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Title: Making Research Collections Accessible Through a Study-Storage System

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ABSTRACT

Title: Making Research Collections Accessible through a Study-Storage System

Museums struggle with the problem of inaccessible, inadequately protected storage collections. The Children's Museum (TCM) has developed a system that makes research collections available by sorting and packaging objects individually for optimum protection and access.

Currently, Northeast American Indian materials have been installed in a working model of this study-storage system. The remainder of TCM's American Indian collection is largely unknown to social scientists; its research potential virtually untapped. Since it is in dense storage, access is limited.

To increase awareness of the model and increase access to a systematic collection from across Indian American, TCM proposes to install this collection in the study-storage system and then disseminate information about both the collection and the system to social scientists.

TCM will move to a downtown facility in 1979. The Museum plans to install the collections in a secure, climate-controlled area, behind a window wall that allows visitors a view into dense storage. N.S.F. funds are needed for a one-year project to specially package this collection in a study-storage format. The curator/designer team that created the model will have project responsibility.

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OBJECTIVES

This proposal outlines our program to install the Children's Museum's (TCM) American Indian collection in our study-storage system. This program will allow increased access to an unknown but systematic collection and inform the scientific community of a successful study-storage format.

An Unknown, Systematic Collection

The Children's Museum is the keeper of nearly 4,000 American Indian objects from across Indian America. Although this collection is well maintained and continues to grow, its existence is virtually unknown to the scientific community. A dramatic illustration occurred just a month ago when a curator, preparing an exhibit of Maria Martinez pottery for the Renwick Gallery, visited the Museum. Upon viewing a set of Maria's pots and other examples of Pueblo pottery, she remarked that it seemed incredible that she had not known about this collection; and immediately requested several pieces for the Smithsonian show. Her response is typical of those professionals who do have an opportunity to see our collection. They are amazed that a children's museum possesses such a fine collection and then share our concerns about the lack of knowledge about it.

Children's Museum would like to rectify this situation by making the collection available to serious researchers. Currently this collection is in dense storage. If its existence were made known at the present time and extensive access requested and granted, it would be difficult to maintain responsible protection of the collection.

A Successful Study-Storage System

In 1975-76, funded by a Utilization of Collections grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) TCM developed a study-storage model that dramatically increases access to objects in storage while continuing to protect them from damage and loss. This system provides for in-depth study of objects, upgrades their preservation, and consolidates previously scattered documentation. It achieves this by preparing and packaging each object individually. Adults can come and study objects in a supervised storage area and have immediate access to the object and its documentation.

Papers describing this study-storage format have been presented by the writer at both a national and regional museum conference. These presentations solicited so much interest that museum professionals come to see the system at the Museum. Other social scientists have not yet been directly informed of its existence.

Installation of the Collection in a Study-Storage Format

To make the entire American Indian collection more accessible and inform more professionals of the study-storage system, TCM proposes to install the collection in its new study-storage format. As the collections are packaged, a running inventory will be maintained of the objects. Once the objects are installed, information about (1) the inventory, (2) the possibility of increased access, and (3) the study-storage system will be disseminated to both the museum and anthropological communities.

TCM has confidence in its ability to successfully carry out this installation since the Northeast American Indian collection was used in the model. We know, from preliminary review of the remaining American Indian collections (90%) that the packaging solutions already developed will be applicable to most of the objects in this, as yet, unprepared collection.

A New Building

Currently housed in cramped, inadequately protected and inaccessible quarters on the outskirts of Boston, the Museum will move to a renovated building in the heart of Boston in Spring, 1979. Collections, like all major Museum functions, will be assigned more space. A centrally located climate controlled area has been allocated to the American Indian and other ethnological collections. A "window wall" to allow casual visitors a view into American Indian storage (see Appendix A) is planned.

Cost of the move, climate control, window wall, security, and overall storage systems will be borne by the Museum, supported in part by a grant from NEA. Funding by NSF will allow the American Indian collection to be individually prepared and packaged so that access to it can be offered to all interested researchers.

SIGNIFICANCE

Anthropologists and other social scientists, museum professionals, American Indian people and the Children's Museum would all benefit from increased awareness of and access to a significant systematic collection, and a successful study-storage format.

For Social Scientists

As cultures change, information about what preceeded these changes is often available only through study of museum collections. Many such collections must be evaluated and studied in order to gain an accurate picture of a particular phenomenon. The research potential of TCM's collection is virtually untapped. Once this collection becomes known, it can begin to be used, along with related objects in other museums' collections, for anthropological research.

While it is impossible to anticipate all of the research projects which might result from access to the collections, there are specific collections whose potential for use is already apparent. Examples of these include the Folk Arts collection and the Poolaw mold collection.

Folk Arts. In 1976-77, the Museum received a grant from the Folk Arts division of NEA to collect and fully document contemporary work made by American Indian people living in the Northeast and especially New England. Forty-three Native Americans from ten different tribal groups participated. Of these, 20 agreed to be interviewed in depth on both film and tape. Two hundred seventy objects covering a full range of materials, processes and functions were collected.

All works have been accessioned and await integration into the traditional Northeast collection. The documentation is being edited and translated into more usable formats, including revised catalogue sheets, annotated transcriptions of the tapes and captioned slides and slide sets (see Appendix B).

Preliminary comparison of these contemporary materials with Northeast objects already in the collection has indicated to this writer that certain Native American traditions are still very much alive in the Northeast. An artist may incorporate new materials into a traditional form or use traditional materials to express a new idea, but almost always a basic connection can be found between the arts of the past and contemporary ones. Comparison with traditional objects from across Indian America also indicated that contemporary work in the East has been strongly influenced by a sharing of skills with Native Americans from other parts of the country. People have revitalized old traditions and learned new ones from sources outside their own community, as well as from within it.

