

MEANINGFUL MATERIALS: REVITALIZING HISTORY AND HERITAGE THROUGH  
HANDS ON EXPERIENCES

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**Title**

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North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted  
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**MASTER OF ARTS**

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## ABSTRACT

The Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project form the case study for this paper. This project used participant observation and interviews with the undergraduate anthropology students that worked on the Fargo Theatre project and interviews with local practitioners in the fields of public history, archival practice and anthropology. The results produced an understanding of how historical materials can affect participants. An increased trend of community involvement, renewed historical interest, and new identity within the community were some of the personal connections that that students made with the historical materials.

Working with the Fargo Theatre materials not only presented an opportunity for some historically valuable materials to be discovered and maintained, but the students' involvement became more meaningful than anticipated. The strong personal connections students made with their community identity and their increased knowledge, and appreciation for the history of this area became a highlight throughout the project.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

### The Historic Fargo Theatre

The historic Fargo Theatre, conceived by T.F Powers and Company, opened to its first crowd in downtown Fargo, North Dakota on March 15, 1926. Attracting community attention from its beginnings, the Theatre offered seating for 1,300 people and a grandiose classic Baroque Revival style designed by Henry Orth, architect with Buechner & Orth (Fargo Theatre Management Corporation: 1996). The façade was fashioned with deep red brick, arches decorated the second story oversized windows, and grotesque open-mouthed figures, also running up the side of the building you can see the marquee reading “Fargo.”The two-story complex included balcony seating that was perfect for viewing the variety of vaudeville shows and silent film features popular during this era. Owners Finkelstein and Ruben had an opulent Wurlitzer pipe organ made specifically for the Theatre and the stage, which was fully operational (including a flyloft) in order to accommodate a number of specialty vaudeville acts.

When the American Amusement Company (AAC) in Minneapolis, MN took ownership of the Fargo Theatre in July of 1926, its goal was to create the finest theater in North Dakota. AAC brought in Edward Kraus as the new manager, and he shaped it into a community icon over the next thirty years. While making Fargo the new regional headquarters for the AAC, the Kraus family made Fargo their new home and Hildegard Usselman Kraus, Edward’s wife, became the signature organist. Throughout the 1930s, significant changes occurred to the country as well as the theater industry. The popularity of audio films increased rapidly, and the vaudeville shows and silent film era soon died. Edward Kraus became an innovative spirit keeping the Theatre alive during the depression, and the following war years. He would offer free lemonade and



peanuts to children attending movies and support war bond sales by incorporating these programs into everyday entertainment.

In 1937, the Fargo Theatre was purchased by the Minnesota Amusement Company who closed the theater for remodeling. Jack Liebenberg was the architect for the renovation process and the new design was an Art Deco styling. The new look created a unique atmosphere for moviegoers, who described the theater as “grandiose and spectacular, enhancing the entertainment experience greatly.” By the late 1930s, silent films had become a remnant of the past and the fine Wurlitzer organ fell into disuse. Kraus continued to bring the Fargo-Moorhead area the finest of popular films and entertainers to keep crowds captivated. Modifications to the façade of the Theatre enhanced curb appeal along Broadway Street and the seating was reconditioned for a more comfortable experience.

The Theatre continued to deliver quality films and performances throughout the next few decades, but major changes occurred in the 1970s when Lance Johnson and David Knutson, with the help of the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS) for the Red River Valley, approached the Theatre owners with a new idea. Using funding from ATOS, they proposed to restore the Wurlitzer organ, which had been left dormant for decades, to its original working integrity, making it enjoyable for future generations. The Theatre owners allowed the restoration, and Johnson and Knutson were able to restore the organ to an operable condition. They added several new adjustments and modifications to the organ and it was fashioned with two playable consoles and twelve working pipes. The Fargo Theatre has now been presenting organ performances and organ-accompanied silent movies to modern crowds ever since its restoration. These performances are rare, and the Fargo Theatre houses one of only two other working organ of this type, the other sits in Radio City Music Hall in New York.

The unique and well-maintained styling of the theater, a beautiful and unique Wurlitzer organ, and the many stories originating with this iconic institution made it the perfect candidate for the National Registry for Historic Places. The Fargo Theatre was nominated for this distinction in 1982 in order to ensure the preservation of historic arts and film while maintaining a specific piece of Fargo-Moorhead heritage - the building itself. The Earl C. Reineke Foundation took on a \$500,000 project to restore the lobby in 1987 to its original glory. Art Deco styling was retained throughout the building, including wall mirrors, a black reflective glass entryway, and an open ceiling in the foyer that created a two-story lobby.

The Fargo Theatre (Figure 1.1) continues to play an important role in the community by maintaining the silent movie traditions, and involving local performance groups such as the Fargo-Moorhead Civic Opera Company and Trollwood Performing Arts School. The Theatre features independent and popular films and hosts numerous film festivals, fundraising events, and popular musical performances. The Theatre now operates as a non-profit entity with elected board members, and continues to have a positive impact on the North Dakota arts and film industry. It is a very important local historical and cultural icon for the Fargo-Moorhead community.



Figure 1.1. Exterior View of the Fargo Theatre. (Photo by Amanda Nordick, October 10, 2012; Fargo, ND.)

## Introduction to the Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project

The Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project utilized students to preserve historically valuable materials within the theatre from destruction, and helped us to understand the social processes of creating historical records. This project is a case study for evaluating how historical records are created, how they are used and interpreted by community members, and how these processes take place and change over time. The initial need for preserving materials within the Theatre arose from concerns over endangered historical

materials facing environmental deterioration issues. While doing research on the sociocultural history of the Theatre, former North Dakota State University (NDSU) graduate student Jessica Rau recognized the extent of the deterioration and the materials' importance. Travis Kitch, lecturer and historical archaeologist for NDSU, and Rau initially approached the previous Executive Director, Margie Bailey, with a project to recover historical materials in the basement and develop a museum within the theater to highlight its priceless history. The project did not progress due to time and money constraints.

In 2011, Joy Sather-Wagstaff, assistant professor of anthropology at NDSU, and Jessica Brown and myself, both graduate students in anthropology proposed a new project to Fargo Theatre Executive Director, Emily Beck. We were able to provide a low-cost recovery solution that would not require Theatre funding for the preservation and archiving of endangered historical materials. The proposal included the support of the Institute for Regional Studies Archives, as they focus on collecting historically valuable material documents that showcase the history of the region. The Theatre will have the ability to use items from the archive for various events or exhibits in the future, thus keeping with the original intentions of Kitch and Rau.

