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Creating a Conservation Plan for the Domestic Apparel Collection in the Apparel & Textile Merchandising Program at Eastern Michigan University

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Abstract

Creating a conservation plan for a collection of garments and accessories is crucial in keeping the collection alive and accessible to others. Without structure and proper handling, a collection will fall into disarray and the valuable information and potential use of the collection will be lost. The public interest in such collections is growing and museums must create structure in order to adapt. If completed successfully, a properly cared for collection will serve as a valuable asset to the greater body of knowledge. The collection within Eastern Michigan University is in such a state that it requires a protocol system to be developed and executed in order for the collection to survive and become accessible to others. I will research and propose a system based on the practices of several similar institutions. This research includes plans for a website, proper photography of items within the collection, searchable database, and developing a catalog system. These areas will be the main focus, with handling, storage, supplies, and lab protocols as secondary areas to address. This project resulted in the development of a "Starters Manual" for the collection, which addresses these areas. Due to this research, future classes will be able to implement the practices outlined within. Also, outside individuals and institutions will be able to access information regarding the collection.

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CREATING A CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE DOMESTIC APPAREL
COLLECTION IN THE APPAREL & TEXTILE MERCHANDISING PROGRAM AT
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

By

Erica M. White

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

with Honors in <u>Apparel and Textile Merchandising</u>

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Abstract:

Creating a conservation plan for a collection of garments and accessories is crucial in keeping the collection alive and accessible to others. Without structure and proper handling, a collection will fall into disarray and the valuable information and potential use of the collection will be lost. The public interest in such collections is growing and museums must create structure in order to adapt. If completed successfully, a properly cared for collection will serve as a valuable asset to the greater body of knowledge. The collection within Eastern Michigan University is in such a state that it requires a protocol system to be developed and executed in order for the collection to survive and become accessible to others. I will research and propose a system based on the practices of several similar institutions. This research includes plans for a website, proper photography of items within the collection, searchable database, and developing a catalog system. These areas will be the main focus, with handling, storage, supplies, and lab protocols as secondary areas to address. This project resulted in the development of a "Starters Manual" for the collection, which addresses these areas. Due to this research, future classes will be able to implement the practices outlined within. Also, outside individuals and institutions will be able to access information regarding the collection.

Introduction:

Eastern Michigan University has in its storage a collection of garments, accessories, and other historical textiles. Over time, this collection has been forgotten; there exists today little documentation for the collection. Within this thesis, I will present a feasible storage system that provides for proper storage conditions for the various items. I will also present a functional system for maintaining and handling a collection. I will propose the best system to fit the unique needs of the institution based on the standards set by the industry. I will discuss the idea of material culture as it emerges in today's society and alters museum policy; the changes made earlier in the semester to improve the costume lab; comparable institutions I examined and how they relate to our own institution; and, most importantly, what we can learn from them. I will also discuss creating an online component for the collection in the form of a website, proper photography standards and how to apply them to the website, how we developed a searchable catalog system, and how to transform this information onto a digital database. Lastly, I will discus Eastern Michigan Universities future plans for the collection.

Material Culture and Museum Importance:

Material culture can be defined by the Oxford University Press as:

> A term used to describe the objects produced by human beings, including buildings, structures, monuments, tools, weapons, utensils, furniture, art, and indeed any physical item created by a society. As such, material culture is the main source of information about the past from which archaeologists can make inferences. A distinction is often made between those aspects of culture that appear as physical objects and those aspects that are non-material.

The idea of material culture is emerging in today's society and becoming a driving force behind historical interest and museum environments such as the Henry Ford Museum, the Tecumseh Historical Society, and the Digital Dress Project–featuring Detroit area museums, The University of Texas Drama Department, Kent State University museum studies, and the Drexel Museums. Clothing and other forms of personal adornment are perfect windows into the societies of other cultures both past and present.

With the public's growing interest in objects and the social meaning behind them, institutions are adapting their collections to meet this changing public museum interest. Institutions are looking to tie together the social meaning of objects and present history and art to the audience in such a way that the audience can connect to the pieces in the collection. Items that were once considered of lesser importance individually are now being grouped together with other objects to create an in-depth learning experience. This gives the viewer a complete feel for the collection as a whole and the ideas the collection represents and shares. Greater attention is being paid to apparel items such as shoes, hats, purses, men's pocket watches, and others. With this movement comes the growing need to create structured order within these collections so that items can be accessed efficiently.

The museum environment and the public's concept of museums are changing according to Jeanine Miller, Curator of Domestic Life, Historical Resources and Education at the Henry Ford Museum. The past conception of a museum as a stagnant, unchanging environment is at an end as new technology and public interest take museums, and museum studies, into a new age.

Whether the objects are domestic, being by everyday people from the past, or famous, as in the case of Jackie Kennedy Onassis' accessories, material culture is increasing increased in popularity. In recent news, the black dress worn by Audrey Hepburn in the 1961 film <u>Breakfast at Tiffany's</u> was recently purchased at a private auction in London for $800,000. The ever popular fashion magazine "*Harper's Bazaar*" featured actress Natalie Portman wearing the gown on the cover of its November 2006 issue and included the photo shoot to promote the auctions and the public's interest in film history and historical costumes. With interest in material culture growing, it is an opportune time to take a look at the smaller collections of surrounding institutions such as Eastern Michigan University. We can see the unique value of such similar institutions.

A collection of historical garments is an extraordinary asset to any institution, yet it also presents an extraordinary set of responsibilities. The collection serves multiple purposes, the greatest of which is that it is a learning tool. A collection such as this is a window into many areas of study and interest and, therefore, has many lessons to teach. From such a varied collection of items, we can learn about garment construction from different time periods and locations. Students can learn and practice museum studies such as cataloging, display and photography techniques, and preservation by working with the collection. We are able to observe in person the varying styles, color, and fabric choices of past generations and what this reflects about the culture of the time period. Since the items in the collection have been acquired from the local Ypsilanti area, the collection serves as an asset while studying local history and can show us the resources the city had during various time periods. With the variety of homemade items, we can also learn about the home-sewing techniques of the past and what technology was available and to

what groups of society. Lastly, we can observe the manufacturing labels and gain insight into brands and companies that have gone out of business. Domestic collections create relevance to people by displaying everyday items and presenting them in a relatable context.

Goals:

When creating structure for a collection, we must ask ourselves what constitutes structure and order. What elements need to be addressed? Why is structure important? What have other institutions accomplished and what can our establishment learn from them. While Kent State University focuses to develop a catalog for a digitized collection accessible from outside sources, the Tecumseh Historical Society focuses on techniques to display their collection while still preserving it. How does technology affect the structure of a collection, and how does it change over time? Although almost all major institutions have transferred their data into a digital storage management system, as we can see from the Henry Ford Museum, The Tecumseh Historical Society, and others, how can smaller institutions emulate these practices? Is it always best to adapt software systems such as "Past Perfect", also used by the Tecumseh Historical Society? Lastly, what have past groups at Eastern Michigan University done with the collections, why was their work lost; and what can we learn from this?

Eastern Michigan University has in its storage a vast collection of garments, accessories, and other historical textiles that have been purchased or donated over the years. Unfortunately, over time, this collection has been forgotten, there exists today little documentation and category work for the collection. Although past groups have worked

on the collection and there is evidence of their efforts, most of their work has been lost, which leads to the collection being poorly organized. The Drexel University Museum also found themselves facing major restructuring after years of past systems being lost due to lack of involvement.

The goals of my thesis project are to create a feasible storage system that provide for proper storage conditions for the various items. Through shared collaboration, we will write a   functional system for those who come after us. Given the time and research conducted we believe that we can design the best system to fit the unique needs of the institution and the nature of the collection. It's important to establish protocols based on the needs of collection as well as the standards set by the industry. The system should be testable, improvable, and expandable. A testable system is important because it is one of the best ways to assure the system can handle the needs of the collection. In order to create a cataloging system that can meet the demands of the extensive variety of items and their data, the system needs to be repeatedly tested. While testing a system, one is able to catch areas that were overlooked and make adjustments to factors that are not needed or simply too vague.