Some interviews yielded specific detailed information about the history and current status of certain traditions that is as yet not fully available to the scientific community (Gay Head pottery and Southern New England ash splint basketry, for example). When Mashpee, Gay Head, Narragansett, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot people are indicating in the courts that their traditions have continued and are seeking recognition as Indians, it is appropriate and important that this new collection of materials be available for study.

The Poolaw Mold and Gauge Collection. Another recently acquired collection that has just been fully conserved and should be made available for study is the Chief Poolaw Penobscot Basketry mold and gauge collection which consists of molds for shaping ash splint baskets and gauges for cutting splints to desired widths (see accompanying photo copy). Molds to make a wide variety of basket shapes and sizes are included and name changes on these molds seen to indicate that they have been passed from one person to another and may have been in use for several generations. Some of these mold types are, apparently, no longer in use. Like the Folk Arts collection, these molds and gauges provide a rich opportunity for the study of a particular manufacturing technique at a particular time, and also have the potential, when coordinated with other museums' related collections to be used in broader studies of cultural growth and change.

For Museum Professionals

Since adequate storage of ethnological collections is of serious concern to the museum profession, dissemination of information about a new study-storage format should stimulate fresh ideas and suggest new solutions to the problem.

TCM has developed a successful model. Using this model for an entire ethnological collection at TCM should demonstrate its applicability to similar collections in other museums. Individual design and packaging solutions could be of interest to a museum curator, even if the system as a whole does not meet his special needs.

For American Indian People

Seven years ago, the Children's Museum began a dialogue with American Indian people in the New England area. A strong relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, is now in existence. People in these communities, aware of TCM's American Indian collection, welcomed the 1976 installation of the Northeast Collection in the Study-Storage model. Nearly every Friday during the open hours of Study-Storage, Native Americans from this area come to see and study their heirlooms. One woman is studying beadwork designs as a source of inspiration for her own work; a silversmith has borrowed slides of 19th c. Passamaquoddy silver so he may have them for ready reference in his own workshop; a Narragansett ethnic heritage project will publish slides from TCM's Northeast collection in its next curriculum unit, and an Indian-led TV project has relied heavily on the documents collected during the Folk Arts project. Parents even ask for special permission to bring their children to Study-Storage so they may share pride in their heritage.

These communities are now urging TCM to install the remainder of its American Indian collections in a similar Study-Storage system so they may have access to them.

This is a valid request and TCM would like to comply. Access will provide exposure to other tribal styles and an opportunity to become more aware of inter-tribal relationships. Eastern people are studying the Northeast collection; the cross-tribal collections are a logical next step.

For the Children's Museum

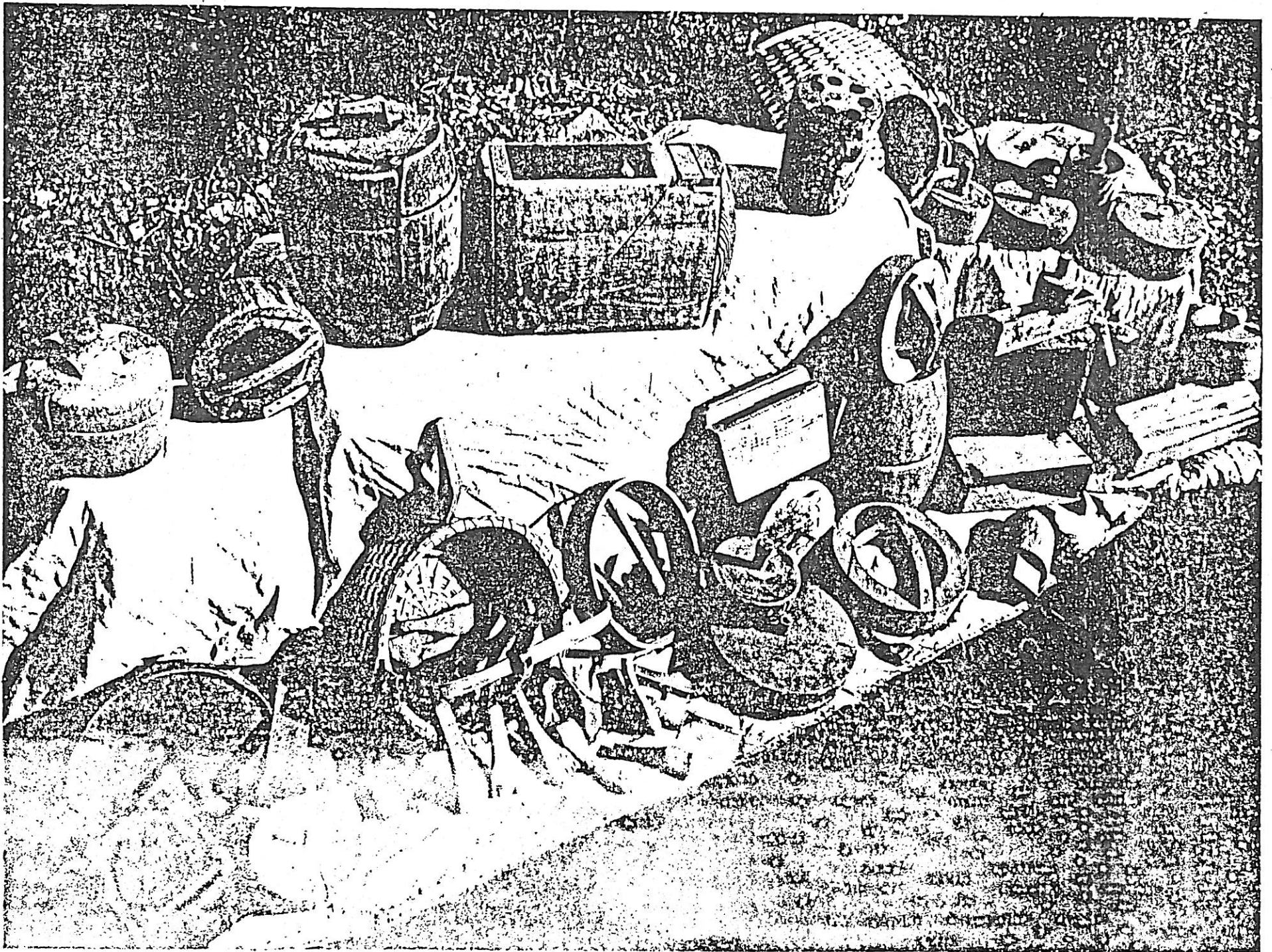
This project would upgrade the preservation of TCM's Indian collection, correlate scattered documentation, expand object information, improve the study-storage system, and offer access to a significant systematic Indian collection.

