smudging. You learn the different parts of each item, too. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the terms for the components of gloves or caps (but if I do I know I can look in a visual glossary). Eventually you can look at an object and think in “condition reporting language.” I believe that this is true of many museum tasks. They may seem overwhelming at first because there is a lot to remember, but eventually it becomes second nature. Like any task it just takes practice and experience.

Friday, August 01, 2008
The Bush Library had items from the Baseball Hall of Fame from their exhibit that they sent to us for ours. The Ford Museum will then send the artifacts back to the Baseball Hall of Fame. While doing condition reporting we discovered that one of these objects, a small plastic statue of a player from the women’s league, was badly damaged. The damage actually made the statue structurally unsound. Jamie hoped that this didn’t happen in shipping because that would reflect poorly upon the Presidential Library system. Reputation is very important. You want your museum to be known for quality and care. If a site like the Baseball Hall of Fame knows an institution has damaged their artifacts before they are a lot less likely to lend to them again. If you want to be able to borrow then lenders have to know that your site is trustworthy and safe. I went through and carefully noted the placement of all of the cracks and their shapes. I actually found additional cracking that further proved its instability. This report had to be very thorough to show what condition we received it in. Hopefully, it was this way before the Bush Library received it, but if it was, then it probably should not have been shipped. Jamie expressed that it should not have been loaned out in its condition. Damaged objects obviously require special care and attention.

Monday, August 04, 2008

One of the things I worked on today was making mounts for hats going on exhibit. This involved using a tool new to me, a “hot knife.” There really are a lot of tools available that make museum tasks easier. Making mounts involves a lot of creativity and improvisation. The way Jamie showed us to make these mounts was to cut the Styrofoam to size, cover it with cotton matting, and wrap it in Tyvec (flash spun high-density polyethylene fibers). A line is cut around the base of the Styrofoam to secure the Tyvec. It takes several tries to get the Styrofoam to the
correct size, but you just have to keep at it. At the same time Jamie and Don were making mounts for baseball bats and various other artifacts. As Don was using heat to shrink some shrink wrap for a mount and I was using the hot knife I commented that there was a lot of burning involved in collections today. He said, “Yes, we have the fun here.” There is quite a bit of working with your hands involved in collections. There are also always new objects to encounter, calling for inventiveness when deciding how to best handle, preserve, and display them.

**Tuesday, August 05, 2008**

Mistakes happen when typing and museums are not immune to this. There were mistakes on a couple of the object labels for the artifacts going in the exhibit. These mistakes were as simple as “Carlton’s Phillies Jersey” when the artifact we had was his Giant jersey (apparently he played for the Giants only one season). Since it is still early these can be fixed. There are also other mistakes in the main exhibit. These are usually minor, but visitors will point them out. I guess it’s just not worth it to fix these if the rest of the information is okay and the mistake is minor. Some information is also antiquated. For example, one label makes reference to Ford still being active. That one in particular is currently too expensive and difficult to fix. I think it’s helpful to be aware of where the errors are, though, so that it isn’t a surprise when a visitor points one out. Visitors seem to like to find errors. My mom even tried to find one. There’s a space shuttle in Ford’s oval office that she thought wouldn’t have existed yet, but the text answered that by saying that it is a prototype that was given to Ford. I think people get a thrill from finding the museum in error, but the people who make the labels are only human. They just have to do their best to get it right and fix what they can.
Wednesday, August 06, 2008

There are five framed World Series pieces for this one area of the exhibit where about three could fit. One of them was supposed to go in the front above the Yankees Stadium seats, but which one had not been designated. Jamie thought it would be good if the one with the seats was a Yankee piece, but none of the ones we had upstairs displayed the Yankees. I remembered that one frame that was left downstairs was a Yankee piece, so I took one of the Cardinal ones (there was a 1934 and 1968 one) back to collections to trade. On the way down Jim asked me what I was doing. I explained it to him and he thought that it was fine to put the Yankee piece up, but he felt that the 1968 Cardinal piece, which was the one I was returning, should remain instead of the 1934 one. My thought was that they were basically the same and the 1934 would be better because it was older. But the way that Jim was thinking, which made sense, was that the majority of visitors would remember the 1968 World Series and be more interested in that. So, both pieces went back upstairs. The 1934 Cardinals still ended up being displayed, though. But Jim’s reasoning demonstrated to me how important it is to keep the visitor in mind when designing and choosing artifacts for an exhibit. The 1968 piece would trigger more of an emotional response in people than the 1934 one would.