As the system is tested, there should be flexibility in the system that allows for adjustments and future improvements to be made. As the collection grows, and more students work with it, there will rise other concerns and issues to address. The system we create in this project should be able to be improved upon and have enough grounded structure and leniency to handle the changing needs of the collection. There is no doubt that in the future the collection will grow, the purpose of the collection will change, the uses and nature of the work will change. The system we create should be expandable to

meet these changing situations and needs of the collection, individual users, changing technology, as well as the changing needs of the Eastern Michigan University.

We intend to establish protocols for using a garment lab, adding data, storage techniques, handling new additions to the collection, photographing items, and database searching. These are the areas we believe need the most attention and would like to research and address in our starter's manual for the collection. In doing so, we will create complete detailed instructions on how each area should be handled and the protocol used by future students and instructors while working with the collection. This manual will help maintain order in the collection, assist in easy searching and access for particular items, and prevent future damage to the collection due to improper handling and storage.

To assist in this endeavor I would like to interview a museum curator who works with historical garments and visit their facility to learn firsthand from their work and research. These are the main goals of my project, and it was with these ideas that I set forth on a six month project of creating an archival system. I was directed by my professor and worked for the semester with a group of three others students who helped to research and create the enclosed protocol manual.

Beginning Work:

Evaluating the garments was very challenging. With any new project, it's important to assess what there is to work with and the extent of the collection. The large amount of diverse garments Eastern Michigan has in its collection is quite extensive. The items range in age from the latter eighteenth century to as late as the early 1990s. Most all of the garments have been donated throughout the years by a variety of families and

EMU patrons. We learned the vast quantity of garments Eastern Michigan had in its collection. During this beginning phase of the project we estimate that at the time we were looking at roughly 300 garments and at least 100 pieces of accessories. The collection also holds a variety of table linens, which were noted and moved into proper storage spaces.

There is evidence of previous class's involvement in the collection. Attached to the garments we found category cards, outdated and attached to hangers. Some garments, especially dresses from the 1950s, had reports from earlier classes, such as Cultural Study of Dress and History of the Haute Couture. These included a basic description of the item, a tag with the approximate date of the garment, a report on the era surrounding the garment's production, and some included a sketch or photo of the item. The reports were hanging from the hook of the hanger in direct contact with the garment, so it was decided to remove them, keeping all papers together. These provided basic information on each garment; however, they proved to be very general and provided only elementary information on specific garments. Among the reference materials we found were two types of data collection form. One was obviously intended for class use and was of limited usefulness to us (Figure 1). The other was fairly basic as well but included the major fields and had an easy to follow layout (Figure 2). One particularly helpful element in the project was the fact that previous sewing classes had constructed padded hangers, which were used to support the more delicate garments in the collection. Roughly forty of these hangers are now being used in the storage closets.

Designer : Christian Lacroix - Prêt-à-Porter

Fabric : Brocade Weave - Acrylic, Acetate, Viscose - Rayon and Silk.

Time Period : Late 1980's, 1988 - 1989.

Description : Yellow background, turquoise, purple, brown and green Oriental floral brocade with Hi-luster metalic accents.

Figure 1.
Handwritten form found attached to garment hanger.

Man: Woman: Child:
Color:
Fiber: Wool Silk Cotton Linen Poly-Cotton   Machine Hand Made
Time Period:
Describe: Ruffles   Tuck   Trim/Lace   Long/Short Hem
Long/Short Dress   Long/Short/Sleeveless Sleeve
Neckline/Collar   Button/Front

Measurements for Women: Size: 6 8 10 12
Waist: Bust:
Back neck to back waist: Length:
Shoulder to shoulder across back:

Measurements for men: Size: Small Medium Large
Neck (Collar):   Chest:
Sleeve:

Wearable/Nonwearable
Condition: Stains Tears Fragile Buttons Missing
Other:

Man: Woman: Child:
Color:
Fiber: Wool Silk Cotton Linen Poly-Cotton   Machine Hand Made
Time Period:
Describe: Ruffles   Tuck   Trim/Lace   Long/Short Hem
Long/Short Dress   Long/Short/Sleeveless Sleeve
Neckline/Collar   Button/Front

Measurements for Women: Size: 6 8 10 12
Waist: Bust:
Back neck to back waist: Length:
Shoulder to shoulder across back:

Measurements for men: Size: Small Medium Large
Neck (Collar):   Chest:
Sleeve:

Wearable/Nonwearable
Condition: Stains Tears Fragile Buttons Missing
Other:

Garment: Dress Blouse Skirt Pant Underwear Blazer Vest Coat
Man: Woman: Child:
Color:
Fiber: Wool Silk Cotton Linen Poly-Cotton   Machine Hand Made
Time Period:
Describe: Ruffles   Tuck   Trim/Lace   Long/Short Hem
Long/Short Dress   Long/Short/Sleeveless Sleeve
Neckline/Collar   Button/Front

Measurements for Women: Size: 6 8 10 12
Waist: Bust:
Back neck to back waist: Length:
Shoulder to shoulder across back:

Measurements for men: Size: Small Medium Large
Neck (Collar):   Chest:
Sleeve:

Wearable/Nonwearable
Condition: Stains Tears Fragile Buttons Missing
Other:

Garment: Dress Blouse Skirt Pant Underwear Blazer Vest Coat
Man: Woman: Child:
Color:
Fiber: Wool Silk Cotton Linen Poly-Cotton   Machine Hand Made
Time Period:
Describe: Ruffles   Tuck   Trim/Lace   Long/Short Hem
Long/Short Dress   Long/Short/Sleeveless Sleeve
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Measurements for Women: Size: 6 8 10 12
Waist: Bust:
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Shoulder to shoulder across back:

Measurements for men: Size: Small Medium Large
Neck (Collar):   Chest:
Sleeve:

Wearable/Nonwearable
Condition: Stains Tears Fragile Buttons Missing
Other:

Figure 2.
Form found among class reports on garments.

As a group, we decided it was best to photograph each item and write a brief description, including basic information and linked to the photo number in each member's digital camera. This was the beginning of our database. We then calibrated our photos onto the main computer hard drive.

Creating space in this workroom was a major challenge for the group as well. Aside from housing items unrelated to the field, the room also lacked the space to store the amount of garments on hand. A blueprint of the room layout was created, and the room was assessed in order to make the most out of the workspace. Tables and cabinets were moved in order to create a photography area of the room.

With a multiuse space, it becomes necessary to create a working environment that can be adjusted, and removed, if necessary. Part of our plan is to create a semi mobile work area in which the room can still serve as a classroom, loom facility, and collection workroom. This space should include work stations that can be broken down and photography areas that can be set up and removed. The need to create multifunctional workspace is evident as many small institutions face issues with space and may not always have the permanent storage and workspace needed to work on a collection.

Comparable Institutions:

Comparable institutions we studied were the Tecumseh Historical Society; the Digital Dress Project featuring Detroit area museums; The University of Texas Drama Department located in the Winship Drama building; Kent State University; the Drexel Museums metadata system, through director Kathy Martin, and lastly, we examined the

Henry Ford Museum as the larger ideal model for the collection. By studying these similar institutions, we wanted to select the best method to fit our current situation.

Tecumseh Historical Society and Museum:

When comparing institutions, it is key to examine not only the larger ideal institutions but the smaller ones as well. These institutions are facing similar situations and issues as the Eastern Michigan University facilities and, therefore, are crucial examining points. Visiting the Tecumseh Historical Society was extremely helpful in studying institutions that are similar in size, staff, funding, prestige, and hold a large variety of objects as we do. Lisa Powell, who is a lecturer at Eastern Michigan University and Tecumseh Museum director, shared with us the organizational structure of her institution and how they developed the system over the years. Many of the same issues facing the EMU collection are prevalent among small area institutions such as Tecumseh Historical Society. The wide variety of objects housed in the collection and the unique storage needs are important elements to consider when creating an organizational structure. Through acquisition of grants, the Tecumseh Historical Society was able to purchase "Past Perfect", a software system designed for smaller collections, which allows for various data to be entered depending on the object, and key word searches based on the fields. Since the introduction of the "Past Perfect" software, the institution has been able to assign catalog numbers and update the catalog system from a paper to a digital system.