Preservation. In this system where objects are packaged individually according to their protection needs, and objects in need of conservation are attended to, the state of collections actually improves. Also, documentation is brought together from widely scattered museum locations.

Interpretation. We know from experience that granting access yields valuable information about the collections. Native Americans have been generous in their explanations of Northeast materials. Certainly, the study of our collection by scholars will further expand collections information.

The Model. Study-storage is a successful system but there are packaging and design solutions that can be improved. Visiting professionals have suggested alternatives to some questionable designs. Further use of the model will allow us to try these suggestions. We also look forward to devising new packages for object types not present in the Northeast collection.

Access. Preparing the rest of the collections would give us the opportunity to respond to Native American requests for increased access and to interest new researchers in our collections.



Courtesy, Maine Antique Digest

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

The Museum is organized into two operating divisions and a support services division. The Visitor Center offers interesting experiences with a variety of participative exhibits and programs to the 200,000 yearly visitors who come to the Museum in school, community and family groups. Operating as a complement to the Visitor Center, the Resource Center encourages 15,000 adults to explore specific topics in depth through use of the Museum's staff expertise and its reference and circulating materials (see Appendix C for American Indian Resources). Collections and collections staff are part of the Support Services division (see accompanying Organizational Chart).

Collections Staff. Collections is administered by the Associate Director of the Museum. Both the Curator and Associate Curator of Collections report to this administrator. In addition to these Curators who have responsibility for overseeing all of the collections, there are curators of specific resources (Asia, American History, American Indian, Japan, Natural History) and two collections volunteers. A Collections Committee, composed of all these staff members, meets the first Friday of every month to consider collections issues. Staff members from outside this group may bring collections-related issues to these meetings. At the present time, the Curator of Collections is also responsible for Registration. Within the year, a Registrar's position will be created.

Collections Facilities. The bulk of the ethnological collections are housed on the third floor of the Resource Center. In addition to a small lab reserved exclusively for collections work, there are curatorial offices with built-in or adjacent work spaces. When the Museum moves downtown in 1979, major improvements are planned.

A Renovation plan that evolved from collaboration of architect, curatorial staff, consulting engineers, conservators, and security consultants now includes secure, dust-free climate controlled collections areas, fumigation and fire-detection systems, and a conservation laboratory. The Registrar's office will serve as a control point for all collections access.

Loan Policies. Since the collection is not well known, requests for major loans are infrequent. When a loan request is received, it is considered by curatorial staff and granted if adequate assurances are given for the security, care, insurance and shipping of the objects. We fully expect that increased visibility of collections at the new site will result in additional loan requests.

Acquisition Policies. The collections continue to expand via new accessions. We estimate that the ethnological collection doubles every 20 years, and anticipate that this will accelerate when collections become more visible at the downtown facility.

Objects are acquired through purchase, and solicited and unsolicited gifts. Throughout the years, people have sought out the Museum as recipient for their treasures. When an object is offered to the Museum it is accepted only if it is pertinent to our collections and can be adequately cared for. Curators also actively seek out objects for the collections and have a small budget for purchases. They also encourage donations of particular objects and may seek financial assistance from benefactors if an important piece or collection is located.

Research Policies. Curatorial staff is engaged in collections research, to support exhibit and programmatic functions and to further basic knowledge about the collections. Outside requests for research access are infrequent due to lack of knowledge about the collection's existence amongst anthropologists and museum professionals. An overriding goal of the new museum is to increase the visibility of the collection and increase the possibility of access for serious researchers.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM CORPORATION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR: MICHAEL SPOCK
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Support Services.

Phyllis D. O'Connell
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Director



COLLECTIONS DESCRIPTION

Children's Museum's American Indian collection is stored in a museum designed tray/rack storage system, sorted first by culture area and then by function within the culture. Objects in this collection represent the following culture areas: Northeast; Southeast; Plains; Southwest-Pueblo; Southwest-Navajo; Southwest-Apache; Southwest-Dessert; Plateau and Basin; California; and Northwest Coast. Documentation records have been maintained for all objects and include an accession sheet, a donor card and a catalogue card. Subsequent comments by visiting museum professionals, anthropologists or American Indians are noted on the catalogue cards.

Origin and Scope of the Collections

The Museum was started in 1913 by an energetic group of science teachers and benefactors. The original trustees were educated, well-traveled and generous in their donations to the Museum and they are, in fact, responsible for the early American Indian materials that form a nucleus of the present collection.

Analysis of the remaining materials indicates that objects were collected and donated to the Museum under a variety of circumstances. Most common are the miscellaneous gifts of 10-20 objects given by a single donor, with a cluster of three or four objects from a particular area. There are also several collections from a particular culture area or related to a general topic amassed by a collector with a special interest. The Emma Coleman Basketry collection (1925) or the Jared E. Bliss Plains Indian collections (1929) exemplify this category.