Thursday, August 07, 2008

With everything up in the exhibit, today was devoted to lighting. From about eight until two o’clock that is what we worked on. I knew that lighting was important, but not so time consuming. The temporary exhibit features theater lighting with removable light heads on tracks. Each “zone” can have the light intensity increased or decreased depending on the need. Light heads are put up where they are needed and adjusted. Artifacts need less light intensity,
although there also cannot be too much contrast between the labels and the artifacts because
people’s eyes don’t adjust well to that. After the lights were on the artifacts a meter was used to
read how many foot-candles were on each. Some lenders will request only certain levels. Since
these lenders did not it was up to our discretion. The magic number for most was eight to ten,
with fewer for Lou Gehrig’s hat and Babe Ruth’s artifacts. With each light adjustment we also
had to check that we could read everything and that there wasn’t any glare or shadows. It was
also an issue that a change in one could effect previous changes, so that had to be checked. The
process seemed time consuming, however not difficult for Don who had had experience with this
before. Light is very significant to an exhibit, even though is an aspect that I have taken for
granted before now.

Friday, August 08, 2008

It was a lazy day for the museum staff after the opening of the baseball exhibit last night.
Everyone seemed worn out and in need of a break. At around ten o’clock Jamie and I went up to
add a key for the signed baseballs so the visitors could decipher the names. We also hung up
“No Flash Photography” signs, although Jamie admitted that some people will ignore them. The
exhibit was full and people seemed to be enjoying it. The response was really good last night as
well. After Jeff Idelson spoke guests could eat refreshments or go up to view the gallery.
Normally when confronted with this decision people eat first, nevertheless several went straight
for the exhibit. Jamie said that many were talking about telling their friends and family. It is
really rewarding to see the final product of your work and to have it well received. I did minimal
work considering this has been a two-year process, but I felt involved. Between taking down the
last exhibit, condition reporting, and putting this exhibit up the whole thing has taken up two full
weeks. Today was catch-up in collections as Jamie finally had time to get back to the pile on his
desk. Starting on Monday it will be back to our normal collections activities. Exhibits are fun,
although I think that it’s definitely good to have breaks in between. They are too exhausting to
do all the time.

Monday, August 11, 2008

Jamie went up and looked around the galleries today to see how everything was going. While up there, Chrissy, one of the security guards, pointed out that there was a penny in the case with Babe Ruth’s artifacts in the temporary exhibit. It’s a floor case that has small cracks at the corners and somebody decided that it would be fun to slip a coin in there. Jamie lifted the case up and Chrissy was able to pull the penny out. Then I went up with him because he noticed that a piece of foam that was covering one of the lights in the case for the Profiles in Courage Award had fallen and was in the case. My job was to make sure that everything remained okay in the case once the piece was pulled out. It was more of an aesthetic reason that it was covering the light in the first place. Apparently they wanted the lantern-like award to only be lighted from the inside, but since the covering failed it was just removed. In the future they can take the extra lights out completely, but for now it will just have to have all of the lights. It is important to do a walk through every once in awhile to check on the artifacts in the exhibits and the exhibits themselves. Little things happen that can distract the visitor from the purpose of the museum and if they can be fixed then they should be. Plus it just looks nicer when everything is in order.

Tuesday, August 12, 2008
Today I was doing data entry on a framed print. Half of the glass from the frame was broken off, though. This had been noted as far back as the White House Gift Unit card over thirty years ago. When the item had been accessioned it was noted that the broken pieces had been removed, but half of the glass was still there. This remaining glass was pushing down the print, which worried me about damage to the print. It had also become loose and was beginning to slide. Jamie wasn’t around so I continued entering data on the piece until he returned. In the condition report I noted the glass and what it was doing. I also added that the printed itself was in good condition. Because of the glass and frame the entire piece had to be rated fair at the best. When Jamie returned he decided to remove the print from the frame. This was the decision that I would have made as well. The glass was dangerous to people handling the piece and the print. The print was the important element, not the frame. However, I have seen other pieces with cracked glass or broken frames. It appears to be somewhat subjective on how much damage calls for action. It seems like generally pieces are left as they are unless they create a risk. So, the print was removed and much of the information had to be changed. It had new measurements, an altered description, a new condition report, and a new location. I also noted in the condition report that it had been framed, although the frame had been removed by the registrar, and then I dated it. That way staff looking for the print in the future and thinking that it was framed will realize that they have the correct despite but it’s having been altered.

**Wednesday, August 13, 2008**

I understood that this internship would be a great chance to make professional contacts and network, but I had mainly thought of the staff at the museum. Today it hit me that I have also created contacts in the two other interns, Eric and David. This occurred to me as David and
I were talking about our future plans. These are both people who are interested in similar things and are both entering graduate school and the museum field at the same time as me. We will most likely run into similar situations and be able to help each other, similar to Rachel Fulton and me sharing posts online this summer. It is also just nice to know someone else who is in the same boat as you. We can keep and touch and, eventually when we have jobs in the future, I will know people in the history field who are on about the same level as me. It is good to have older, advisor-type contacts, but it will also be beneficial to know peers who understand what you are going through because they are going through it, too.