One of the main differences between the Tecumseh Historical Museum and the Collection of Eastern Michigan University is space, for the Tecumseh Historical Society has a designated permanent facility and greater storage space and conservation efforts.

Although the garments are on display the display conditions are furthering their aging

and deterioration; however, displaying which draws in visitors and funding. Many items

deteriorated from constantly being displayed.

Similarly, the Eastern Michigan University collection, although not on display,

would like to be used by faculty and students to learn from, while increased handling will

also speed up the aging and wear of the items. Lisa Powell expressed great concern over

keeping interest and function of a collection alive while still preserving the items that are

in use or on display. For this reason, we believe we must address handling and checking

items out from the collection as part of our instruction manual.

Eastern Michigan University Archives:

As a group, we also visited the Eastern Michigan University Archives and

interviewed Rosina Tammany, who is the archive curator in Halle Library. From a

university archival system we can learn the structure and methods for handling an even

larger variety of items that have been donated or saved from the University over the

course of over 150 years. We compared cataloging systems and found that the Eastern

Michigan University archives seemed to divide the collection into smaller manageable

collections and categories; however, we still found gray areas where collections blended

into other collections. Every grouped collection had a finding aid, which was a large

bound book with the paper form of the catalog information and where the item could be

found within the storage facilities. Although the collection is managed through a digital

software system, Rosina Tammany expressed the extreme importance of having any

information that is digitally stored backed up by a paper system. This finding aid not

only serves as such a backup system but it serves as a quick reference to locate an item in

the collection. We also discovered that they, too, had difficulties with storage space, an issue that seems to face every institution regardless of size or funding.

Although the archive collection was housed inside Halle Library, the information regarding the collection is not accessible from the library's catalog system. Instead, there is an entirely separate system used for the objects in storage, completely disconnected from the system used to research books and articles. While the essence of a library database system is used to research text, in which key words can be pulled from a set of larger text, it is interesting to note that a collection of objects has no such text and, therefore, must be approached differently. There can be no such interpretation in the text of a book; either the key words you are searching for are there, or they are not. When examining an object, no such set of key words are given. Instead, the information must be interpreted and extracted from the object, a process that is subjective and varied depending on the person examining it. Then how do you develop a data base system based on a collection of objects without structured text to search by? A costume collection should have searchable fields based on the information extracted from the object, but how do you determine what information is valuable and what is not? While you could search for an item in a costume collection by style, time period, color, uses, construction technique, items with buttons, items with lace, accessories type, or materials used to construct the item and so forth, the amount of categories you could potentially develop becomes so large that you must logically sort out what field a person would realistically use. A student in the library may want to examine every book with a blue cover; however, there is no way to search the database by cover color. Instead the text of the book is the focus. But when we look at a book not for its text but as an object, the

cover color or size of the book may be an interesting aspect to look at and then becomes a searchable field. The stark differences between a collection of text versus a collection of objects are very great.

Many collections today are the combination of previous collections reworked and developed to express different ideas. In these cases, you may need to search through a variety of nonrelated areas looking for particular characteristics to use for a developing exhibit. The Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City recently did this in the summer of 2006 with their tailoring exhibit. This collection featured items of varying dates, genders, purposes, and style to demonstrate the art of tailoring. The curators in this case cannot simply search their field for items that are tailored; such a field does not exist in most data bases. This is yet another example of the complexity in creating a searchable system. With many catalog areas blending into one another and museum environments changing, the development of such a system can become very difficult.

Creating Websites:

A common goal among other institutions is to establish and maintain an online searchable website, available to the wider community and accessible outside of the university. For our institution, we believe this type of informational access is important to the academic community, and addressed it early on as an important goal. While each item in the collection has been digitally photographed it is the long term goal of the collection project to create a searchable on-line database.

The goals of a collection should be established in order to efficiently manage time. Is it more important to have every item in the collection properly photographed and

featured online? Or should each item be physically cataloged and analyzed so its fields and item information are documented before the item is featured on the webpage. How much of the collection should be featured on the website? Should there be a sample of each category or should every single item be featured? These questions relate to the order in which tasks should be accomplished and what areas take priority. For our collection, it is best to put into place accurate catalog information, then to post the item online. It is not necessary to complete the entire cataloging system of every item before beginning work on the website; rather, as items information is completed, the item will then be qualified to be photographed and featured online.

The Drexel Digital Museum project evolved through a collaboration of the College of Media Arts and Design and the College of Information Science and Technology at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA. The majority of information contained in their collection was recorded on 3"x5" index cards containing limited data. In the report presented on their website, director Kathi Martin identifies the goals of the project as "allow[ing] broader public access to Drexel's unique collections … offer[ing] research opportunities within the collection on a global scale, train[ing] students in digital image management and museum informatics … protect[ing] the University's assets" (Martin, 2002). She further defines the project's end result as a searchable online database providing high quality images from multiple angles.

The Drexel collection had not had a curator in some time and had been moved between locations, so there were three different numbering systems in use. Many objects in the collection did not follow the biblio-numeric standard of accession date.number of objects in accession.sequence of object in accession. We find striking similarities in our

own collection here at Eastern Michigan University. Establishing a continuous naming convention allocates a unique identifier to each object in the collection and provides a structure for control. Images in Drexel's online database fall into one of seven categories, four of which are freely accessible to the public. For the Eastern Michigan University website, all images would be open to public and student viewing, as we believe the collection should be explored to the fullest extent. A 3-D panorama of the item is stored as a .mov file, and thumbnail, full-shot, and details are stored as .jpeg files. Those files not available to the public are the master images of full shot, detail images, and vector patterns of selected garments stored as .tiff files. The .tiff file format is a lossless type of file that contains metadata in the tag attached to the image and retains their high quality when digitally printed.

Metadata is data about the data within a record, in plain text format. For the object ID, Drexel used a system generated number; together, this naming system "creates unique identifiers for objects in the collection, indicates the use of the file, provides … description of the image ... and allows for the identification of the source of data" (Martin, 2002). Although the Drexel online project is far advanced from our own system, we found their web format to mirror the goals of our own collection's future website, and our system is reinforced by the similarities from other institutions. There is, however, no standard convention for cataloging garments and creating a searchable webpage.

For their data entry form, Drexel University staff created a hybrid based on existing structures for art images, fashion, and textiles and tailored it to the needs of their users, identified as costume scholars, fashion design students and faculty, and outside fashion designers. They wanted the project to be easily accessed by other universities

with similarly limited resources and have multiple searching formats. At Eastern Michigan University we also believe that our collection should be accessible by outside institutions. We would like it to serve as a model system for future emerging collections, just as our collections system emerges from the research of similar intuitions and is tried and tested to fit the needs of the unique collection. In the future, we would like to help other institutions learn the protocol and development of their collections. Users can search the collection by descriptive field or through the collection to which the item belongs. The metadata contained within each record prevents unrelated results from appearing on the list.

The Drexel database did not conform to the Dublin Core metadata system used to share data openly across the Internet, so the costume collection data could not be shared with other databases. Due to the size of the Dublin Core metadata system, which is fairly small, the system could be shared with other institutions, while the Drexel database is considerably larger. In comparison to our own collection, the fields established are small enough to be shared with other institutions but larger enough to incorporate the necessary information to search it.

The website home page of Drexel opens with a "runway" of thumbnail images, from which the user can select an item to learn more about. They can also presort the runway by creating a set of constraints by selecting the period, designer, category, fabrication, and donor. Similar information would be found on the future Eastern Michigan University page, although very little record remains of the donors to the collection. From the detail information screen the user is able to view the item in a 3-D panorama and view detail images. A 3-D panorama is a valuable tool to establish on the

website. Having the 3-D panorama allows viewers to completely view the garment and increase the visual information gathered from the site. Since fashion and personal adornment consist of multiple parts and are meant to be viewed in 3-D, our future website would also include an option to view the items in 3-D. Future plans for image records include a color calibration scale and a measurement scale in metric and inches. The image will be saved according to the MOAC (Museums and the Online Archive of California) specifications and saved as uncompressed .tiff files.