There are several world wide collections with significant American Indian materials originally collected for children's organizations (the Cambridge Public School Children's Museum, Wellesley Convalescent Home, Home for Little Wanderers) that were ultimately given to TCM, and there are a few collections gathered by trained professionals. These include the Cherokee/Catawba gourd collection of Frank Speck, the noted ethnologist (1948), and the materials collected in the past 10 years by this writer. Since a significant portion of the objects were collected by non-professionals, staff has over the years made an effort to have the collections seen and further identified by competent professionals. While Dr. William C. Orchard was curator at Peabody Museum, Harvard, objects were frequently taken to him and the results of each such visit recorded on the appropriate catalogue card. When Eric Douglas, Curator of Indian Art, Denver Art Museum, was revising the Hall of the American Indian at Peabody in 1950, he contributed two full days to a study of TCM's collection. All the objects were taken from storage and spread out for his evaluation. His revised identifications and comments can be read on many catalogue cards. And, in 1966 Fred Dockstader, then Director of the Museum of the American Indian, came to sort and evaluate the collection, again at the request of curatorial staff. His extensive comments have been transcribed and also form part of TCM's documentation (see Appendix D).

Although catalogue information is not always as extensive as that found in a research institution, AAM's Accreditation Visiting Committee, in a record recommending accreditation for TCM, remarked,

"The collections of the institution are extremely fine; the scope of the collections in terms of potential program contributions is outstanding; the record keeping is of a very high order." (1972)

Previous Work with this Collection

Soon after the Museum was founded, American Indian collections were exhibited in display cases and used directly in programs with children. Early photographs show Museum children wearing Indian dress and freely handling other ethnographic materials. This hands-on usage was approved by the original trustees. In the past 13 years, with the tenure of a new director, the Museum has begun to seriously re-evaluate such activities and to reassert its Museum responsibilities, especially its collections-keeping responsibilities. Two recent collections projects, Collections Renewal, and Utilization of Collections, graphically demonstrate this renewed commitment.

Collections Renewal. In 1966, all of the Museum's ethnological collections, including the American Indian materials, were moved to a warehouse for sorting and evaluation, first by Museum staff and then, as needed, by cultural consultants. The purpose of this project was to learn the scope of the collections, expand basic information about them, remove inappropriate objects and improve the storage system.

After return from the warehouse in 1971, actual usage of the American Indian collection decreased dramatically. With a heightened awareness of the extent and value of the collection, staff was reluctant to use any materials in the "hands-on" programs for which the Museum was rapidly gaining recognition. A few objects were selected for presentation in formal, protected exhibits, but the collection as a whole was underused.

Utilization of Collections. Museum staff was aware of the conflict between having collections and yet having them underused and inaccessible. In response to this problem, TCM requested NEA funds to investigate ways to simultaneously protect and yet increase access to its collections. This funding led to creation of exhibit and storage models that achieved proposal aims. TCM developed exhibit models that safely incorporate "hands-off" collections objects into "hands-on" participatory exhibits. Several models were also developed for more effective but protected usage of collections in storage. The study-storage system referred to throughout this proposal was developed at this time.

Present State of American Indian Collection

The Northeast American Indian collection is installed in the study storage model. The remaining 90% of the American Indian collection is stored under conditions that inhibit access. Due to space limitations and growing collections, objects are densely packed in trays, and trays stacked from floor to ceiling. To protect objects from dust, many are bagged; to gain space in the trays, many have been folded or rolled up or stacked one on top of the other. It is sometimes necessary to move three or four objects to gain access to a selected one. It is then sometimes necessary to de-bag the object and even unroll it or unfold it in order to view it fully. Locating the object's number requires similar handling. Tray heights rise to more than eight feet; and objects in those trays risk being rummaged through without a clear view of the objects. Oversize objects sit on the floor or are tucked into any space available.

Under these conditions even the curator can cause unnecessary damage no matter how carefully he or she handles objects. Under these conditions, opening storage to researchers would be irresponsible; the collections could not withstand the increased handling and movement that such access implies. To grant responsible access, we are proposing that these American Indian objects, like those in the Northeast collection be packaged in a study-storage format.

STUDY-STORAGE

Study-storage is a supervised area in storage where adults can come and study reserve collections that have been specially sorted and packaged, and have immediate access to the resources and documentation that give those objects greater meaning. Currently, the Northeast American Indian collection is accessible via this system (see accompanying photo copy). Of necessity, for the protection of their objects, a museum grants access to stored collections reluctantly and infrequently. Our system is based on the premise that it is possible to grant access to a storage area if the objects are evaluated and packaged so that risks are minimized. It is a system that:

- makes all objects visible
- minimizes handling
- protects objects fully if they are handled
- facilitates in-depth study of collection
- is coherent, consistent and therefore applicable to other storage areas.

The creation of this model involved two major developmental tasks: the preparation and protection of the collection itself; the assembly of associated resources that would facilitate in-depth study.

Collections Preparation

Issues concerning both preservation and interpretation were confronted and resolved during preparation of the Northeast collection.

Visibility. It was proposed that handling of objects, necessitated by poor object visibility, be eliminated. The decision was made to spread out, and decrease tray heights. Objects were unfolded, unrolled, and given "breathing space" within the tray. Trays were stopped at five feet so objects were visible at eye level. When trays were moved to eye level, unused space was created above them.

Shelves were inserted into the rack, and oversize objects stored on them. Objects that did not fit or show up well on the flat shelving were assigned wall space. A decision was also made to clearly number object packages so numbers were visible without object handling.

Withdrawals. Northeast objects that had been "withdrawn" during the Collections Renewal project were taken out of deep storage and returned to their proper place in the collection.

Protection Categories. Review of the Northeast Collection led to two interrelated conclusions upon which further system work was based:

(1) Not all objects need the same kind of protection.

(2) If the kind of protection an object needed could be

established, a package could be designed to protect it.

Three categories of protection were established: Looking Only, Handling and Careful Touching.

"Looking Only" is for objects that can NOT be touched and

includes irreplaceable, fragile, one of a kind, culturally, significant objects.