Thursday, August 14, 2008

As I was doing data entry on some political cartoons today, I began to think of the historical value of these artifacts. Not only do they give information about events that happened, such as Ford choosing a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, but also a sense of how the general public might have felt about that. One cartoon depicted then President Richard Nixon and Arthur Burns, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, drowning in papers that said “economy” on them. A secretary was at the door saying, “A Mr. Howard Hughes is here to see you.” Without knowing any prior information you can look at this cartoon and see that there were economic problems in the country during that time and that people were discouraged by that. Then knowing through donations that Howard Hughes was involved in a scandal connected with Nixon’s elections and Watergate adds another element to the cartoon. His presence in the cartoon in 1970 was a foreshadowing of events to come. I’m continuously amazed how much research and educational potential are to be found in artifacts.
Friday, August 15, 2008

I had lunch with Don today and he told me about the trip that he and Jim just took to Chicago. They went to the Chicago Historical Society Museum, the Cantigny First Division Museum, and the Field Museum, three museums that have recently or are currently renovating exhibits. This is because by 2013 the Gerald R. Ford Museum would like to have new core exhibits. The year 2013 has been chosen as the target date because it will be Gerald R. Ford’s 100th birthday. It has been over ten years since the last installment, so Jim and Don needed an update on what has changed so that they can be prepared. Not only was it a good trip because they could see what these other museums were doing, but they could also figure out pricing. Apparently the Ford Foundation believes that it will cost five million dollars and that’s what they are prepared to raise. However, the cost looks like it will be more from eight to twelve million, so that is what Jim and Don will have to take back to them. They will also be more prepared to talk intelligently and know what they want when they begin having planning meetings with exhibit firms in October. It is a great idea to go out and see what other museums are doing. Don made the point that visiting museums is different once you’re in the field and that you don’t really just do it for fun anymore. At first this seemed sad to me, but I understood. After doing a few museum evaluations for History 240 and Anthropology 377 and now working in a museum, I tend to judge the exhibits and the set up more rather than just viewing the content. I still enjoy museums, but it’s already becoming a different experience. I already feel like I pick up more on what they are trying to do and how they are doing it than I used to.

Monday, August 18, 2008
I looked through the inventory for Ford’s post-presidential office at Rancho Mirage today. It was quite the thick binder which included pictures of each area and descriptions of each item. Don said that it took two days to do the inventory and then several more putting in all together and checking it for accuracy. The reason for this inventory is that there is an idea to have another Oval Office type exhibit with this office when the core gallery is redone. Don also likes the idea of having an Air Force One exhibit that people can walk into and sit down. He explained that with the Air Force One you could talk about oversees trips, diplomacy, and campaigning, or it could be used as a classroom. Don called this type of exhibit an environmental exhibit. At the First Division Museum in Chicago they utilized these. For WWI the exhibit was a trench with periscopes to look through and watch videos and artifacts fit in within the exhibit, as well as similar things for each war. This sounds like a fun approach. Bettina also believes that this contributes less to museum fatigue because it feels more like you are playing rather than learning. The museum can’t teach everything; the most it can do is give a framework and spark an interest. I think this might be better done for many people if they are having fun and are within the exhibit instead of simply viewing it. It is different to read about Ford’s post-presidency and see pictures than it is to see his office with his wide array of books and his desk filled with knick-knacks and family photos and then hear about what he did. Each piece would have its own story. There is plenty of criticism for environmental exhibits, but I believe if done right they can be great tools. They do take a lot of work, research, space, and money, though.

Tuesday, August 19, 2008
I saw yet another one of Jamie’s “toys” today. This one was similar to a staple gun that was loaded with flex points to hold a canvas in a frame. I watched as he reframed an item with ease and wondered how he discovers these tools. Then I realized that this is yet another great outcome of networking. By knowing what people at other sites have you can know what is available and what would work well at your site. I also remembered Jamie flipping through a catalogue a few weeks ago. Just glancing at what is out there in catalogues and seeing prices helps to weigh what your museum could use and what it can afford. It also comes with experience and working with different things over the years. Like so many other museum things that I have learned this summer, it takes networking, research, and experience.