Another notable costume collection in which we based our research exists at Kent State University in Ohio. Their goal, as set out by Marcia Lei Zeng, associate professor at the School of Library and Information Science, is "to develop a catalog for a digitized collection of historical fashion objects …. and to analyze and evaluate how well existing metadata formats can be applied to a fashion collection" (Zeng, 1999). Zeng, not being directly involved in the historic costume field, concentrates mainly on the development of a data labeling system and the layout of a webpage. She begins with "an investigation of the unique characteristics of the discipline and the potential use of the collection" (Zeng, 1999). The dates of the items can influence how you catalog an item. Similar institutions will assign numerical codes to the item in the order in which they receive it. Since we are working with an already large collection of items, with most acquisition dates unknown, we will not be following this method.

Digitizing a collection and placing it online creates a new dynamic for a collection and makes these items available to a larger audience, including those who may not have previously been exposed to the collection. Zeng identifies the primary audience of the Kent State collection as museum registrars, art historians, curators and gallery

directors, art conservators, educators, and students. Collectors, administrators, critics, wardrobe designers, restorers, and the general public comprise the set of secondary users. Putting the content of the collection online is not merely a replacement for exhibition and study but allows for expanded knowledge and use of the collection by a wide range of users. Compared to the Drexel website, which strives for similar standards in image capturing, the Kent State University project has a clearly defined audience. While both attempt to establish metadata formats which can be applied to a costume collection, it is Drexel that has developed a format promoted by the Open Archives Initiative (OAI). Dublin Core and XML developments. (XML is a markup language for documents containing structured information.)

Photography:

In order to ensure our collection's website had professional and easy to view photographs that accurately displayed the items in the collection, efforts were made to research proper photography techniques and set guidelines for future use. Within the manual there are guidelines based on the Drexel University and Kent State University website, as well as the Digital Dress project. While basing the image guidelines on these websites photo standards, articles such as "Optimizing Photography for ITAA Design Exhibition Submission" by J.R.Campbell were recommended as a guideline and standard. We also experimented with lighting and mannequin positioning to best establish shadow free and even lighting photographs. When you begin to photograph a collection you are, in fact, creating another collection. For the collection of items there is now a collection,

of photographs, each with its own metadata. This data includes the date in which the picture was taken, if it needs adjusting, who took it, if its size is correct and others.

Determining how to communicate the contents and which aspects to index is a challenge to the collection director. We should also consider and establish the visual mood of the collection before constructing the webpage. How will our images appear and what atmosphere will they project to the viewer? There are also many guides as to which data to record, and Zeng provides a brief overview of the more prominent of these. L.F. Lunin, author of "Analyzing Art Objects for an Image Database", created a list of twenty-four relevant fields including theme, style, period, color, texture, surface embellishment, and provenance and exhibition history. During their existence, many items travel extensively and gain unique and notable stories about their wearers and various exhibitions. By noting the style and period, users can infer details about the era in which the item was produced and the cultural influence of and on clothing. These data fields can be organized into one of three broad categories: registration information, regarding when the item entered the collection and its history since acquisition; descriptive information, including pattern, fabric type, dyes and surface decoration; and subject/topic information, like terms that indicate the function of a garment, period of design, and cultural influence.

Cataloging:

Dating the object can be particularly complex considering there is a variety of dates you could feature: the date when the object was created, date in which it was worn or used, date in which it was donated, date in which it was restored, and so on. Each of these dates could potentially have a field of its own. So as we can see, even a field that

appears too simple is open to interpretation, and could have multiple sections within it. It is important to specify which date you intend to use, so there is no discrepancy in the catalog information.

From their website we could observe that he Kent State information also included a sample data form filled out to comply with the VRA (Visual Resources Association) core format. Main fields include title, material, color, structure, date, and notes about the general appearance and about its path through the collection. The field we created for our own collection consisted of approximate dates, color(s), category (garment, accessories, home goods, or raw material), object, sex, material, ornamentation, weight of fabrics, and manufacturing process. Although we cover the same core information as Kent State; we also add considerably more fields that are considered "main fields" and further fields that are considered minor.

Another institution we researched is the costume collection held at the Winship Drama Building at the University of Texas located in Austin. Their collection was not cataloged until the 1970s and data was recorded in several different formats. We felt this was a similar situation to ours as they had a wide range of nongarment items, and are working with limited support. Melissa Bradshaw, faculty in the Management of Preservation program, begins with an overview of the room layout and item storage. The main goal of this survey was to ascertain the damage to the collection and to recommend better storage ideas, as well as to get a better overall idea of what was held in the collection. After choosing a selective sample, Bradshaw prepared a sample data entry form and revised it with input from probable users of the collection.

Before developing their catalog forms, and deciding what information should be included, they identified our core group of users and those who might be interested in the data available from the collection. These users included design, anthropology, and theater professors and students; museum curators; community historians; and the general public. By identifying our audience, Bradshaw was able to tailor the forms to users who had little to some knowledge of the collection or historic costume in general. These sets of identified key audience members is very similar to those outlined by Marcia Lei Zeng at Kent Sate University

Each of the items surveyed included catalog number, location, approximate date, color, and the object type. With this data at hand, Bradshaw created the first prototype form and improved from that point. The item period, gender, fabric weight, manufacturing process, and condition of fabric were compiled into a form. Conservation methods were excluded because Bradshaw did not feel confident making recommendations, not being a costume or textiles conservator. To conclude the needs survey, she concludes that the collection held more than previously thought, gives storage recommendations, and suggests an estimated budget for purchasing conservation supplies. Bradshaw also includes the original and revised versions of her data harvesting forms, which we used extensively as a base for our cataloging forms.

We decided that a hybrid form would work best for us and borrowed liberally from the existing forms in the collection as well as the Kent State and University of Texas data forms. After the production of this first version, each of the class members took a random sample of five garments and filled out the form to the best of our ability, making notes about what changes we felt needed to be made (Figure 3). Proposed

changes included adding a more specific measurement field, clarification about the "Label" category, and further treatment options. In comparison with Drexel, we added categories such as conservation notes, of how the garment should be stored due to its condition, and treatment needs. The group consulted and changes were implemented on the forms. Further tests were done, especially on the nongarment items in the collection. This round of tests brought up many points that needed to be changed, fields that needed to be added or removed, and a general restructuring of the form (Figure 4).

Ideally, once the website is complete, we would like to create links to other websites so further information can be obtained, such as dyeing techniques, construction fabric, time periods, and so forth. With this in place, users are linked to other sources and, therefore, Eastern Michigan University has created a link for users to a larger body of knowledge and contributed to that body through their website.

It is evident that the skills and resources needed to maintain a collection of historical items are not accessible to everyone. Aside from the organizational needs, the storage requirements needed to prevent further damage and deterioration are not in place to everyone who holds a small collection. The question is how many small institutions do you really need? Similar comparisons can be made to a laboratory environment that is costly to build and maintain yet is shared with multiple institutions and outside organizations that collaborate to share the resource. Perhaps the same theory should be applied to historical collections as time passes and these items fall further into dust covered boxes in forgotten back rooms.

After speaking with members from both the Henry Ford Museum and the Tecumseh Historical Society, we found that there is difficulty in establishing consistency

among catalog information. Due to the variety in human description, what one staff member may call a day dress is in fact a evening dress, what one may call tiffany blue, others may call robin's egg blue, and so forth. Color inconsistency can be very wide, and no two people usually describe a color the same way. Inconsistency in a catalog system leads to item information being varied and inaccurate and searching the data base lengthy and tiresome. For these reasons, we aimed to establish a set of key words, terms for the individual items themselves, as well as a set of color names from which users of the collection could choose. These selected color names will be based on a set of color paint samples or the color wheels from Pantone, so the user can match the color chip to the item and label it its proper name. The colors should be selected based on the main color of the item. The main color is considered that color that holds the highest percent coverage of the item. The main color is followed by the secondary color, which is the second most dominant color of the item. If the item is patterned, the same color hierarchy applies. If the object is colored or patterned with equal proportions of two or more colors, then the colors are to be listed with a note stating that they are of equal proportion.