"Handling" is for objects that can be held, and includes

extremely durable, replaceable, contemporary objects or replicas.

"Careful Touching" is for objects that can be touched carefully if

necessary for understanding the material or the process of manufacture. "Careful Touching" the most nebulous of the three, includes near duplicates of "Looking Only."

as well as objects that may be less fragile or less significant than "Looking Only." objects. This category is established by comparison with the other two, rather than on its own.

Use of Proper Conservation Materials. If objects were to be protected via packaging, the materials used to protect them needed to be conservationally correct. The following packaging materials were selected:

- foam core (inert, neutral) for handling bases;
- mylar strips and dental floss for trying or sewing objects to their bases;
- polyethylene bags (004 mil) with opened bottom (to prevent condensation) for bagged objects;
- plexi-glass or mylar for see-thru support;
- polystyrene boxes (with breathing holes) for "Looking Only " objects;
- acid free tissue for stuffing and shaping objects;
- muslin for background display;
- moleskin for covering metal supports, to prevent abrasion;
- hangars padded with polyester fiber fill, covered with muslin;
- wig heads covered with polyester fiber fill and surgical stockinet.

Packages. A series of packages were designed, based on the protection level and physical configurations of each object. The packages were intended to protect the object and still let the viewer get close. One of these package types would be selected for each object. The following package types were designed:

- clear, rigid polystyrene box, with breathing holes, for objects that could not be touched but needed full visibility;
- polyethylene bags, cut to the specific shape of the object, for objects that could be handled, if protected by a bag;
- handling bases for those objects that could be touched, if necessary, but otherwise handled only by the added base;
- handling bases for those objects that could not be touched or handled but were so large and cumbersome that their visibility would be seriously reduced by bagging;
- handling bases and then bagging for flat objects that were so large they could not be supported in a bag alone;
- plexi-covered storage tray for those objects that should not be moved or handled, even in a plexi box or bag;
- handling bases with see-thru mylar bottoms for those objects whose bottoms needed visibility;
- tags or unattached box bottoms for those objects that could be handled. If possible, tags were attached; otherwise, loose objects were placed in a box top, and the box appropriately labeled;
- wig heads on handling bases, for headwear;
- padded hangars, for clothing that could be touched or handled;
- padded hangars, with bagging, for clothes that could not be touched but were strong enough to hang up; and
- sandwich of mat and plexi-glass for flat objects requiring two-sided visibility and total protection.

One of the simplest and yet most effective package types is the handling base. It is a flat surface, made of foam core, larger than an object, to which an object can be laced with mylar strips or dental floss. The user handles the base rather than the object, but can still view the object closely. All these packages provide the user with good access to the object, good visibility of the object, and minimize direct handling of the object (see accompanying photo copies).

Packaging Clothing. A special effort was made to package clothing so its specific use would be visually understood. Rather than place all clothing flat in a tray, a rod, the width of a tray was inserted into the rack system. Clothing that was strong enough to hang (a parka, a bandelier bag) was bagged and then hung. Articles of personal adornment (garters, armbands, necklaces) that were too small or fragile to hang, were wrapped around forms that suggested their configuration when worn and then attached to handling bases. All clothing was stuffed with acid free tissue (moccasins, leggings) to simulate the fullness they would have had when worn. Headwear that was in good conditions was stored on specially prepared wig heads attached to handling bases.

A Protection Symbol. The object's package is intended to communicate appropriate behavior toward the object. To be sure this was understood, a color-coded symbol was designed for each of the protection levels. Colored red, it reads "stop" for Looking Only; yellow, "caution" for Careful Touching; and green, "go" for Handling. These symbols were attached to every object package.

Consultations with Native Americans. Consultations with Native Americans reminded us that there were culturally appropriate ways to store objects that could be applied to a museum system. For example, roach storage posed a problem. Laid in a tray, this headpiece began to flatten out. We were shown how to store it in a culturally appropriate way: wrapped inside out around a baseball bat, to preserve its delicate shaping.

Consultation with Onondaga people led to the special storage and packaging of False Face and Bushyhead masks. The Onondagas requested that the masks neither be closed up in a box or closet nor be "on view." A culturally appropriate solution was devised. As in an Iroquois home, the masks were hung on the wall, covered with cotton cloth.

Security. To secure this collection, new security measures included:

- a sign-in, sign-out system for all users, including staff;
- assignment of curatorial time to supervision of the area whenever a visitor was present; and
- an inventory system that numbered the exact spot where each object belonged, to allow quick visual checks of the collection.

Assembly of Associated Resources

To allow a visitor to be able to study an object and its documentation simultaneously, in the same place, all available documentation was correlated and brought to study-storage (see accompanying photo copy).

Document Envelopes. A system of document envelopes was created for objects with study material. In addition to the commonly included accession lists and correspondence, we deliberately added material that would lead the user to resources beyond those at TCM. There are referrals to similar objects in other collections and copies of photographs from archival collections.

Catalogue Cards. Catalogue information is being revised and expanded based on the curator's research into an object's history. Since this task is ongoing, a set of the standard catalogue cards was brought into study-storage.

Books. An effort was made to locate or purchase key books and pamphlets that related directly to Northeast material culture. If key articles were out of print, they were borrowed and xeroxed. Important research materials were removed from the library collection and reassigned to study-storage.

Slides. In discussions with members of TCM's Native American Advisory Board the issue of object loans was raised. How could an interested person continue to study a collection or an object at home? What if he wished to give a lecture or use the object as a taking off point in his own creations? To respond to this need, more than half the collection was photographed and a slide library, with multiple and close-up views of many objects, was created. A non-circulating set of these slides is kept for use in study storage; slides may be borrowed from a second, circulating set for use away from the Museum.

Tape Recordings. In the course of TCM's work with the Native American community, and the Native American collections, many tape recordings were made. Those pertaining to the Northeast collection were retrieved from widely scattered locations and also placed in study-storage.