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

Today was my last day. After everything that I’ve learned this semester I feel a lot more at ease in the museum setting. The first thing I did today was make a new accession file for an object and adhere a number, something that I was nervous about when I first had to do it. I think that the biggest thing that I’ve learned about public history this summer is how important internships are. This internship has not only helped me to learn skills and become more confident in them, but I am now part of the “Ford Family” and have those contacts to use in the future. Both Jamie and Don told me before I left to be sure to use them as references, keep them updated, and stop back in. I think that internships are great experiences and provide many opportunities, at least mine did. I believe that it will play an integral part in my future plans. I’ll miss the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, but I will keep in contact and I am now more prepared for a public career.
The Midpoint of My Public History Internship

So far throughout this semester I have performed various assorted tasks as part of my internship at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. My internship has been centered in the collections of the museum and I work under the supervision the registrar, Jamie Draper. The tasks performed by interns each semester are important to the institution and are a key component in keeping the collection organized and well maintained. Although many of the tasks are small, each is important as they add up when working with over 16,000 artifacts. An internship is best when both the institution and the student benefits. I am benefiting the museum by performing the jobs described below and I am benefiting greatly from the experience which I have received.

The jobs that I have done span a wide range of areas. I have performed conservation work by making protective covers for books and moving them to a new location. I’ve also learned how to encapsulate items from the map cases, which is a project that will continue. Additionally, I have accessioned items and affixed tags to them, which I’m sure I’ll do more of. Another task that I have taken on is to do full record data entry. The exciting thing about data entry is the range of items I have worked with, from plaques and certificates to artwork to textiles. The data entry consists of entering relevant information about items including object names, descriptions, measurements, credit, and location, as well as other information. Currently the big data entry project for the rest of the semester will be the art racks, which will give me valuable knowledge in regard to working with art pieces, as well as other pieces that are on those
racks. Finally, I have begun to assist in taking down an exhibit and there will be another one to take down and put up later this semester. All of these are typical museum tasks and provide me with skills that professional curators must possess.

My large project consisted of sorting through the map case drawers and placing items into categories. These categories were then organized back into the drawers (mostly with categories in alphabetical order) with blank drawers in between for expansion. The items are already back in place and have had their locations changed in the database. The drawers now have nice little labels so that you know that “m1d2” has artwork while “m1d7” contains awards. This system will make it easier to locate items and gives a sense of order to the map cases. This project is finished for the most part and the only thing left might be to go back and update the common names that we changed as we pulled items from the drawers. This project made me greatly appreciate organization and the benefit of having things in the right place.

Throughout the semester Jamie has given me a lot of advice regarding graduate school and museum work. I am now aware of some more of my options in public history. It has also become clearer that a Master’s degree is the best option for what I want to do in my career, although I am still questioning what to study. The most important thing that I think I’ve learned is that I will have to start from the bottom at small local history museums and that it is important to stay mobile. I have learned a lot about federal employment and a bit about how that works, as well. What I am learning both from my experiences and from my conversations will benefit me in my future career in either museums or archives.

Many aspects of my coursework have been reinforced through my internship. A general knowledge of museum work and how museums operate that I learned from History 240, Introduction to Public History, has helped me to feel at ease in the museum and to feel more
comfortable doing many of the tasks assigned to me. The career assessment report was beneficial because it has aided me in knowing what questions are important to ask about a career. Moreover, through the field trips and speakers I became more comfortable in asking professionals about their work, which has been useful. From History 320, Laboratory Course in American History, I learned and developed the skills of researching and acquiring knowledge, which are necessary in museum work. Furthermore, I believe that History 320 and History 445, History and Historians, have taught me to value materials besides just books and documents as sources. For example, the dresses that I accessioned earlier this semester could be considered a source for what a First Daughter, or other young women, would have worn in the 1970s, which I did not fully consider before these and some of my other History courses. I therefore looked at those dresses differently and understood the importance of preserving them. Anthropology 377, Topics in Museums, has similarly proven to be an invaluable course as I learned all about how museums generally operate. I therefore came into this internship already knowing things like how to handle objects and the basics of accessioning.

A value that has been reinforced during this internship is the obtaining of knowledge about the subject the museum covers. When I started I found that I knew a lot less about President Ford than I thought I did. I picked up things over time and quickly learned when he held what offices, which is more confusing than it is with other presidents. I still felt like I wanted to know more about the family to better understand the collection, however, so I read Betty Ford’s biography. Now when some event or fact comes up I remember reading about it and it clicks. For example, I kept hearing and seeing things about Vail, Colorado when I first started. Once I read Betty Ford’s biography I learned that it was one of her favorite places and that the family used to go there to ski each Christmas and eventually purchased a place there.
Now whenever Vail items come up I know what they are and what their significance is. Having knowledge about the Fords helps me to understand and value the items in the collection that much more. I gained more respect for the Fords themselves too, which makes caring for the collection that much more rewarding. I believe that this value of wanting to know as much about what I'm working with as possible will carry over to wherever I may be employed in the future. I also sincerely hope that I will be able work with subjects that interest me in the future as well.