Catalog #   Location:

Approximate Dates: Color(s):

Object: Full length womens dress

Period:

Sex: Male   (Female)   Unisex   Child

Fabrics: Silk (Cotton) Linen (Lace) Velvet Wool Organza Other

Weight of Fabric(s) Thin/   Translucent   Medium   Thick

Manufacturing Process(es): Woven   Knitted   Crocheted   Other

Size: Labeled   _____   (Unlabeled/Hand Made)

Condition of Fabric: (Good)   Fair   Poor
Thin/Weak   Holes   Tears   Pulls/Snags (Loose Threads) Stains

Stitching: (Intact)   Not Intact

Closures: Buttons   Hook & Eye   Snaps
         (Intact, Not Intact) Intact Not Intact   Intact Not Intact
              Ties   (partially) None
         Intact   Not Intact

Ornamentation: (Intact   Not Intact   None

Measurements: x — still to be taken

Environmental Damage?   No (Yes....What Kind?   Fading)

Treatment Needed: Store as is: Layer with Tissue   Store in Box

                              Wrap with Tissue   ☒ all of the
                                                     above

(handwritten margin notes:) 1910 period blue we ♡ it

Figure 3.
The first version of the data cataloging form, with suggested changes written in. This example has been filled out using a randomly sampled garment.

Catalog #   Location:

Approximate Dates: 1940 1950   Color(s): _cream_
                                                          white

Object: _coat_

Period: _20th century_

Sex: Male   (Female)   Unisex   Child

Fabrics: Silk Cotton Linen Lace Velvet Wool Organza (Other

Weight of Fabric(s) Thin/   Translucent   Medium   (Thick)

Manufacturing Process(es) (Woven)   Knitted   Crocheted   Other _

Size: Labeled _22_   Unlabeled / Hand Made

Condition of Fabric: Good   (Fair)   Poor
    Thin/Weak   Holes   Tears   Pulls/Snags   Loose Threads   Stains
                                                          misplaced

Stitching: (Intact)   Not Intact

Closures: Buttons   Hook & Eye   Snaps
          Intact Not Intact   Intact Not Intact   Intact Not Intact
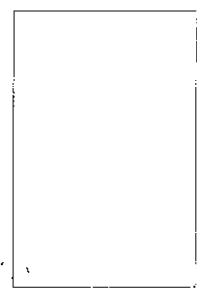
                Ties   Zipper   (None)
          Intact Not Intact   Intact Not Intact

Ornamentation: (Intact)   Not Intact   None

Measurements:

Environmental Damage?   No   (Yes...What Kind? _yellowing_)

Treatment Needed: Store as is: Layer with Tissue (Store in Box

                            Wrap with Tissue
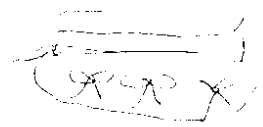
Picture of Item

Figure 4.
This version of the data entry form has had more closure options added as a placeholder for a thumbnail picture of the item on record. As you can see, there are still more changes to be made.

Catalog #   Location:

Approximate Dates: Color(s):
Object: # of pieces:

Sex: Male   Female   ~~Unisex~~   Child

Material: Silk   Cotton   Linen   Lace   Velvet   Wool   Organza   Nylon
          Leather   Rubber   Chiffon   Polyester   Fur   Other
Weight of Fabric(s) Thin/   Translucent   Medium   Thick

Manufacturing Process(es):   Woven-   Knitted-
                             Twill / Basket / Plain   Warp Knit / Weft Knit
                             Crocheted   Other

Manufacturing Label: _____   None

Industrially Produced   Machine Made   Hand-Sewn

Size: Labeled   Unlabeled / ~~Hand Made~~

~~Measurements:~~

Stitching: Intact   Not Intact

Closures: Buttons   Hook & Eye   Snaps
              Intact   Not Intact   Intact   Not Intact   Intact   Not Intact

              Ties   Zipper   None
          Intact   Not Intact   Intact   Not Intact

Ornamentation: _____   Intact   Not Intact   None

Condition of Fabric: Good   Fair   Poor

Thin/Weak   Holes   Tears   Pulls/Snags   Loose Threads   Stains   Misshapen

Environmental Damage?   No   Yes....What Kind?_____

Treatment Needed: Store as is: Layer with Tissue   Store in Box

                             Wrap with Tissue   Hang on Padded Hanger

Picture of Item

1st Pic.   Cleaned Pic.

Figure 5.
Changes made to this data form reflect the additions to the current data entry form.
Checkboxes for photo editing progress have been added and more fabric options are
listed.

A major part of the data entry system was creating a catalog numbering system. Several options were considered and discarded over the course of the semester. One of the first was a top-down alpha-numeric numbering system. Garments would be assigned a letter, starting with A for head wear and working down the body, starting from the inside layers and working out. So headgear would be followed by scarves, ascots and ties, which would be succeeded by brassieres and corsets, then slips, chemises, and undershirts, etc. This system was eventually discarded because nongarment items proved too hard to fit into the letter categories, and there was the danger of having more categories than letters in the alphabet. We also must establish if any information and meaning can be drawn from the catalog number alone. For instance, if the number starts with two, is that because it is a shoe and all shoes in the collection have the first digit of their catalog number as a two?

When we are creating a cataloging system, it is easy to create a format for 100 of the same items and far more difficult to create a system for 100 different items. After a brief period of being pushed to the sidelines, a brainstorming session produced the system we have decided to implement. Items will be categorized by type under the broad headings of "Garment," "Accessory," "Home good," and "Raw material." Item type will be indicated by the letter in bold. Following this category will be a gender field, including "Male," "Female," "Unisex," "Indeterminate" and "N/A." This will also be indicated by the bolded letter. The Drexel Museum project also considers the gender of the item (or whether it is gender neutral) as well as the age (used by an child verse an adult). The next field will be numeric. Each item will be assigned a four-digit number from 0000 to 9999. As the collection expands, further records can be added. For easier finding

purposes, the final element of the naming tag will be the color of the item. Patterned items will be categorized by the main color, followed by the second most predominate color. If an item truly consists of more than one color, a multicolor option will be provided. We can also at this stage leave an open box for a verbal description of the object that may help to provide a better visual image of the object.

Care and consideration should be given to those objects that are part of a set. Many items in an apparel collection are part of a greater set; garments may come with matching accessories or parts of a suit belong together. While each item is individual and should be considered that way with their own set of card information, it is very important to note they belong to a group and should be kept together when at all possible. In the case of ordering, do you assign numerical numbers to each piece of the set? Will they start with the assigned numerical order that represents what category the piece belongs to or should the set be given only one number? These are important questions to consider and address when dealing with sets.

More data could be added to the catalog number, but we decided that keeping the information to the bare essentials would avoid confusion since the project will be passed through multiple classes it will be easier to catalog in the long run. The data form we developed provides space for more descriptive fields, as well as the accompanying image of the item in question. All completed data forms will be stored in paper form in at least one comprehensive binder, and a finding aide with key subject words will also be produced.

Digital Information:

Transferring the collected data to a computer database was the second main goal of the class. From a digital form the information would be easily transferable to an online format and could be shared across the web. We experimented with many programs, each of which had strengths and weaknesses. Microsoft Excel was the first in a line of choices, but it was not flexible enough for the type of data we were recording. Excel operates based on formulas, and there was no logical or easily implemented way to translate the multiple types of data into one format that could be quantified. Because of the visual nature of our data, pictures will be included in the computer database and Excel did not allow for easy insertion of images.

The next program tested for database suitability was Microsoft Access. As the data we are gathering is more visually based than word based, tailoring the forms to fit our needs would be a time-consuming effort. By creating a database with sub- and sub-sub-forms we were also afraid that the data contained would not transfer easily to other programs or formats. Access and Excel are both used in the garment industry to track pattern pieces and for management purposes, but for the depth and variety included in our collection; they were not user-friendly or able to be learned easily by new students entering the project after we are gone.