By the end of the project, all these associated resources had been installed on shelving in the study-storage area. Two desks had also been moved in; one to accommodate a researcher, the other for the curator who would supervise use of the collections.

Work Related to this Study-Storage Model

There are many ways to make reserve collections more available (see accompanying bibliography) and TCM has learned from other responses to this problem.

The Object Gallery. The Object Gallery at the Florida State Museum is a hall complete with exhibits, books and pamphlets (recommended by appropriate curators), tape recordings of conversations with curators, study carrels and object-filled drawers. Its intent was to make possible greater utilization of the Museum's collections and to provide the documentation that would encourage self-directed study (Gabianelli, Munyer 1974). The Object Gallery is not nor was it intended to be a study-storage system, but its successful combination of objects and documentation in a museum setting reinforced TCM's plan to correlate reserve objects with their documentation.

Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia (UBC).

The newly installed visible storage system at UBC also parallels our belief that entire collections and their documentation should be combined and made available in a single system. Despite the positive aspects of making collections visible and documentation available, the UBC system is, in this writer's opinion, less than satisfactory for the serious researcher. Objects are not numbered and a viewer must first correlate the object with an object number on a schematic chart, then correlate these numbers with appropriate registers, and then find the right register! Since there is no place to sit, the viewer stands while reading the registers or making notes or sketches.

Although this system might satisfy the casual visitor, it is too detailed and time consuming for a person seriously studying many objects. If small labels with collection numbers were placed next to each object, catalogue sheets filed simply by number, and study carrels installed; this system would better serve the serious researcher as well as the general public.

Burke Museum of Anthropology, University of Washington. At the Burke Museum of Anthropology, there is a large plate glass window that provides a view into the collections storage area. A large label explains that behind this wall, the work of the museum goes on; and that individuals may apply for access. This system seems to successfully respond to the needs of both casual visitors and researchers. It is this same system that TCM plans to install at its new downtown facility. For the casual visitor, there will be a view of the American Indian collection, a behind the scenes glimpse into the workings of a museum, and the potential for access if the need ever arises. For the serious researcher, there will be the American Indian collection, fully accessible and yet protected in its study-storage system.

We have learned from the work of other institutions. We are requesting funding for this particular study-storage system because we believe it has within it certain noteworthy innovations.

Rather than just letting people see storage collections, this model provides a place where objects and resources can be studied together;

Rather than protecting all objects in the same way, it sorts
and packages objects individually for optimum access;

Rather than offering a straight, systematic display, it takes
an active role in the interpretation of the objects via
the way in which they are stored;

Rather than selecting reserve objects out for viewing, it
provides exposure to the entire reserve collection;

Rather than being available to a general audience, it solicits
specially interested visitors.

In a sentence, it is a model that grants access to collections
in storage while serving both the in-depth needs of specially inter-
ested visitors and the preservation needs of the collection.

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PLAN OF WORK

One year is needed for installation of the remaining American Indian collection in a study-storage system. The basic issues related to creation of the system have always been confronted and resolved, and criteria, tasks and work procedures established. All this developmental work can now be directly applied to the proposed project. An outline of work follows:

Packaging

Working with one culture area at a time, we would:

- return all "withdrawn" objects;
- sort objects into protection categories;
- evaluate conservation needs; seek conservator advice; proceed if only basic repairs needed; list serious conservation needs and submit subsequent NEA Conservation proposal;
- determine appropriate object packages;
- modify some existing packages;
- check with Native Americans for culturally appropriate storage solutions;
- design new packages as needed;
- select and photograph key objects for circulating slide library;
- attach symbol with object number and protection category;
- keep running inventory system;
- re-label trays and return to rack;
- move trays down and create shelving above for oversize objects.

Documentation

Working with one culture area at a time, we would simultaneously:

- assemble scattered Museum documentation and prepare document envelopes;
- reassign relevant library materials to study-storage;
- xerox out-of-print articles;
- consider purchase of key books not currently in library;
- revise and expand catalogue cards if new information available;
- list related resources in other area museums;
- bring set of standard catalogue cards into study-storage;
- install shelving for documentation;
- prepare study area for researcher; curator.

DISSEMINATION

After installation is complete, we will disseminate information about both the collection and the study-storage system.

Existence of the Collection. In order to describe the collections, an inventory will be prepared and made available to individuals and institutions. The new central location of the Museum and the planned visibility of the collection itself, behind the "window wall" should also contribute to increased awareness of the collection.

Existence of the System. Papers describing the study-storage model have already been presented to the museum community. At the end of the project, a presentation describing the entire system, complete with modifications, new solutions, collections inventory and possibilities for access will be prepared and made available to those conferences, journals and individuals that reach museum professionals and those whose audience is anthropologists.

PERSONNEL

To capitalize on past experiences and an efficient working team, we propose that the same people who created the study-storage model be responsible for this project. Joan Lester, Associate Curator of Collections would be responsible for the overall project, and specifically for documentation and dissemination. Signe Hanson, designer/fabricator, whose services are available to the Museum on a contract basis, would have responsibility for object packages and photographing.

Joan Lester

After receiving an M.A. in American Indian art from the University of California, Joan came to Boston where she has worked at TCM for more than 13 years, first as a teacher and exhibit developer, and then more recently as Coordinator of American Indian resources. She has always been deeply connected to the American Indian collections and the responsibilities associated with them. Joan devised the systems in the Collections Renewal project; initiated the dialogue with the New England community; directed the Utilization of Collections project; created (with Signe Hanson) the study-storage model; was principal investigator for the Folk Arts project; and is presently Associate Curator of the Collections (see Appendix E).

Signe Hanson.

Signe has worked as a museum designer for many years, and has contributed extensively to exhibit and graphics design and photographic work. She was the designer/technician for the Utilization of Collections project where she was responsible for the successful packaging and spatial design of the study-storage model, and this past year served as photographer and secondary investigator on the Folk Arts Project (see Appendix E).