So far this internship has been a primarily positive experience. I have taken part in activities and tasks unique to medium-sized, better funded museums, while still learning those tasks important in any museum. Specific to museum skills, I have dealt with a wide range of artifacts and have learned how museums operate, particularly the collections. This I know will benefit me whether I am at a big or small museum. Some of these skills can even translate to archives or employment in other careers. I am continuing to learn what it is to be in a professional environment and have gotten to meet important people. Learning how to interact with professionals on a daily basis and on special occasions are examples of things that will benefit me no matter what career path I choose. Additionally, it has been encouraging to be in such a positive environment where people seem to enjoy being with those around them. I am sure that there are differences between the staff, but in general it has been a more positive environment than others that I have been in, which I have found makes me more productive. I am optimistic that one day I can find another positive work environment in this field.

Although I have met other staff and we have interacted somewhat, I sometimes feel confined to the collections area. I really do not mind as this is the area that I am most interested in, but I do feel like it would be nice to see how things work in other parts of the museum. I also sometimes feel spoiled, which is no fault of the museum. But I know should I choose the
museum path that I will most likely find my first job in a local museum which may not offer all
of the amenities that I have grown accustomed to this summer. I feel like I should be preparing
myself for that by knowing how they operate, too. I have been pretty quiet and do not think that
I have fully come out of my shell yet, so something that I can do is to make sure that I voice my
concerns and needs if I should have any. I need continue to ask questions, as well, which is
something I've been consciously trying to do.

I have really enjoyed my time at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum up to this point
and I am looking forward to the rest of the semester. My internship so far has been both
educational and rewarding and I have gained invaluable experience. I am still not sure if I want
to work at museums or go into archives, but at this point I can safely say that I could be happy
and enjoy working in a museum and perhaps make a career out of it. Even if I decide not to
follow the museum path, or an archival one, the skills I have obtained will benefit me in any
career I choose. I am eager to see what the second half of the semester has to offer and to
perform more of my tasks in collections.
Upon the Conclusion of My Public History Internship

Throughout this summer as an intern at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, I have gained first-hand experience of the day to day activities of a museum. The things that I have learned were through observing and doing, which could not be replicated outside of an internship. I have now handled a diverse collection, accessioned artifacts, done data entry and condition reporting, and participated in exhibit rotation, among other activities. While not every day has been exciting, there seemed to always be something around the corner. I was able to attend museum events and meet prominent individuals. I also experienced what it is like working for the federal government and the perquisites and detriments that come with that. The knowledge that I have gained this summer about museums and collections will be invaluable to a future career in museums or another public history related field.

I accomplished a variety of projects over the course of my internship. The first major task that I saw to completion was the reorganization of the map cases. This took about half of the semester and involved pulling artifacts from their drawers, inventorying, sorting, entering changes into the computer, and re-inventorying. It was rewarding to see this venture to its end and I learned the significance of organization and how important it is to keep track of the movements of the artifacts after a couple were misplaced and had to be located. I also worked with preservation of materials through encapsulation, creating enclosures for books and newspapers, and polishing brass. These activities taught me the importance as well as the difficulties of preserving and restoring artifacts. I got to clean the collections storage, too, which
is an important task in museum collections. Another big job that I had this semester is data entry, which involved making full record catalog entries for artifacts. This encompassed much of my time throughout the semester and has increased my appreciation of having information on artifacts and knowing where they originated. Throughout the semester I have also accessioned and catalogued a few dozen artifacts into the collection. All of these tasks have taught me new skills that will be useful in a museum career.

Additionally, I have received a nice exposure to exhibits. Through working with the new tribute gallery and the rotation of the temporary exhibit I have seen the amount of creativity and improvisation, as well and practice and planning, that is involved in working in a museum. I was able to participate in several steps of developing the temporary exhibit rotation from de-installing the previous exhibit, condition reporting of incoming loans, making mounts, installing the artifacts in the new exhibit, and setting the lighting. Another intern and I were responsible for a case containing baseballs signed by world leaders. This assignment took a lot of thought on how to best organize and display the artifacts, as did all of the cases. Together we worked out a system and it was very rewarding to observe the lender and other visitors react excitedly to our final product. Exhibits are satisfying because you do have that conclusion to all of your work where people actually see what you have created.