There is a theme among institutions of finding a middle ground between what is ideal for the institution and what is feasible given the resources. While every institution would like to have the latest equipment, the largest space in which to work, a showcase area in which to present work and exhibits, the best archival storage resources, it is almost never possible or easy to attain. It is very easy to research what is the best and

suggest that as the plan for the institutions; however, these plans are not obtainable and often useless. It is far more difficult to develop a plan based on what you have to work with, a feasible proposal that can realistically be executed and followed by others. It is this type of plan I intend to create with the assistance of my instructor and three fellow students.

Future Plans:

Research was done in regard to what materials the program should invest in for further use. There were two main companies we found that provided the highest-quality supplies, but they came at a cost: Light Impressions and University Supplies. Funding for the project is limited, so we could only generate a list of what is needed and acquire a few items such as pH papers. Fran Faile, conservationist at the Henry Ford Museum, recommended University Supplies and Light Impressions as quality suppliers of archival material and supplies. We contacted the companies to request catalogs to have on hand in the room for future use. While comparing suppliers and products we found that for many items such as humidity readers and temperature gauges, the latest and most expensive items had more features and uses then our institution would need. We did determine minimal requirements for lighting and storage, which are outlined in the manual.

There is a great deal of importance in the idea of preservation. To preserve items is to ensure that future generations will have the same opportunity as previous ones to see history and the objects that represent past generations and time periods. Preservation is an attempt to keep items that are irreplaceable from being lost forever. The unique aspect about collections is that once the years have passed and those who created the objects

have gone, the items become irreplaceable due to the fact that they have aged. Although in theory you could re-create a similar item you can never re-create an original. The only reason we have any items from the past, whether it is an original disco ball or an ancient Egyptian vase, is that a series of individuals have taken care over the years that the item was cared for and removed from harm. Today's society owes a great deal of gratitude to those who have come before us to preserve items so we may still have them today.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out the difference between conservation and preservation. Conservation means to repair and make new again, to restore an item to its original state, while preservation focuses on the item as it is and attempts to keep it in that states neither repairing it nor letting any further damage or aging affect it. There is a philosophical question facing museum staff today on whether they should alter an item. Is it right to have the resources and not alter the item to its original state, is it right to add new material to an object, to strip away its original form simply to present it to the viewer as looking new again? This is an issue and a philosophical question that continues to arise among historical and museum patrons. This process can only occur when you have structure within the collection.

Conclusion:

With interest in material culture on the rise, the importance of small collections continues to grow. The demands of a collection grow due in part to the rise of technology and the need of digital access combined with handling needs. Handlers of such collections must pay particular attention to the changing trends, and, in an effort to

contribute to the greater body of knowledge, modernize their collection as other institutions are currently in the process of doing.

We propose a protocol manual for using the garment lab, adding data, storage techniques, handling new additions to the collection, photographing items, and database searching. We have created complete detailed instructions on how each area should be handled and the protocol used by future students and instructors while working with the collection. This manual will help maintain order in the collection, assist in easy search ability and access for particular items, and prevent future damage to the collection due to improper handling and storage.

Through shared collaboration, we were able to write this functional system for those who come after us. Given the time and research that was conducted, we believe that we have presented the best system to fit the unique needs of the institution and the nature of the collection. Based on the needs of the collection, we have established protocols and yet followed the standards set by the industry and modified them to fit our unique situation. The system is testable, improvable, and expandable. There is no doubt that in the future the collection will grow, the purpose of the collection will change, the uses and nature of the work will change. The system we created is expandable to meet the changing situations, needs of the collection, as well as the direction of Eastern Michigan University.

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Protocols and a Starters Manual
For The
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Domestic Apparel Collection

- **Checking items in and out**
  - ○ Check in /out log book is located on the counter in the corner of the room between closet number six and one.
  - ○ The log book included the date checked out, name of the object(s), professor's name and contact information, class the item will be used for, and the date the item was returned.

  *Note: that an item may only be removed from the lab by an EMU faculty member. Students wishing to study garments, or items, may do so in the lab. Items may only be checked out for one day, to be used for class, and then returned that same day, or the next. Any removal of items from the collection must be recorded in the log book, regardless of the purpose, or length of time.

- **Log-Books**
  - ○ Log books will be used to record who is working in the lab, and what is accomplished during that time.
  - ○ The log book is located on the counter in the corner of the room between closet number six and one, along side the Check in /out log book.
  - ○ Any student or faculty member who wishes to work in the lab must log in.
  - ○ The log book includes the date, name of the person using the lab; check in time/ check times, and what they are working on. This is done so others can track the labs progress, to prevent repetitive work, and to account for the frequency of lab use.

- **Handling & Hanging Garments**
  - ○ You must wear white cotton gloves when physically handling a garment in the lab. This is to prevent further damage to the garments from the dirt and

oils on hands. Gloves are located in the supply cabinet which is the first cabinet to your right as you enter the room.

o Other supplies such as, Ph paper, measuring tape, scissors, tape, extra forms etc, are also located in the supply cabinet. Any additions to the supply collection should be stored with the rest of the supplies in the designated cabinet.

o To examine a garment or item, first check that the surface you are working on has no dirt, spills, dust, or clutter on it. Lay the item flat, facing up on the table top or work counter. Try to avoid any heavy folds, when the garment is on the table, as folding puts stress on the seams, and fibers of the garment.

o There is absolutely no food or drinks in the lab while items are out of storage.

o Avoid over handling exceptionally delicate garments, when at all possible. Keep folds, bending and garment movement to a minimum.

o All items should be placed back into the box, closet or rack in which they were found, in the exact same order. Items must be re-wrapped with tissue, or hung on padded hangers to prevent storage damage.

- **Tissue Paper Storage**

  o Tissue paper storage is used to prevent further damage to garments and items. Acid free tissue is the only type of tissue paper used to wrap items, or layer over garments.

  o Wrapping items is too completely cover from all angles the item and then store it. Layering garments is used on garment to weak to hang, layered items should be laid flat, with tissue on the bottom, the garment with tissue in between each layer of the garment, then a final layer of tissue on top to prevent any dust from settling on the garment.

  o A garment needs tissue paper storage if it is especially weak in the shoulder area, and cannot be hung on padded hangers. If the seams are coming apart, or if there are holes in the garments then it should be laid

flat and layered with acid free tissue. Accessories and other items should be wrapped in tissue when in storage to prevent dust damage.

- o Tissue is in a brown paper wrapping and located on the counter.
- o Use tissue sparely on items, but enough to completely cover the items being wrapped or layered.

- **Maintenance of Room**
  - o The room should be cleaned at least every 3-4 weeks.
  - o Cleaning should include vacuuming the floors, dusting the room with a damp cloths, so that the dust is picked up, not brushed up into the air, and countertops should be wiped down with water or a light cleaner.

  * Do not use any strong chemicals while cleaning the counters, drawers, or closets as the fumes may damage the garments, and the residue may get on the items.

  - o Any cleaning supplies should be returned to the supply closet located nearest to the door.
  - o Common cleaning supplies can be purchased at any grocery store, however, archival supplies such as tissue, boxes, Ph paper, light and temperature meters and others will have the be purchased through "Light Impressions", "University Supplies" or other credible archival storage companies.

- **Maintaining Cataloged / Storage Order**
  - o Keep catalog book in designated location
  - o Do not remove pages from book; copy what you need, then return pages in the same original order.
  - o When examining garments, check the tag on the items before returning it to the closet to be sure it hasn't fallen off.
  - o Closets and drawers should be checked monthly to reaffirm correct order and relocate any misplaced items.

- o Check the In/Out log book to verify that nothing is overdue or that someone has forgotten to check an item back in.
- o The catalog system should be tested by randomly checking an item in the catalog book with its location in the room. This should be done at least once a month, to a variety of items in different categories. Example: test the location of a coat, child's shoes, purse, skirt, and dress.