With the approval of the Theatre, a team of field study students worked in fall of 2011 to systematically uncover and catalog an array of historically valuable materials within the Theatre basement. As the team worked through this salvage project, we realized that many of the items of potential historical value were deteriorating. While working with the field study students, we discussed issues regarding the recovery of materials and their transition to archives. It was evident that further research should be done to understand this process from a practice-centered perspective. This thesis project, by combining information about student experiences, my own experience, and interviews with professional historic preservation/archival staff, produces an

understanding of the relationships that form between practitioners and materials during the process of creating historical records.

### Current Context for the Project

The Fargo Theatre is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, and thus the structure and aesthetic Art Deco elements must be maintained and protected. However, there is an unrealized need to consider identifying and preserving potentially important historical and cultural items contained within the building itself. Because the building has been in operation since 1926, it is safe to assume that there are many more material representations of its more than eighty years in operation than just the building alone. There should be artifacts (such as documents, films, artwork, photographs, etc.) that hold historical significance and value for the Theatre, which would accompany the building as a story-telling mechanism. Finding where these materials reside can often be tricky however, when the research team first took a trip down into the basement of the Fargo Theatre it became quite clear where the last eighty years of materials had collected... Everywhere! (Figures 1.2 and 1.3.)

While there is little that can be done about the geographic location of this historic building and even less that can be accomplished with our continuous yearly flooding only four blocks from the Theatre, we can work to mitigate the potential damage to some items housed in the Theatre basement. The environmental hazards of flooding and high water tables cause loss and devastation in the Red River Valley require that we work to protect local heritage and maintain those materials in a more protective environment. There is a need to preserve culturally relevant materials so that current and future generations are able to understand the context of the Theatre through more than just the building's physicality, or through fragile memories.



Figures 1.2. The Fargo Theatre Basement Film Room (top) and Projector Room (bottom).  
(Photos by Veronica Krile, October 11, 2011; Fargo, ND.)

With the support of the Fargo Theatre Executive Director and the Board of Directors, our team was able to offer our assistance, expertise and time to remedy this issue. The Materials Recovery Project collaborated with the NDSU Institute for Regional Studies, which agreed to house historically valuable materials the Theatre wished to deposit. We were able to recruit several undergraduate students excited for the opportunity to recover these historically relevant

materials and gain practical preservation knowledge and fieldwork course credit through NDSU. With archival preservation expertise, and a passion for sustaining heritage, three anthropologists, and several student volunteers set out to protect the tangible cultural heritage in the basement of the Fargo Theatre.

The conditions within the basement were not ideal for housing any culturally significant items as damp and dusty environments increase deterioration. To properly preserve these materials for future use in research, displays and educational purposes, they need to be housed in a hospitable environment to prevent rampant decay. Another issue still at play is the sheer volume of materials at this location, where time and care are required to keep an orderly account of exactly what is being uncovered. Throughout this project, there was the potential for finding many or few artifacts of consequence. The materials in the basement did demonstrate gaps as we found materials from the 1930s through the 1970s with very little from the 1980s.

There were decades of stage props, concession items, camera equipment, and a beautiful array of holiday decorations in every corner. With no original order to speak of, we crafted a concise plan for maintaining order among chaos. Beyond the dusty boxes and behind the concession items we saw glimpses of the past with tattered stage backdrops and signed movie posters, which could not yet be reached through the clutter. The first stage in getting to those culturally important materials was to clean through the present to uncover the past. The second stage was to carefully document items found by the project team after the initial cleaning. These stages constitute the body of this proposed thesis work: the initial crafting of a permanent archive for the Fargo Theatre materials, qualitative research on the processes of making historical records, and studying information from the perspectives of the students and professionals involved in materials recovery work.

## Site Overview

When first entering the Fargo Theatre, sleek back reflective doors lead into a two-story foyer with cool indigo blue and pink neon tube lighting. The Theatre itself is characteristic of the 1930s with continued soft blue and pink lighting that cascades down the walls of the theater, directing focus to the stage. Entering the basement of the Fargo Theatre is a stark contrast to the inviting entrance hall. A dark cold concrete staircase leads down into the basement and at the bottom of the staircase, there is a large locked door to the right with a unique and uninviting handle, and in front is a knee-high landing stacked with popcorn “butter.” The only option to move forward is the short staircase to the left. Up these stairs and past the light-switches there is the space that had been divided and compartmentalized, revealing the multiple ways that this basement was utilized in the past, and those spaces that are still being used.

Just up the stairs and to the left, there are two large piles: one of paperwork haphazardly arranged into boxes, and the other was what came to be known as the “computer graveyard” which as one can imagine, was an assortment of the best computers that each generation had to offer along with all the necessary accessories. Around the corner from the computers, there is the soda-pop vending tubing that leads upstairs and tucked behind that are a fully operational washer and dryer set.

Two very distinct operational areas exist in this basement. First, there is the “office” which was enclosed from the rest of the basement. The other is the “film room,” an open area with stairs leading down half a level from the rest of the basement and used for viewing films as well as storing various modern film posters, film reels and holiday decor. The office is used as practicing area for an organist and contains a workstation with a phone line, desk and fainting



couch. It is decorated thoughtfully with film reels hung on walls along with antique reel-to-reel equipment. In the corner, there is also a large set of built-in mustard yellow cabinetry, with many of the drawers painted shut, which had not been used in decades.

The “film room” holds an assortment of old and new items. One side of the room includes shelves full of recent entries from the annual Fargo Film Festival. The other side of the room has plastic totes lined with antique framed photos, signed memorabilia and various other materials that held meaning from past events at the Fargo Theatre. In the plastic totes are around 100 rolled-up movie posters used for auctions. This room included large curtains and a white sheet hanging in the front of it along with two rows of old theatre seats for viewing films. Outside of the film room near the popcorn butter, a large film reel is placed to project films into the room through a cutout hole in the wall.

Behind this projector, there are short and tall shelves full of miscellaneous paper work, film reels, books and press materials, along with an assortment of Christmas decorations, a fake tree completely decorated for the season and even a prop fireplace. Further beyond the decorations we were able to see an unexpected full-size shower complete with curtain, drain and shampoo (no one was brave enough to see if there was running water).