A major internal struggle that I have been having throughout this internship has been whether I want to work in archives or museums. Although I have still not completely come to a conclusion, I am leaning towards museum work. If I do work in museums I would be happiest in collections with the artifacts, though. I believe that this semester has given me a good idea of what museum work is like, as well as a great foundation if I decide to pursue that career path. Having the first hand experience of working in a museum and knowing how collections are
typically or should be run will help me in graduate school and in finding a job. Many of these skills can also transfer to archives. I believe that having an understanding of how museums operate and how they are different than archives would be beneficial if I took that path as well. Being in the museum full-time has also reinforced values that can be useful in any career that I may choose, such as responsibility, trust, and sociability. It has been advantageous to be in a working environment as opposed to a classroom as it has made me feel less like a student and more like an adult.

Jamie Draper has been a great supervisor throughout my internship. He has done an effective job at the museum bringing the collection to the level that it is at now and preserving the artifacts in the collection. At the same time he knows how to have fun and keep the work environment enjoyable. He has been good about keeping the interns informed about evening events and when there is food in the break room or cake for somebody’s birthday, too. These small things have made me feel like part of the museum. Jamie has offered numerous pieces of advice on graduate school and working in the real world, making me feel at ease about the direction that I am taking. I know that he will be a good reference in the future, as well as an excellent contact if I should ever have questions once I am out in the public history field.

My internship has additionally served to build upon and highlight my coursework at Ball State University. History 240, Introduction to Public History, gave me an awareness of museum work and what is involved in it. Ideas and concepts from the books and the articles that I read in that class have surfaced during my internship and have helped me to feel more informed in conversations. An example of this would be the knowing that people like history that connects to them, which is why the pop culture 60s/70s exhibit is so popular at the museum. History 320, Laboratory Course in American History, honed my skills as an historian through research using
primary sources. Going through documents and seeing history through them bestowed upon me a greater understanding and appreciation of primary sources which translates well into museum work. In History 445, History and Historians, I worked on a team history project which involved doing research and writing a history of a local organization with three other students. Dr. Abel Alves, the professor of the course, stated that this was good practice for public history careers because public historians often work with others. I did not fully understand this concept until this summer. I worked with two other interns on a couple of projects which required some compromising, but in the end I believe created a better final product. I also encountered how the entire staff of the museum functions as a whole during museums events and exhibit rotations. Each individual has his or her own duties and responsibilities, but everyone comes together to form something bigger. Anthropology 377, Topics in Museums, has also been a good foundation for this internship. I was able to connect things I observed in the museum to what I had learned in that course. One example of this would be visitor orientation, which I discussed in a journal entry. I believe that all of my history courses have enabled and encouraged me to more readily obtain and seek out knowledge and information, which is an asset to the public historian.

The biggest effect that I believe this internship has had on me does not have to do with the museum itself, but with residing in a different state. I have lived my entire life in Indiana, but for the past three months I have been in Michigan learning the ways of the "Michiganders." Although the two states border each other, I have discovered how different they are. There are little things, such as traffic lights and u-turns, which I caught on to quickly. Issues also popped up with geography, history, and different customs as well that would require me to remind my colleagues at the museums and the friends I made that I did not know these things because I was
from Indiana. I would often receive questions about Indiana and how it is different. It was both fun and difficult being the outsider, but I believe that I learned how to adapt to my new surroundings. Grand Rapids is also the largest city that I have lived in, so I was able to learn more about and enjoy "city living." In order to prevent feeling isolated in a place where I did not know anybody, I had to open up and make some new friends, which was not always easy. I did my best to become familiar with Michigan and learned a lot as I went. Adaptability and flexibility are both important in the museum field, as well as many other careers. These were not necessarily attributes that I was expecting to obtain through this internship, but I believe that it has served to strengthen both.

The fact that I was the only full-time intern of the three interns I believe inadvertently put me in a leadership position. In general I prefer to allow others to take the lead. However, since I was always there, I came to know more about what was going on at the museum. When the other interns came in it was often up to me to fill them in on where I was in a project or show them how to perform a new task. Being in such a position is not always comfortable for me, so that was a learning experience. Doing things outside of my comfort zone only helps me grow as a person. Now in future positions I may be more ready to take a leadership role. I also witnessed how it is to interact with coworkers, superiors, visitors, notable figures, lenders, and donors. Each is subtly different, but all require communication skills and understanding.