Photography Protocols

Set up

- Hang backdrop on wall, at least 3 feet above mannequin head. Use double-sided tape
- Backdrop can pool on the floor, or be pulled out to cover area under mannequin
- Place mannequin stand on backdrop 3 feet away from wall
- Secure lower portion of form to base
- Secure upper torso to base
- Attach arms and/or head, if need be
- Make sure all body segments are aligned and facing forward. Make sure arms are on correct sides

Camera

- Should be on tripod 5 ft away from mannequin

- Adjust setting to type of light used

- Make sure camera has a high enough resolution to capture details – at minimum

5.0 mega pixels

   For a digital

- If possible, adjust the sharpness, contrast and saturation of image quality. These

can also be

   Manipulated later in a photo editing program

- Use the high quality photo option

- If camera has it, use a portrait or collection setting

- Camera angle can change the perception of a piece. Too low an angle will lengthen/heighten the

      Piece and too high an angle will shorten it

Lighting

- This is the most important aspect of the photo record
- Overhead room lighting needs to be turned off
- Make sure there is even lighting over item surface
- Plug lights into power strip and control them that way. Turn off immediately after use – bulbs burn out quickly
- Use white balance setting to make sure camera is reading pure white. Should be able to auto-correct
  - Hold a perfectly white flat item, at least 10 inches square, where you will photograph the piece
  - Navigate to the white balance menu and choose the option to 'measure' the balance. Save the setting and it will apply to all photos you take until you take a new measurement or return the setting to automatic

Types of Shots

- Make sure to get close-up shots of details on the piece. Do this by increasing the zoom and slightly angling the camera if absolutely necessary
- At minimum, shoot front, back and sides (if applicable) of a piece

<u>After the photo is taken</u>

Importing photos to computer

- Before transferring photos, go through the camera memory and note which photos need to be transferred. Avoid duplicates or unrelated images
- Using the USB cord, attach ends to camera and computer
- Transfer selected images to Costume Conservation folder on desktop.

- o In the "New Images" folder, you will need to create a sub-folder with the date and your initials as the title.
- o There is a limit of 10 sub-folders in the "New Images" folder. When this limit is reached, the files need to be rotated, cropped and color corrected using a photo editing program
- o Individual file names should be as follows: date picture was taken. Your initials. Item catalog number ex: 4-17-2007.CAC.GW4055
- o On the cataloging sheet accompanying each item, mark the progress of the photograph, through transfer and editing
- o After the photos are edited, they should be moved, still in the sub-folder, to the "Cleaned Images" folder
- o When image is clean, a thumbnail needs to be attached in the correct space on the datasheet

Top of Backdrop

Light

Dress form, 3ft from wall

Camera, on tripod
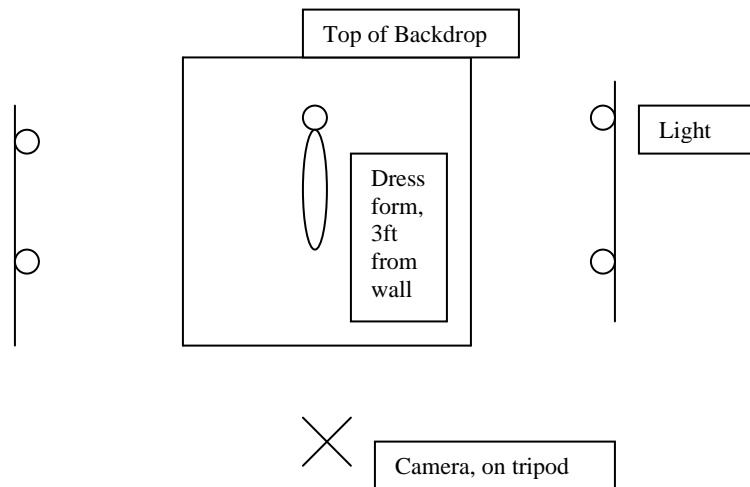
Garment-specific Instructions

Make sure garments are handled with the proper care and respect, as outlined in the Garment Handling section.

- - Use gloves, limit exposure to light, keep room closed to avoid outside contamination

- Lay flat when pieces are waiting to be hung up or put on form
- Make sure garment is in stable enough condition to be put on a form. Shoulder seams should be strong, waistband should be stable and ornamentation should be secure

Dressing the Form

- Unfasten closures carefully
- Slip garment over top of form, being careful not to snag
- Refasten only as many closures as needed for garment to retain shape and stay on form
- Stuff sleeves with acid-free tissue if need be
- Check that any belts or accessories are with garment
- Check that hems are straight, collars are properly folded, shoulder seam is sitting straight
- Remove extraneous items from photo area

Undressing the Form

- Unfasten belts or sashes
- Unfasten closures
- Remove tissue from sleeves
- Have hanger ready, or spot to lay garment flat
- Carefully, lifting from the bottom hem and wearing gloves, lift the garment over the top of the form
- Refasten closures, replace belt or sash
- Replace on hanger or in safe storage area, AS YOU FOUND IT
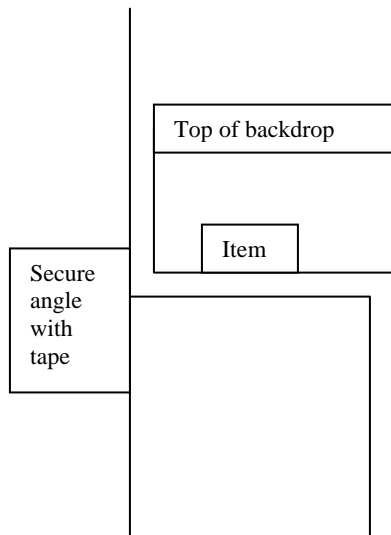
Flat Item-specific Instructions

Setting Up

- Using counter space, hang backdrop 2 feet up on wall and allow to flow over the counter and down the cabinets. Use tape to secure to backsplash area if backdrop will not follow 90 degree angle
- Using adjustable lights on telescoping bases set 4 lights so there is even coverage over piece. Larger items may require more lighting
- Tripod will have to be set at lease 3 feet higher than the counter, and swiveled down so camera is parallel to the piece
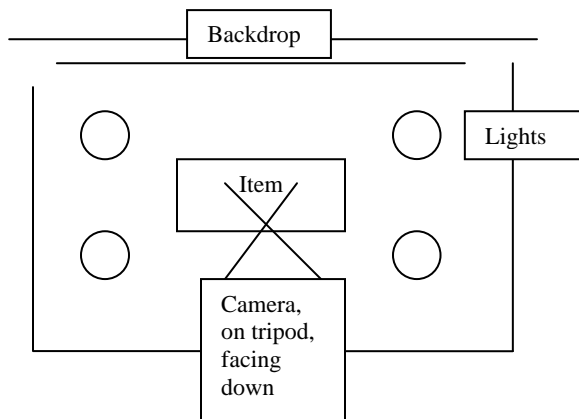
Handling Items

- Wearing gloves, remove item from storage space and lay on backdrop, at one end
- Carefully, without tugging or yanking, unfold piece
- Make sure right side is up
- When front/detail shots are done, fold item in half on self. Keeping a gentle hold on the upper edge, slowly move the lower edge out from underneath. This will turn the piece upside down with less trauma to the fabric
- After back/detail shots are done, refold the item, taking care not to put the creases in exactly the same spot. Doing so will cause that area to weaken over time. Instead, alternate between halves and thirds
- Replace item in acid-free tissue, note your progress on the data sheet and return item to where you found it

Side View of Setup

Top of backdrop

Item

Secure
angle
with
tape

Top View of Set-up

Backdrop

Lights

Item

Camera,
on tripod,
facing
down

Accessories-specific Instructions

Flat pieces – gloves, stockings, handkerchiefs, etc.