This basement lies directly underneath the seating area for the main theatre from the foyer to the stage and just as wide was the basement space. Our work became more challenging the closer towards the front of the stage we worked because the ceiling sloped downward so the pipes, lights and concrete supports became hazardous to anyone taller than four feet. The material trend, however, was that the closer towards the stage we explored, we found less organization and more long-term storage. Another room, dubbed the “projector room” contains

light bulbs of every kind and color, an array of film lenses, fresco pieces, theatre chair parts, old light fixtures and paperwork from the early to mid 1990s. There is also a large workbench at the back of this room filled with motors, gears and circa 1950s insecticide. Behind the seemingly innocent machinery in a corner of this room was a half bottle whisky! The students had a few laughs over the bottle and alerted the management, but we did not think too much of it until we started working further towards the stage of the theatre. We found more bottles of a wide variety of alcohol in various hiding places throughout the space—we uncovered six nearly empty full-size bottles in the Theatre basement.

The shorter the ceiling got, the more the spaces contained long-term storage items such as a set of choral risers, a number of theatre seats, unused boxes, broken glass and several old pianos placed back here. There was a dark, ominous corner draped by homemade blankets, but unfortunately this was not the treasure hunt we were all hoping it to be. A long, narrow, and dark hallway runs from the computer graveyard all the way to the stage and here we found all the spare parts for the Wurlitzer Organ stacked from floor to ceiling. The overall nature of this site was not welcoming; it exudes an aura of forgotten materials that could easily be left in the past if not for our efforts.

Our project aimed to begin the process of bringing these items into the public once again as part of the Theatre, a powerful piece of history that truly matters to the Fargo Moorhead area. This project was planned to include several stages of work, from identification of materials and creating a catalog to beginning the process of incorporating the materials into an archive. The earliest stages were accomplished through a cultural materials recovery field study course with a team of students working to find and identify historically relevant materials in an anthropological context for information recovery and the preservation of heritage. This field study course

presented students with a hands-on opportunity to preserve historically important materials. This experience not only enabled the team to accomplish the initial identification of valuable materials but as analyzed through an anthropological lens, generated information on how working with historical materials impact students, practitioners, history-making, and the recovered material itself.

## Roadmap of the Work

Methodological frameworks and theoretical contexts for understanding the relationships between anthropology, history and archival disciplines are discussed in Chapter 2, serving as the foundation for understanding the dynamic relationships between historical materials and those who work with them. Using a multi-disciplinary approach allows for a holistic understanding of these relationships throughout the stages of this project; these approaches are also discussed in this chapter. My role as both a participant-observer and archival authority for the participants in the Theatre are highlighted, as well as the goals of this research for both the student and professional participants. The interviews enabled an understanding of the relationships formed by students and practitioners with historical materials, provided fresh insights to the processes of archive-making, and unpacked local issues concerning heritage, history and identity in the local community.

Chapter 2 addresses theoretical issues including the relationships between history and anthropology in similarities of outcomes and differences in fundamental research practices (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). The use of an ethnographic perspective to better understand the relationships manifesting in an archival setting is addressed (Gracy 2004). The role of interpretation in archival theory and practice and variances in how history can be portrayed is

presented using Brothman (2002), Breakell and Worsley (2007), Marcus (1995). A foundation in the terms history and heritage is established to allow for better understanding of the personal and emotional attachments from individuals working with historical materials and how these notions impact communities and their identities. Later chapters present ethnographic evidence for how relationships with the historic materials create new meaning, identity and a greater sense of community, all of which develop over time.

Chapter 3 draws upon theoretical and applied practices from the archival and history fields by exploring how telling and retelling of history as an action is often filled with varying interpretations. Trends in public perception of archives shifted from places of safekeeping, to places collecting unwanted documents which appear to be meaningless to everyday individuals. Issues regarding aspects of history, heritage and identity are discussed in Chapter 3, including a case study from Connolly (2011) focused on collaboration and including the community in the overall museum interpretation. Flinn (2007) and Stevens, Shepherd and Flinn (2010) highlight the connections between communities, archival, and museum institutions, including the challenges and rewards of utilizing community knowledge and involvement.

The research findings of this thesis project are discussed in Chapter 4. It presents several themes represented throughout analysis from both professional and student interviews. The students working with the historic materials from the Fargo Theatre had very strong personal reactions and formed meaningful experiences when working with historical materials. Student connections with their community and identities were motivated by working with historical materials as a way to make a difference, and be a part of something beyond their daily lives.

The practitioner research findings in Chapter 4, highlight themes that describe personal, professional, and academic relationships with historical materials, surrounding community, identity and heritage. Many of the practitioners shared when their interest in the field manifested, and often it was a combination of positive personal exposure to historical materials that sparked a continuing curiosity with the field. Professional interpretation of historical documents remains a challenge in the field. The perceptions of archives discussed in Chapter 3 are confirmed as Robinson and Peihl who describe the power in creating records, and the relationships with the people who use those records. The differentiations made between history and heritage in Chapters 2 and 3 are compared to the professionals interviewed. The themes discussed in Chapter 4 lead into the discussion for Chapter 5.

The discussion and conclusions are presented in Chapter 5 tying together the information gained from both student and practitioner interviews. Connecting with historical materials produced a deep personal meaning and continued interest in history from both the practitioners and students where they had the opportunity to explore their heritage and identity within the community. The professionals shared strikingly similar experiences with student groups as the reactions from the students working with the Fargo Theatre project. The collaborative Hopi Youth program titled “The Footprints of the Ancestors” presented by Gumerman et al (2012) showcases the relevancy of community based heritage and identity projects and the positive impacts on our youth. This chapter also offers concluding remarks and an outlook into the future for the continuation of this project and other similar ones as a way to increase community belonging, heritage and identity within the region.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGIES AND THEORETICAL CONTEXTS

Multiple disciplinary paradigms and methods are employed in this study to uncover the multifaceted process of record making in the context of both heritage and historic places. Studying both the inanimate objects and the people who are working with them to uncover the meaning behind the processes of creating historical records requires archival, historical and anthropological approaches. A cross-disciplinary approach is thus implemented to better understand these processes. A *bricoleur* methodology is utilized, as it allows multiple qualitative methods to be applied in one study in order to holistically uncover a sociocultural phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:8, 337). The integration of anthropological, historical and archival studies allows for a more diverse toolkit of methodologies for the analysis of the creation of archival records.