Conservation Consultants.

We propose that Dennis Piechota, conservator at the Peabody Museum, Harvard, be available as a consultant, to advise on the conservation needs of the objects in each culture area. As he has done in the past, Dennis would outline procedures for objects in need of basic housekeeping, and pinpoint those objects whose needs exceeded in-house skills.

We also propose that Native Americans from specific culture areas be invited to see a collection and advise on culturally appropriate storage methods. We would draw these consultants from Native Americans currently studying or living in Boston.

Collections Trainees.

We propose that a graduate student(s) or intern(s) be hired to assist the two staff members. Such assistance would assure project completion within the proposed year. TCM has an ongoing internship program from whom a collections intern could be recruited; or a request for help could be submitted to Boston area universities. We feel this training position would offer a worthwhile experience with collections management.

BUDGET

Title: Making Research Collections Accessible Through A Study-Storage System
12 Months: July 1, 1978 - June 30, 1979

	Requested from NSF	TCM Cost- Share	Total
A. Salaries and Wages			
1. Principal Investigator (Joan Lester) 50% @15,000/annl.		7,500	7,500*
2a. Designer (Signe Hanson) 100% @14,000/annl.	14,000*		14,000*
b. Consultant (Professional) Dennis Piechota 3 hrs/10 cultures @\$10/hr.	300		300
c. Collections Trainee(s) FTE @\$6,000/annl.	6,000*		6,000*
d. Native American Consultants 3 hrs/10 cultures @\$5/hr.	150		150
B. Fringe Benefits @15%*		4,125	4,125
C. Total Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits	20,450	11,625	32,075
D. Materials & Supplies (see attached)			
1. Packaging	2,500		2,500
2. Documentation	100		100
3. Slides	400		400
E. Total Direct Costs	23,450	11,625	35,075
F. Indirect Costs @28.5 of Salaries*		7,838	7,838
G. Total Costs	23,450	19,463	42,913
H. Total Contribution from Other Source 20% NEA Renovation Grant (\$56,250)		11,250	11,250
I. Total Estimated Project Cost	23,450	30,713	54,163

D. Materials & Supplies

Packaging materials include:

polyethene sheeting, polyethylene bags, foam core, acid free tissue, wig heads, plastic boxes, plexi-glass covers, polyethylene tubing, mylar, velcro, moleskin, muslin, poly-fibre fill, stockinet, cardboard tubing, printing costs for symbol, cardboard tubing, acid free box (bottoms), plywood for stationary shelving, bases

Documentation materials include:

xeroxing out of print materials
book purchases
permalife envelopes

Slide library includes:

50 rolls film @\$4/roll
50 rolls film processing @\$4/roll

Budgetary Assurances of Current and Pending Support

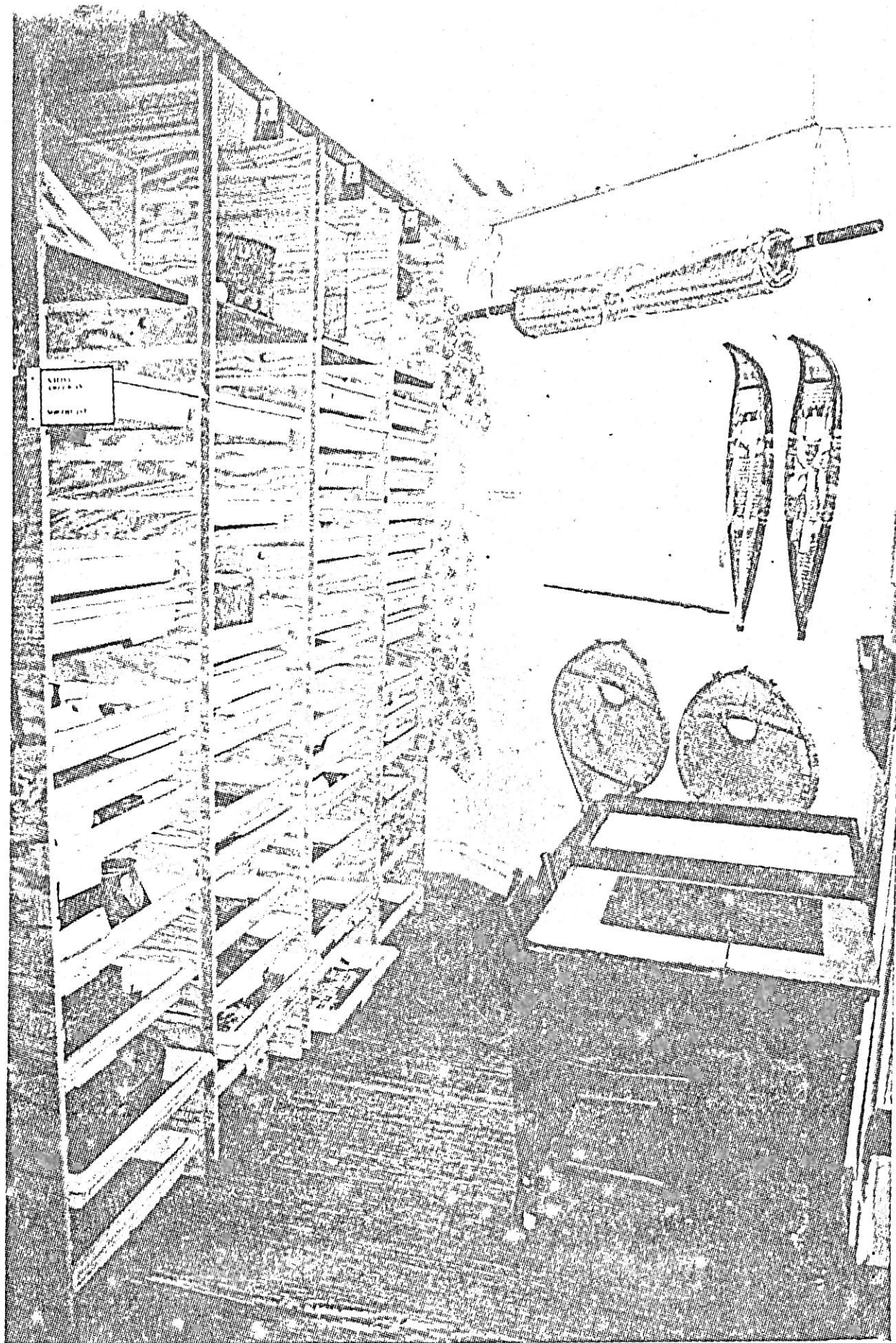
In the recent past, collections work has been supported by both federal and local agencies, including National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities and Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. This support continues:

Foundations.

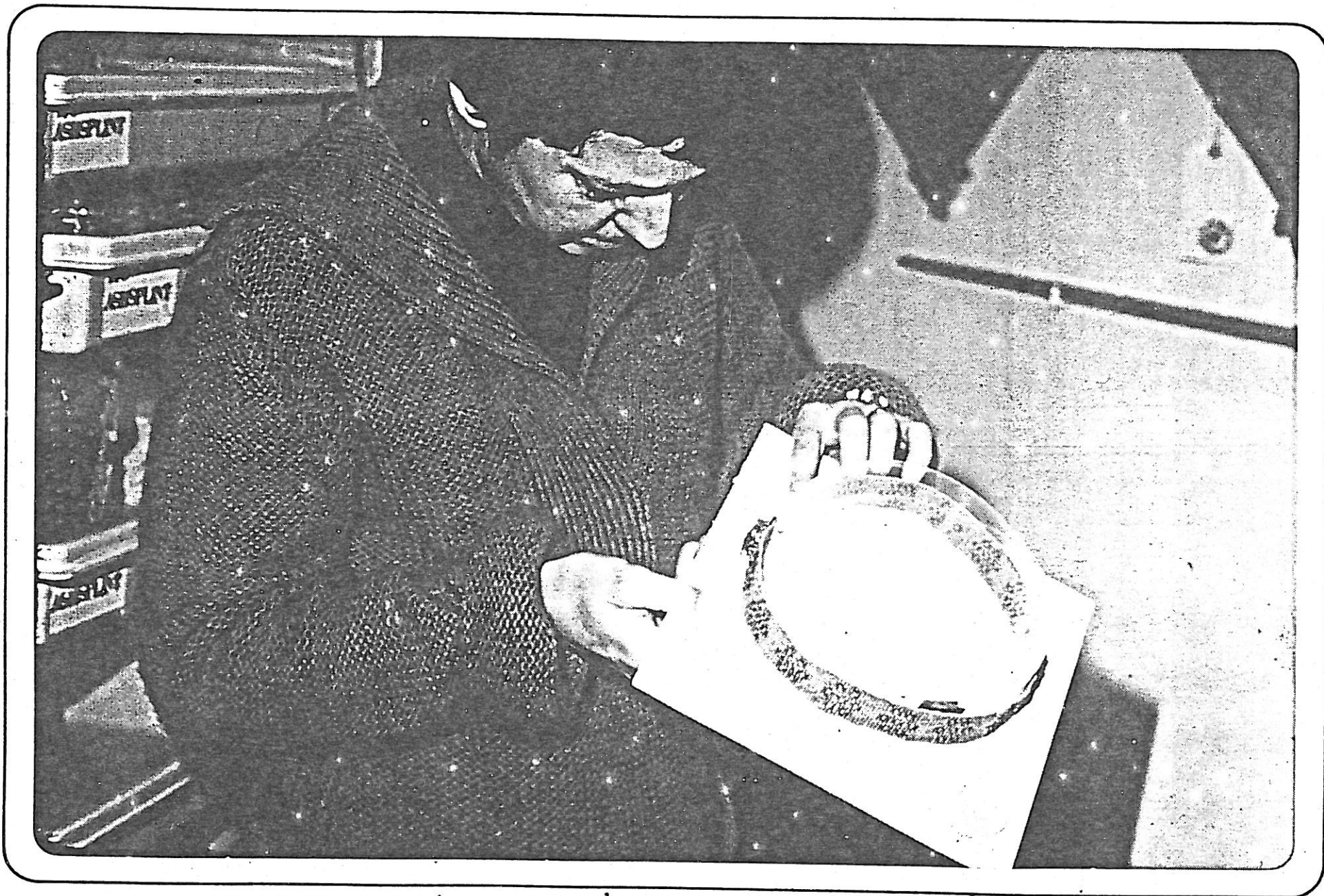
- TCM has just received a \$56,250 grant from NEA for "costs of Renovation (Climate Control, Security, Storage) installation project....." This award will cover approximately one-fourth of cost of completing first phase work for all of the ethnological collections.
- Mass. Council on the Arts and Humanities is currently supporting the research and development work of several curators. Under this \$9,740 grant, a portion of this writer's time is earmarked for supervision of visitors to the current study-storage model.
- TCM has just received a \$8,980 grant from NEA Cooperative Programs for this writer to collaborate with staff of Tomaquog Indian Museum and the Passamaquoddy Tribe to describe aesthetics, history and current development of New England ash splint basketry.

The Children's Museum.

- The Museum's operating budget supports curatorial salaries; collections facilities, collections management, and overhead costs.
- Capital funds have been allotted for collections appraisals and further expansion of collections funding sources.
- A Native American Endowment has been initiated which will ultimately support a staff member's exclusive involvement with Native American collections, exhibits and programs.



Partial view of Study-Storage with bays and work area.



Examining object on handling base.



Examining object in see-through plastic box.



Using the Study-Storage Model.