- Follow directions for flat items, making sure to capture details
- Keep items in pairs, is they come as such

Shoes

Setup

- Set up backdrop as if for flat piece
- Light stands can be placed on the floor
    - One pair should be set 4 feet above counter top
    - One pair should be set slightly lower than counter edge, avoiding shadows and illuminating the underside of the shoe
- Camera should be placed on tripod 3 feet away from item, level with the middle of the shoe – about 4 feet up

Photos

- First should be a head on shot of the front of the shoes
- Second, rotate the right shoe 90 degrees, to show its inner side
- Back of both shoes
- Back of left shoe, outer side of right shoe
- Make sure to capture any details, or damaged areas
- To get the top and bottom angles, you will need to move the camera into the position used for photographing flat items
- Top of both shoes
- Detail of label
- Bottom of both shoes – may require props to hold them upright

After photos, note progress on sheet. Wrap shoes in tissue if need be and return to where you found them.
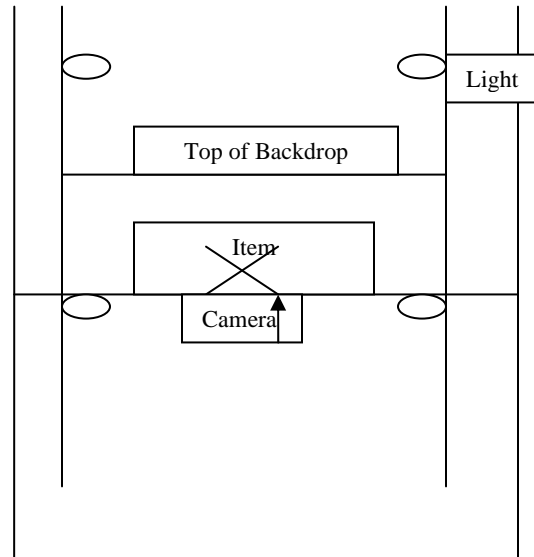
Bags

- Set up is the same as for shoes
- Handle may need to be suspended. This can be done with a simple loop of fishing line held in your hand, or by someone else. Make sure to only apply as much force as needed to hold the handle upright, not lift the bag
- At least one detail shot of closure(s)
- Front, back,, sides, top and bottom should be the basic set of images
- If there is a label, make sure to get a photo of that as well. May require help propping the flap/lib/closure open
- When done, replace tissue filler/wrapping and return to storage location. Note photography process on data form

Hats

- Setup will also be the same as for shoes and bags

- Hat should be placed on blank head form

- Make sure veil, appliqués or any other ornamentation is correctly placed and front of hat is aligned with front of form

- Front, sides, back, top and bottom are minimum images.

- Details should be well-documented

- If there are size and/or manufacturer's labels, make sure to get a legible shot of these

- When done, re-stuff with tissue, wrap, and return to hat box or other storage system

Organization

- **Map of room**
- **Current state of room**
  - **Closet #1** - all garments that should be hung on padded hangers
  - Variety of clothing men, women and child
  - Organized and placed by length of clothing
  - Top shelf garments that can be folded are neatly placed

  - **Closet #2** - variety of clothing, mostly women's garments
  - Same as above
  - Boxes placed on closet #1 and 2 of ties, men's underwear, jeans accessories etc…

  - **Big/ long counter** – drawer and cupboards # 5
  - Organized and neatly placed
  - Paper work, folders, research and students work slides and pictures
  - On top of counter – delicate garments placed with PH paper/ tissue
  - Folded garments

  - **Center counter** – work shop counter, free work surface #

- Thin long drawers delicate beaded garments placed with tissue paper

- **<u>Photo wall</u>** – cleared space for garment photography

- **<u>Racks</u>** – hung garments on padded hangers, racks covered with cloth fabric

- **<u>Shelf racks</u>** – boxed shoes, some boxed accessories
- Neatly organized accessories, hats, purses, gloves, ties, etc..
- Located in the narrow room closest to front door.

- **<u>Closets in narrow room</u>** – closet closes to the door #.
- clothing organized on padded hanger
- Children, shirts and negligent placed
- Second closet #   women's clothing.

- **Future plans/ investments**
  - Each closet should be placed or organized by different garments, such as men, women and child
  - Organize closets and cupboards by catalog # (once created)
  - Make more padded hangers

  Things that will be an Investment:
  - Boxes (tyvak) - doesn't allow vapor in, but lets it out.
  - Tyvak bags and cover can be made
  - Option for more research on boxes and safe storage
  - Mobil racks
  - Storage unit on wheels

Small counter will be mission control:

- Laptop

- Folders

- Log in book

- Lamp

- Lighting and photo equipments

- All important necessities

- Above counter, build shelves for records etc..

Big/ long counter:

- An investment can be already built cupboards

- Safe and light

- Be placed on the counter, for more storage space

- Pictures and examples provided on back

Narrow room/ closest to door

- Invest and place shoe rack and accessory shelf all across wall

- Closet closest to wall re-organize, maybe place all magazines and articles in basement and provide more space for the garments. Would be safe

When project succeeds

- Provide more closets and cupboards

- If possible another room for expansion

- More drawers for delicate items

- Provide safe environment for accessories, closets, boxes

- Rack for all shoes

- PH boxes all different sizes, light, temp etc…

Photo wall

- provide a high quality background

- invest in lights and photo equipments
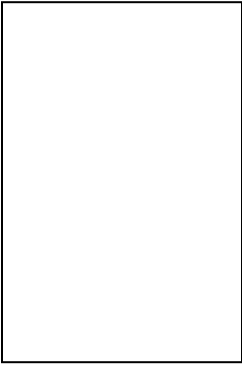- light rods

- **Cataloging/ digital/ computer programming**
    - # all garments for easy access once transferred

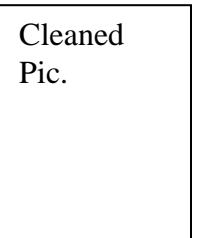   Example: closet #1 – BLKdrss1a Stands for (black dress 1 a)
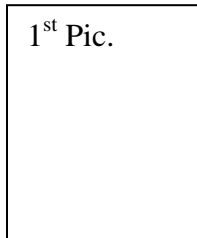
    - web catalog (add and changes can be made) all important information about garments
    - each sheet will come with the photo of garment
    - Access, perfect etc...
    - Create website – include history, funds, pictures, promotions, garments etc…
    - Catalog book available provided- everyone and things will be signed IN-OUT
    - provide back up plan filed and organized

Example of Final Catalog Card

Catalog #   Location:

Approximate Dates: Color(s):

Object: # of pieces:_____

Sex: Male   Female   Unisex   Child

Material: Silk Cotton Linen Lace Velvet Wool Organza Nylon
          Leather   Rubber   Chiffon   Polyester   Fur   Other

Weight of Fabric(s) Thin/   Translucent   Medium   Thick

Manufacturing Process(es):   Woven-   Knitted-
                             Twill / Basket / Plain   Warp Knit / Weft Knit
                             Crocheted   Other

Manufacturing Label: _____   None

Industrially Produced   Machine Made   Hand-Sewn

Size: Labeled_____   Unlabeled / Hand Made

Measurements:

Stitching: Intact   Not Intact

Closures: Buttons   Hook & Eye   Snaps
               Intact   Not Intact   Intact   Not Intact   Intact Not Intact

               Ties   Zipper   None
          Intact   Not Intact   Intact   Not Intact

Ornamentation:_____ Intact   Not Intact   None

Condition of Fabric: Good   Fair   Poor

Thin/Weak   Holes   Tears   Pulls/Snags   Loose Threads   Stains   Misshapen

Environmental Damage?   No   Yes….What Kind?_____

Treatment Needed: Store as is: Layer with Tissue   Store in Box

                             Wrap with Tissue   Hang on Padded Hanger

Picture of Item

1st Pic.

Cleaned
Pic.

Detailing of 1920's Day Dress

Example of wire hanger damage and delicacy of items.

Example of multiple part sets
Includes: dress, cape and hair bow

Sample of beaded Victorian embellishments for jackets or evening wear

Detailing from late Victorian outerwear jacket

Photography experiments and storage areas

Recommended Suppliers

Light Impressions
P.O. Box 787,
Brea, CA 92822-0787

<http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com>

University Products Inc.
517 Main Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

<http://www.universityproducts.com>
<http://www.archivalsuppliers.com>

Archival Products
P.O. Box 1413
Des Moines, IA 50306-1413

<http://www.archival.com/>