### Methodology

#### *Project Stages*

The first two stages of this project were preliminary, and aided in discovering what the Theatre housed in terms of culturally/historically relevant materials in need of preservation. The first stage consisted primarily of cleaning, in which the removal of unnecessary materials and debris was the primary goal. This stage opened up the Theatre basement to help us recognize the problem areas, and obtain a broader picture of the items the Theatre houses. Then students took time to distinguish between the materials that are currently being used by the theater, compared to those that may hold historical value.

The second stage of this project involved a general survey of materials in the basement, followed by a more detailed process of accounting and cataloguing the materials. This space was

divided into eleven zones of interest, which aided in noting the original order and locations of materials and also served as a roadmap for completion. A dedicated notebook for each zone was used to catalog items found in that zone. The items cataloged first included a general overview of a zone's contents including larger items such as mechanical equipment and a count of miscellaneous boxes. This list was then broken down into a more detailed list of relevant items including the zone section and sub-sections in which they were found. The complete catalog of items allowed us to grasp the span and variety of the materials and to identify a chronographic timestamp for when various spaces in the basement were being used. The catalog is being used by the Theatre's Executive Director and Board Members for assessing the value of items and identifying what materials will be donated to a safer, more controlled environment at the Institute for Regional Studies.

Throughout this stage, I interviewed students who participated in the Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project as well as other cultural material heritage practitioners in the local area. This stage required NDSU Institutional Review Board approval because I interviewed participants (see Appendix A and B). The interviews focused on the experiences of those who work with historical materials. They shed light on how people can impact the materials themselves through recognizing value and interpretation. These interviews also provided insights on how the materials can impact the individuals by creating meaningful experiences and deeper connections to history and the community identity through engagement with material culture. They emphasized various understandings about how records are created in general and how records are produced by those working with materials.

### *Key Content for Student Volunteers and Professional Interviews*

This study focused on processing of materials, the relationships between heritage practitioners or students and historical materials that form during this process, and exploring heritage and history-making in the field. The interviews enabled an understanding of the relationships formed by students and practitioners with historical materials, provided fresh insights to the processes of archive-making, and unpacked local issues concerning heritage, history and identity in the local community.

My goals for the interviews with students and the interviews with professional practitioners shared some similarities and some differences. The goals for the student interviews included:

- Understanding the relationships students developed with the materials they came in contact with.
- Understanding students' meaning-making process while working with historical records.
- Increasing our understanding of how historical documents are developed within an archival setting and community in which they are created.

Goals for the interviews with professional practitioners included:

- Establishing how professionals working within the field view and define heritage.
- Understanding the working relationships and experiences they have had with heritage, and historical documents.
- Establishing various insights and points of view of the interplay between heritage and history.



- Understanding their relationships with historical materials.

Open-ended, guided interview questions addressed each of these objectives (see Appendix C) while allowing for elaboration, context sharing, and conversational opportunities between interviewer and interviewee.

### *Ethnographic Research*

I used ethnographic participant-observation methods while supervising the student volunteers engaged with materials recovery at the Fargo Theatre. My role was both a traditional participant-observation role and I also acted as the guide for maintaining proper archival preservation processes throughout the project. My goal was to see how students working with these materials increased their connections to local heritage by participation in a project such as this. While working with the students in the Theatre I made careful observations, maintained a journal of my reflections upon daily activities, and noted productivity. These activities served to measure student involvement and changing views or connections with the materials from the Theatre.

My role as a participant observer enabled me to obtain insider, hands-on perspectives on the creation of historical records and involvement with local heritage and community relations. Describing such for this project requires using Clifford Geertz's (1977) notion of "thick description" where the phenomena under study are presented to the reader through rich and descriptive examples. According to James Clifford "ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. It describes the processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of the [research] process" (1992:2-3). Clifford

(1992) also addresses the politics associated with writing. A researcher's interpretations and writings are always selective accounts given that ethnographic writing is a form of "retelling." In this thesis, greater attention is paid to the ways in which historical knowledge is presented.

Likewise, John and Jean Comaroff discuss the value of engaging in ethnographic research, working tandem with historical methods in order to produce "a historically situated mode of understanding historically situated contexts, each with its own, perhaps radically different, kinds of subjects and subjective, objects or objectives" (1992:9-10). The Comaroffs' (1992:6) compare these two methodologies as such

My suspicion is that most historical research is done because there is a known body of source material available. The anthropologist on the other hand, is often interested in a problem... the question is then one of deciding what types of materials he will need for pursuing the problem.

The Comaroffs (1992) also contrast anthropologists with historians; with historians primarily dealing with subjects that are often deceased and therefore cannot speak for themselves thus the historian is only able to present their own interpretations and a selective history. Conversely, cultural anthropologists work with living people who can tell their own stories, express their emotions and contest the interpretations of the researcher. Both disciplines overlap by having "subjects" but the role of those participants is quite different and combining the two provides a richer account of phenomena. Using both history and anthropology which are supplementary, offers a broader perspective to view the processes.

Karen F. Gracy, (2004) a library science practitioner, provides a model of ethnographic research that includes broader social and historical contexts and historiographic methods.

Gracy's (2004) research addresses archival film institutions and focuses on the relationships between staff, volunteers, and the process of creating and maintaining historically valuable film collections. She argues, "by employing ethnographic methods, researchers can immediately expand the scope of archival investigation to include the sociocultural realm of record creation and management" (2004:335). This process in turn, allows her the ability to "defin[e] the record in direct relationship to the communities of individuals who generate, accumulate and preserve documentary evidence" (2004:335). Gracy's (2004) use of ethnography vis-à-vis the creation of archival records informs the methodology for this thesis on the Fargo Theaters it includes following the processes historical of record making as well as understanding the reactions of those working with historical materials. Combining an archival standpoint, historical perspective, and anthropological methods broadens our potential knowledge on the processes of archive-making. This project thus uses highly diverse methodological toolkit for studying the processes of creating historical and archival records that allows for a more holistic and reflexive view of how these records are created in sociocultural and historical contexts.

### *Archival Methodology*

Archival theory is a critical aspect of this project. While a student at NDSU I completed structured archival theory courses, an internship with the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies & University Archive, and other work with local archives. This background and training through the field of public history has provided me with a foundation in preservation techniques and an overview of the methods used to obtain and process collections.