Watching how coworkers interacted together and with the public throughout my internship and learning how to do the same has proven to be useful. As mentioned in my Midterm Report, this has also been a positive work environment, which was uplifting to see and has given me something to hope for in a future job.
This has been an overall positive experience. I was able to spend three months working in a Presidential Museum with some of the best museum tools and staff. I continuously learned more about the museum field from the employees and their experiences. Everyone was always very helpful and ready to share his or her knowledge. Furthermore, the variety of tasks I was given this summer enabled me to work with some utensils that were new to me, like the encapsulation machine and the hot knife, and learn new skills. Knowing about the basic needs of storage and exhibiting can translate into any museum that I work at. Through inventiveness I could replicate items I have used here that may not be available to me, such as an art rack. This internship has given me the chance to meet some prominent individuals, too, including Richard Norton Smith and Susan Ford Bales. It was at times difficult not to appear star struck and continue doing my job. The most satisfying part of the entire experience has been completing tasks, seeing the final product, and knowing it will be used. For example, I know that the map case organization project will be useful to the staff at the museum for years after I am no longer there. It is a good feeling to know that I have left something behind that improves the museum in some way.

One negative aspect would be a period of tedium. Although there did end up being a variety of tasks, there was a long span of time in which it felt like I was only doing data entry. I now understand that it is important to the institution to have that done. I did have a chance to participate in other activities eventually, but at the time it did begin to wear on me. Sometimes I also felt not as able to do some of the lifting of boxes and various other things throughout the semester. Perhaps I will have to work out more if a museum career is in my future. When it is all put together, though, the good definitely outweighs the bad of this internship.
The Gerald R. Ford Foundation has been generous to provide students with such a great opportunity. The museum itself has been very welcoming. One issue was that this internship program does not usually facilitate full-time undergraduate internships. For this reason I believe that there was some confusion over what should be done with me. I hope that I have served Ball State’s public history program well and set a precedent for future interns from the program to be able to have a similar opportunity at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. In that case, it would be helpful for the museum to have a policy addressing full-time undergraduates. I also think that it would have been nice to be able sit in on a staff meeting or two, although I did overhear some informal meetings. I believe that this would have allowed me to better understand how the museum operates on a larger scale.

As always, I am quiet. By the end of the internship I was less reserved and enjoyed my colleagues more. I wish that I would have gotten to know Eric, the other intern who started at the same time, and my other coworkers better in the beginning. Another thing that I would have done in the beginning was watch the introductory video for guests, which I put off. I believe it might have helped me to understand more about who Gerald Ford was from the start instead of picking things up as I went along. By the time I watched it I already knew everything in it, so it did not do me much good. It would have been easier if my housing had been more stable as well. I was definitely distracted for a couple of weeks during the internship because the girl I was subleasing from was supposed to have a lease at an apartment and did not. If I had it to do over again I think I would go with a different housing option, but there was really no way of knowing and it all worked out.

Overall this has been an excellent experience and I have no regrets taking this internship. It has exceeded any expectations that I had. It has been an amazing chance to gain real museum
experience at a museum with a well earned reputation. Additionally, I have been able to work
with presidential history, which I would consider my area of interest. Over the course of this
semester I have been able to learn more about Gerald R. Ford and the presidency in general than
I ever thought I would. I was able to gain useful skills by performing many different tasks with a
variety of artifacts. Additionally, the people that I have met at the museum will be great contacts
in the future. After completing this internship I now feel more confident about graduate school
and a future career in public history.
This is the miscellaneous stack from the map case organization project, with the newspaper stack in the background.

Me pulling a Theodore Roosevelt piece off the art rack to do data entry.
This is me typing in information on a piece from the art rack.

Here I am polishing a coffee urn that was a gift to Gerald Ford.
Eric and I are wrapping artifacts at the library for transport back to the museum.

Eric and me condition reporting a batting helmet on loan for the baseball exhibit.
I'm looking over the case that I helped put together on the opening night of the show.

This is looking underneath of Pete Rose's baseball cap on display to see the mount that I made for it.
The following are different views of some of the records I updated through data entry or created through accessioning and cataloguing.

**1983.400.2**
**COMMUNICATION ARTIFACTS**
**Revised Nomenclature, 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION ARTIFACTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>DOCUMENTARY ARTIFACTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>POSTER, MOURNING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maker</td>
<td>KURZ AND ALLISON</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Place Made:** Chicago
- **Date Made:** 1881
- **Materials:** Paper, glass, wood, metal
- **Description:** Framed memorial lithograph poster from after President James A. Garfield's death. Features images of Garfield, his wife, and his mother, as well as a portrait of Abraham Lincoln in the background. Housed under glass in black wood frame.
- **Signed/Dated:** 
- **Credit Line:** Gift of John Keeler
- **Legal Status:** PERMANENT COLLECTION
- **Whole/Part:** WHOLE
- **Home Location:** s17
- **Activities:**
  - **Condition:** Fair
  - **New Condition:** Fair
  - **Summary:** Discoloration with age. Water marks along borders, particularly top and bottom. Staining also goes into image on Garfield, his mother, and Lincoln. Tears around edges. Glass is loose from frame.