In keeping with the archival standards in which I was trained, I sought professional assistance from the Institute for Regional Studies. Their help was invaluable in the creation of

the initial Fargo Theatre materials catalog and planning for the final stages that will take place beyond this thesis work: the future placement of the materials into an official archive with more detailed cataloging. My role in the pre-archival portions of this project was very active and hands-on with both the materials and students. I supervised the Material Recovery students through the first two stages of this project, and delegated tasks correlating to zones that needed to be cataloged and took an active role in cataloging many items myself. I consolidated the materials cataloged into one document, which we presented to the Institute for Regional Studies archival staff and the Fargo Theatre Executive Director (see Appendix D). The Theatre's leadership is now in the process of evaluating which materials will be moved into the archive for preservation. The future plans for preserving these materials are still in place with the assistance of Joy Sather-Wagstaff and the Institute for Regional Studies.

The following stages should be considered if the Fargo Theatre chooses to move their materials into a more hospitable environment. The first of these new stages is to determine what will be moved out of the Theatre. To maintain this project as a hands-on learning experience, donated items should be moved out of the basement and onto NDSU campus for preliminary processing of the materials by students. In this stage, items that the Theatre would like to keep would be digitally documented and returned. Items approved for formal integration into the archival collections will be processed by students overseen by professional staff. Creating collections such as these takes a considerable amount of knowledge about materials, preservation methodology, historical relevancy, and records processing. The professional staff must also keep in mind the future roles and relationship of the collection for the local community and proper access to them by the public.

Public access is critical to archival collections but the public often views archives as the “beginning of the end” of materials as they disappear into the organized chaos of an archival institution. Breakell and Worsley (2007) argue that archives have a symbolic link to death because they represent a mysterious abyss into which records disappear. This may account for the public’s lack of archive use, perceptions of the inaccessibility of materials, and overall decline in positive associations with archival institutions. Yet archives contain tangible objects from specific people and/or time periods that represent events from the past that may, according to Breakell and Worsley activate new ideas and identities not only in today’s world but also in the future, as “archives are the hinge between the past and the future” (2007:175). Each archival collection is typically unique as it is determined by an institution’s regional or local community-focused mission. Keeping this in mind, and moving beyond the idea of archives as a place of death, we must promote an understanding that archival records are created to be seen and used by the public, not hidden.

In terms of archival materials usage, Terry Cook argues that there is “a shift away from looking at records as the passive producers of human or administrative activity and towards considering records as active agents themselves in the formation of human and organizational memory”(2001:4). This perspective has generated a renewal of the public’s interest in archival institutions as useful and relevant places for historical knowledge. The ongoing preservation of historical materials, in this new light, remain socially important as a means for community identity and meaning-making. Yet interpretation shapes what “historical knowledge” may be gleaned from archival materials and thus used for identity and meaning-making.

Brothman (2002) suggests that intention plays a key role in identifying attempts to alleviate bias in archives. Yet, Breakell and Worsley conclude, “no selection is free of bias, and

this is why archives should seek to be as transparent as possible about their processes and avoid the stereotype of mystery” (2007:177). Aspiring for transparency can also alleviate staff responsibility and allow users to individually interpret materials. Ineke Deserno (2009) claims that recent actions to privatize many archival institutions (primarily in the corporate world) actually decreases transparency as previously publically available records fall into private institutions that limit public access (2009:217). Further discussion on archives follows in Chapter 3.

### *Heritage, Materials and Access*

The theoretical and applied relationships between heritage and the making of historical records are important to understanding how communities and institutions create heritage itself. Heritage can be defined broadly by many academics including Fog Owig (1999), Lowenthal (1998) and Smith (2006). The multiple layers of heritage each encompass different aspects of material culture, language, everyday items and traditions such as music, art, architecture and dance of a specific group of people. There can also be a deeper more volatile side of heritage involving political lines, territory and cultural property rights (Smith 2006). Lowenthal (1998) goes as far to say that “heritage is not a testable or even plausible version of our past; it is a *declaration of faith* in that past” (1999: 7-8). One of his concerns is to relive any notion of myth within heritage accounts. Laurajane Smith defines the “practice of heritage” as “the management and conservation protocols, techniques and procedures that heritage managers, archaeologists, architects, museum curators and other experts undertake” (2006:13). Heritage, for communities and non-professionals, is also “an economic and/or leisure practice, and/or a social and cultural practice... of meaning and identity making” (Smith 2006:13). Many people identify and connect emotionally and personally with traditions and history that reflect and represent ideas about their

past as individuals and the community. A community shapes its “official” local heritage based upon the resources (including archives and museums) available to them. Rau suggests that the Fargo Theatre is the “epicenter of the community’s collective history” (2010:1), and in my study, the Theatre serves as a representation of the Fargo-Moorhead community in that the community’s history, heritage and identity are defined, in part, through this building.

In this project, I focus on the Theatre’s historic materials as an embodiment of history and how such artifacts affect individuals who work with them. This process is powerful in that we create personal connections to inanimate objects as we imbue them with meaning. Our group was given complete access to the Fargo Theatre basement, in which we were free to begin our exploration and better understand the relationships formed when working with historical and heritage materials.

## CHAPTER 3: ARCHIVES, HISTORY, HERITAGE, IDENTITY

### Archives, History, Identity

Historically, archival theory considers archives to be the “custodians of history” (Holmes 2006). Yet, popular public perceptions about archives consider them as “keepers of trash” (Gracy II 1989; Holmes 2006). For example, David B. Gracy II (1989) describes how prominent member of a local community, Ms. Dragonwell (daughter of an influential author) would use the archives as a method of spring cleaning. Ms. Dragonwell told Gracy II, “yeah, it was the Special Collections (at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville) and R&D Hauling that is our trash service” (Gracy II 1989:73). Such misconception of what archives actually *do* diminishes the relevancy of archival institutions for individuals and communities. Preserving these materials for the future enables the public (and scholars) to better understand the world as it was in the past through a more personal perspective.

The social relevancy of archives and the information they possess cannot be overlooked and in many cases, community members may uncover new senses of identity through engagement with historic documentation. Archivists are becoming more proactive in alleviating their appearance as guarded institutions and continue their efforts to positively impact the community through outreach and awareness. With this knowledge of external perspectives, archives are aiming to reconnect with the surrounding community (Flinn 2007; Kettelaar 2002). In turn, these actions create the opportunity for increased use of the many unique collections. Gracy II describes the excitement of archives as a place where one can often “watch a genealogist’s face light up upon discovery among the records of an ancestor and you witness joy in a new acquaintance, not a sense of out-datedness” (1989: 75). Deserno (2009), whose work with



corporate archives suggests there are deeper connections between communities and their archives, signifying that “they play an essential role in the formation of corporate memory. At the same time however, they are part of the collective memory of our time and provide essential information on our current culture and society” (2009:216). Such social impacts demonstrate how the records housed in archival settings can, in fact, impact modern communities and identity.

### Heritage, Communities, Identity

History is somewhat of an umbrella term for documented events of the past, while heritage is much more loosely discussed as an intangible collection of ideas, values and traditions, all of which can manifest as tangible items or goods that are passed down through generations. Helaine Silverman and D. Fairchild Ruggles argue, “heritage is important because it provides symbolic and economic sustenance, meaning, and dignity to human lives. It legitimizes territorial and intellectual ownership, and it is a critical factor in the formation of social identity” (2007: VI). A contrary view is that of David Lowenthal who suggests “history seeks to convince by truth, and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates, omits, and candidly invents and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error” (1998:7). This negative view of heritage devalues much of its necessity for identity and community-making.

In contrast, Silverman and Ruggles (2007) argue that heritage is both a tangible and intangible set of personal connections, practices, values and traditions that offer a sense of identity and dignity to a group of people. From dances, folklore, and even recipes, every day practices and sentiments become important symbols of meaning through life. We see this symbolic power in historic places, such as the Fargo Theatre, that represent a pivotal time or era

for a specific location. According to Nityan and Deckha (1999) landmarks represent a piece of community identity as a physical representation of a heritage group that allows others to see that identity portrayed. There has been an increase in historical restoration projects, urban revitalizations of downtown areas, and the marking of minority groups' significant events, showing their importance and contributions to the community. Deckha also claims that the key to picking specific historical places is to choose a site with most social history attached to it. For example, the Fargo-Moorhead area has a rich social history centered in and around the Fargo Theatre making it a perfect specimen for heritage studies in this community.

### Community Based Archives and Curation

Kettelaar promotes the idea of an engaged public owning their archives suggesting “the archive’s power is (or should be) the citizen’s power too” (2002:221). Archive creation and control has historically been the domain of elites rather than the public. Even the movement and flow of people through museums that curate archival materials was originally defined and controlled by these governing groups and continues to be restricted by professionals (Bennett 1995). While modern archives and museums intend to be safe-keepers of valuable historical records and material culture in order to allow public use, such institutions are overwhelmingly controlled by archival and curatorial professionals.

Archives and museums may also both perpetuate selective historical or cultural knowledge as well as account for a diversity of knowledge through unique collections (Brothman 2002: Flinn 2007). According to Heather MacNeil (2005), archival professionals play a role in interpretive variation “just as textual criticism involves conscious and deliberate decisions about the representation of texts, archival description involves conscious and deliberate decisions about

the representation of archival documents” (2005:272). As such, even archival or institutional summary descriptions of holdings indicate the power that archival professionals hold. If summary descriptions do not best represent the information on the records described, a researcher or curator may overlook that collection entirely.

Creating community-based archives is a recent trend that challenges the power held by professionals in traditional archival institutions and museums. Mary Stevens, Andrew Flinn, and Elizabeth Shepherd (2010) discuss these challenges in the context of a European movement towards establishing community archives. For these scholars “the defining characteristic of a community archive is not its physical location, inside or outside of formal repositories, but rather the active and ongoing involvement of members of the source community in documenting and making accessible their history *on their own terms*” (Stevens et al. 2010:60). Such archives, along with other grassroots historical organizations, are emerging “wherever struggles over identity and the right to self-definition is a feature of public life” (Stevens et al. 2010:60) this includes the particular groups which have historically been marginalized. These groups may include indigenous communities, immigrant or ethnic minority communities, or gays and lesbians.

These marginalized groups are creating change and action from their previous positions to promote information and knowledge about their communities. The social and political importance of community archives stems from the potential power such collections have for creating a more inclusive history and positive social effects for marginalized groups. For example, Flinn (2007) describes a trend of community archival establishments springing up in Britain in the early 1990s as a reactionary response to a lack of representation of black culture in Britain’s dominant historical narratives. The objective of these establishments was to “collect,

document and disseminate the culture and history of the peoples of Africa and Caribbean ancestry living in Britain in order to reverse the marginalization of Black people in British histories” (2007:157). Creating more inclusive historical archives incorporate marginalized groups into a broader overall historical narrative.

Stevens et al. (2010) analyzed a similar process in Britain, focusing on grassroots organizations who worked with mainstream archives to develop community-based archives. Community archives are, in this case “collections of material gathered primarily by members of a given [historically marginalized] community and over whose use community members exercise some level of control” (Stevens et al 2010:59, 61). The organizations that constituted the case studies for this analysis included Future Histories (African, Asian, and Caribbean performing arts), Rukus! (Documenting British black lesbian/gay/transgender communities), and the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum (Stevens et al. 2010). “Custody, collection, curation and dissemination, advice, and consultancy” (2010:63) were the key concepts utilized by mainstream archives who worked with these organizations to create community collections.

The custody of community collections is a crucial area where power plays a role. Many marginalized groups are hesitant to simply “hand over” materials to a professional archive. Discussions of custody must be handled with care, trust, and consideration of shared power through continued access to and control over the dissemination of materials (Stevens et al. 2010). Yet custody agreements are also attractive in that they are necessary for validating the histories of marginalized communities. Ajamu, one of the co-founders of Rukus!, explains this position, noting that

I'm not an archivist and basically, I'm not interested in the professional side of things. Yes, what we do has to be up to that standard and I think it's better placed with an organization that has that history around collecting a community [...] and then they can conserve it and preserve it [...]. And that then makes it more accessible publicly, because also, I think if you are building up an archive and people then ask you 'where's it held'? And people say, 'well, you know, it's under my bed', people won't see it seriously. It's kind of dismissed as 'well actually, that's lovely, great', but actually it's not *serious* because actually, it's in your house (Stevens 2010:65).

Mainstream archival institutions have the power, as official historical institutions, to validate materials as "serious" by taking in such collections from "under the bed," thus justifying marginalized community histories as a part of local and national history (Stevens et al. 2010:65). However, in order to be effective, institutions must be flexible and willing to share power and authority over collections with communities.