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**1988.228**
**COMMUNICATION ARTIFACTS**
**Revised Nomenclature, 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION ARTIFACTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>CEREMONIAL ARTIFACTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
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<td>Common Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>PLAQUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Place Made:** GETTYSBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA
- **Date Made:** c. 1976
- **Materials:** Wood, metal
- **Description:** Honorary membership plaque to Betty Ford from the Pelican C&J Club in Gettysburg, South Carolina, addressing the First Lady as "1st Mama." Wooden, shield shaped base with black border edges. Gold colored shield shaped metal plate affixed to front with bicentennial flags on either side.
- **Signed/Dated:** 
- **Credit Line:** Gift of Alfred J. Larson
- **Legal Status:** PERMANENT COLLECTION
- **Whole/Part:** WHOLE
- **Home Location:** s1850 box
- **Activities:**
  - **Condition:** Fair
  - **New Condition:** Fair
  - **Summary:** The plaque is in good condition with some minor wear and tear.
  - **Priority Treat:** 
  - **Treatment:** 
  - **Priority Date:**
  - **Damage:** 
  - **Prepared:**
1987 384
COMMUNICATION ARTIFACTS
Revised Nomenclature, 1988
COMMUNICATION ARTIFACTS
Art
Painting of ORF and others
Object
Painting
Emilio Arias Jr.

- Date Made
- wood, canvas, metal
- Measurements
- Painting portraying President Gerald R. Ford, Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein, Henry Kissinger, and the Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus. Background includes depiction of Ellis Island including huddled masses, Statue of Liberty, a bridge, and the distant skyline of NYC. Housed in carved wooden frame. Gift from an immigrant who asked for assistance in obtaining citizenship.

2008 222 1
PERSONAL ARTIFACTS
Revised Nomenclature, 1988
PERSONAL ARTIFACTS
Clothing
Gown worn by Susan Ford - Analee Festival
Gown

- Materials
textile, metal
- Measurements
- Susan Ford wore this dress as Queen of the Norfolk's International Analee Festival in 1975 or 1976. Off-white, short sleeved gown with high collar worn by Susan Ford during President Gerald R. Ford's administration. Features lace flower design on bodice and lace trim along the neckline, waistline, and hem. Skirt is large and flowing. Zips in back and contains two metal clasps.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Made</th>
<th>2008.248.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>paper, wood, metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Framed lithograph depicting harbor in Martinique. Given to Gerald R. Ford by the French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing during President Ford's visit to Martinique. Mounted with green and off-white matting and housed behind glass in gold colored frame. Features metal plate on front of frame presenting the piece to Ford in French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed/Dated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Acquired</td>
<td>1974-12-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Date</td>
<td>2008-07-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Condition</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Slight surface loss to frame. Discoloration of metal plate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXHIBITIONS (0)**

**LDANS (0)**

**LOCATION (1)**

**PEOPLE (1)**

**PUBLICATIONS (0)**

**VALUE (0)**

**AUTHORITIES**

**Keywords**

**People**

**SOURCE**

Giscard d'Estaing, His Excellency Valéry
The following is an example of condition reporting on incoming loans for the baseball exhibit. This loan is from the Detroit Tigers.

**Detroit Tigers**

**Cage Jacket/Trainer:**
- **Incoming:** Loose thread in left proper armpit. Light accumulation of fuzz and random fibers on surface
- **Outgoing:**

**Base:**
- **Incoming:** Heavy scuffing/dirt marks on surface, particularly on right side. Corner on right side are slightly worn. Paint on stand is dirty and torn.
- **Outgoing:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Packing Notes**

**Condition upon arrival from lender:**

Date: 7/3/201

Condition upon departure to Lender

- [ ] Same as upon arrival
- [ ] Other – Expound

Condition upon arrival from Borrower

- [ ] Same as upon departure
- [ ] Other – Expound

Recorded by:

Date: 7/3/201
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lender</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLOTHES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(EXTRA LARGE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Packing Notes</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition upon arrival from lender:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PACKED: 5/14/97 CLOTHES: 8 0C/20 0C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition upon departure to Lender</td>
<td>Same as upon arrival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recorded by: | Date: 5/14/97 |
Condition upon departure to Lender |  |
| Same as upon arrival | Other - Expound |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition upon arrival from Borrower</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PACKED: 5/14/97 CLOTHES: 8 0C/20 0C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition upon arrival from Borrower</td>
<td>Same as upon departure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recorded by: | Date: |
I compiled this bibliography of sources I consulted for the performance of my duties at the museum and for my academic assignments.