Flinn (2007) also suggests that an "important incentive in stimulating interest in community history comes when communities go through rapid and significant change and feel that they are in the process of losing their identity or having that identity marginalized or ignored" (2007:159). These are key motivations for community archives and a way to safeguard this endangered information.

To emphasize how history impacts community identity, Robert P. Connelly (2011) presents his case study addressing how descendant community groups (such as African and Native American groups who have been marginalized by history) can represent their history, and increase local museum investment as stakeholders in such communities. The C.H. Nash Museum

at Chucalissa, in Memphis, Tennessee presents content of contemporary Native and African American roots and the Chucalissa, an archaeological site once inhabited by prehistoric Native Americans of the Mississippian cultural complex. In the past, visitors viewed an exposed burial site, and interacted with Native Americans performing cultural demonstrations.

The C.H. Nash museum was restructured largely due to the passage of the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the 1990s, and also a lack of funding available for programming and upkeep due to falling attendance. NAGPRA protects Native American gravesites, human remains, sacred, cultural and funerary materials, and works to repatriate these items. Because of the NAGPRA legislation, the exposed burial mound was no longer open to the public, and museums were then mandated to inventory their artifacts and discuss repatriation. The loss of the burial site and decrease in the Native American “living history” performances resulted in declining attendance at the Museum.

The Museum thus redefined its mission statement, inspiring the staff to “think outside the traditional box of a prehistoric archaeological museum and to engage multiple perspectives that represent additional, yet no less legitimate, voices of the landscape on which the Chucalissa site is located” (2011:36). These voices included those of local Native Americans and African Americans. Now, the Museum includes African American history and engages with the contemporary African American community of Boxtown, located near the Museum. This community has increasingly participated in museum events, sponsored school field-trips, hosted a Smithsonian exhibit featuring African American History and also screened African American History films. Connolly asserts that to remain a relevant asset, the museum must become a stakeholder in the community through such activities (2011:36).

The Museum has utilized students from University of Memphis Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program to create new programming, interpretive hands-on activities, and aesthetic updates to keep the Museum at the forefront of new, community-inclusive museological practices. Connolly suggests, “typically, archaeological sites with occupations that span considerable periods of time... are interpreted through singular snapshots, ignoring what comes before or after” (2011:36). He understands that this kind of presentation does not produce an inclusive and participatory history. The museum has therefore done away with permanent exhibits and moved to fluid “core exhibits” which focus on key concepts but have room for interpretation and are routinely upgraded. Central to the new content for the museum are the American Indian cultures of the Midsouth interpreting the historic and contemporary Native culture.

This active new role for the Native Americans participating with museum content Connolly described as a shift from “actors” in history, to becoming the “directors” of their history (2011:38). Having several members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) on staff, they were asked by the C.H. Nash museum how to tell their story. The MBCI staff was surprised that they had never been asked this in the past. Throughout the creation of the Choctaw Heritage exhibit, the MBCI staff was given control over the content; they made an exhibit that they were proud of for their community and themselves. Harnessing the power of an inclusive history is what the C.H. Nash Museum did to design their new museum paradigm and root themselves within the community. The C.H. Nash Museum now engages visitors in active learning that *shows* history rather than *tells* history, and it became a community stakeholder and an integral community partner.

Be it at the Fargo Theatre or the C.H. Nash Museum, history and heritage are dependent on tangible materials as physical representations of a place, event, or identity. Material culture embodies history over time and act as important points of reference. Archives, particularly community-based archives, are critical to this as repositories for material culture. An overall goal for community archives, and by extension, museums that engage with communities for collection, curation and programming, is best represented by Flinn (2007:162)

Community archives and the stories they tell can help us construct an inclusive local and national heritage in which all communities, all relations and interactions are included. This heritage and the uses to which it can be put help to connect people, places, communities and traditions, bring together and foster understanding between different generations and communities, and thus contribute to a wider social justice agenda.

Historical institutions are seen as the gatekeepers to community information in many instances, and this relationship is adapting; the impact of the materials and information representing the community is making impacts and connections that are more personal for individuals to their communities. The value of this information is seen as relevant in linking individuals to their heritage, history and communities. The more involved the museums or archival institutions and the communities themselves become and align their goals the more appropriate interpretation and representations of those communities can be created and shared.



## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Due to the time needed for decision-making by the Fargo Theatre, the Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project did not progress beyond Stage II. Cleaning out and mapping out the basement to understand how the space was being used were the primary tasks in Stage I. In Stage II, students completed a comprehensive catalog of the contents in the Fargo Theatre basement. The activities in Stage I and II, along with student and practitioner interviews, form a case study for understanding the processes of working with historical records. The results of this study thus incorporate and compare student perspectives and insights from professionals working in the fields of heritage and history.

### Student Research Findings

Many of these students had no prior experience with historical materials before this project, but expressed interest in the Theatre itself, or were intrigued by the idea of a hands-on historical recovery experience. Students working with these historical materials showed a greater interest in history while handling tangible historical objects; while working on the project, their curiosity increased and they felt a true sense of community involvement. The students who chose to work on this project all had similar motivations for working on the project. One student, Deanna Anderson, described her motivation as “being anthropology major, and having that drive to know and discover things and be able to piece them together. It’s kind of like our own archaeology dig and to me better, because I would rather go through stuff than dirt.” Veronica Krile, Erin Busta, and Taylor Lubovich expressed a common interest in history and wanted to work in a hands-on environment. Field experiences like this are rare for many undergraduate students but they are valuable for learning real-world skills.

### *Processing Artifacts: Uncovering and Adding Context*

Exploring of the basement materials is one of the favorite things for many of the students including Lubovich who described, “it was exciting to see what was down there.” The constant questioning while researching artifacts made this process very exciting, as the students became “urban archaeologists” which required them to identify many of the objects that were uncovered including prop materials, antique light fixtures, film equipment and the use of certain specialty cabinets. Correspondence with famous movie stars, and countless props and stage items were identified, along with financial documents, box office reports and numerous ephemeral materials that were found throughout the basement. Most of these items could be identified with some research, but there were several artifacts that not only stumped us, but also experts in the field.

During a preliminary investigation with the Executive Director, one of our first “mystery items” found turned out to be a ticket grinder from the 1920s pictured in Figure 4.1(left photo). These grinders were once used by ushers to eliminate the chances of people using the same ticket for multiple shows. They have long been out of use and are difficult to come across even from antique theater resources. The ticket grinder stands about four-feet-tall and has beautiful art-deco styling. It is metallic blue with silver winged detailing. Items such as this were enticing for the students, because at any moment one could stumble across these glimpses into the past with just a little digging. Busta said “overall it was a great learning experience, I have never had a hands-on learning experience like this, and it was nice to just dig in with your elbows in all the dust, dirt and grime.” Other items are mentioned throughout the interviews as particularly memorable pieces were signed Babe Ruth photographs to the Fargo Theatre, correspondence with celebrities, Cassius Clay fight posters, antique theatre equipment, reel cabinets, fresco fragments and documents that showcased the many generations of the Theatre.



Figure 4.1. Art Deco Ticket Grinder (Photo by Veronica Krile, November 8, 2011; Fargo, ND.)

Interpreting material artifacts like those in the Fargo Theatre relies heavily on the context of each object. A working definition of *context* fashioned by Anind K. Dey (2001) highlights the variables and ambiguity using the term can imply. “Context is any information that can be used to characterize the situation of an entity. An entity is a person, place or object that is considered relevant to the interaction between a user and an application (Dey 2001:5)” this definition is scenario based and is defined by the application or interactions and the information that can be derived from the situation. In this case, the situation is the Fargo Theatre project and the context is anything that characterized or reveals more information about the objects or artifacts, people involved, and the Fargo Theatre itself.

Context can be used in various ways to look at an object, idea, or even a word in a sentence that may be unclear, it uses other objects, ideas or words to decipher the unknown

meaning and provide some more information. Context is a type of deductive reasoning where information can be drawn from the surroundings. In the Fargo Theatre project, for example, when uncovering a group of ticket stubs, props and box office reports, each of these individual objects tell a portion of the event of a play, if each item was found individually we would be able to understand only the particular object and what it individually implies. For the ticket stubs, we can understand the date and time, name of event and price of ticket; for the props, we would only be able to identify what that item is but not what it was used for. For the box office reports, we would gain statistical information about the shows that were played at the Fargo Theatre in that month. With all of these items found together in one location, we can use the artifacts as a group to understand a more holistic picture of the event. We can now understand that the props were used during a specific play in a specific date range and that a certain number of people were in attendance. In this scenario, we used multiple items to infer more information about the group of items because of their relations to one another. We could apply this context because these items were grouped together at the time of the creation of the box they were in. Often in history, we see another type context that can be applied to an artifact as we saw in the example above but the context does not always include items that we found in relation to one another.

Context in archives can also be similar as many historians use the information that relates to the subject matter to apply a more clear perspective to an object or information set. Context is an educated guess at times, and we as humans can get it wrong. When we have something with little to no context, the object becomes an oddity or can have little meaning to the environment that it is found. When an object lacks context such as the wooden box item we uncovered at the Fargo Theatre it becomes difficult to attach any meaning to that item and it cannot be identified.

The lack context while it creates a mystery and intrigue, it does not at this time add to the story of the Fargo Theatre because it lacks the context for how it relates to the Theatre.

We were able to identify many of these artifacts from context clues. For example, large books with elaborate lettering “Ledgers” filled with blank pages were found with little information, but deeper inside the box a playbill for the Christmas Carol was uncovered. Using the Christmas Carol as a context clue, we could reasonably assume that that the books were stage props for the Christmas Carol from the 1991 performance. . Some other artifacts took a little more digging to uncover their context. For example, Krile explained that “I really liked finding the Babe Ruth signed photo... I actually did some research afterwards and found that he spoke to about a thousand students at the Fargo Theatre.” (See Figure 4.2)



Figure 4.2. Babe Ruth Signed Photograph (Photo by Veronica Krile, December 11, 2011; Fargo, ND.)

Another example of uncovering the historical context of an item came from a large shower curtain found amongst a number of picture frames. At first, it looked out of place among many autographed photos and promotional items from the Theater, but when this plastic curtain was unfolded, it revealed a large red signature. The name in red was largely unknown to those of us from younger generations, so the mere scribble did not evoke any meaning for us. Ronnie Krile took this on as a fact finding project and through some quick internet research found that the autograph was that of Janet Leigh who we learned played the leading-female-role in the film *Psycho* (Figure 4.3) she also appeared at the Fargo Theatre in 2000 as part of the Library of Congress Film Perseveration Tour. Once this information was uncovered, the other students were star-struck, and this curtain became an exciting piece of history its context was finally identified.



Figure 4.3. Janet Leigh Memorabilia (1960) (Photo by Veronica Krile, December 11, 2011; Fargo, ND.)

In a very dark corner of the Theatre, the students also found a small wooded “plaque” shown in Figure 4.4. The object includes hinges, wing-nuts, brass brackets and a translucent

leather cover to it. Near this item there were boxes from the late 1990s and a trunk as old as the 1930s, so there was a large range of context for items in this area. Much to our surprise, local historians, archivists, performing arts historians, theatre technology groups and a lighting expert were unable to identify this object. Many of them had similar hunches but none with definitive answers for our mystery. The three main ideas about the objects function could be a lighting apparatus, a noise maker of some kind (possibly for the Wurlitzer organ) or a stage prop.



Figure 4.4. Mystery Box (Photo by Amanda Nordick, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011; Fargo, ND)

While conducting student interviews after the initial stages were completed, the mystery of the wooden box continued to be of interest to the students and several made comment or asked like Krile “did we find out what that mystery box was?” or “did we ever find out what that one wooden thing was”(Anderson)? Others would also comment about it when discussing loose ends of the project. Anderson went on to say, “the mystery continues and that’s half the fun!”

Unfortunately, we were not able to identify any new context for this item, nor did we find any definitive answers to determine its function or age. Despite much research, we have not uncovered any more information to understand this item.

Although we were not able to gain a significant amount of background information on several items to fully understand a more holistic context of the basement several students such as Busta recognized the importance of uncovering the situational information relevant to understanding some materials. Such as the various signed and labeled photographs relating to other materials found throughout the basement. She recognized that “what we found kind of captures the movie industry before it evolved into what it is today, it was much more personal, where the actors went out and promoted their films in smaller places like Fargo.”

### *Tangible Aspects of History*

Being in contact with historical items allowed the students such as Krile to relate to their local history better. Krile describes that she was “able to connect to it more when you can touch it. It makes it more real to people.” She went on to say “I think people have a better understanding of things when they can interact with it, than if they can only view a two-dimensional representation of it.” The tangible aspect of this project, and the ability to touch many of these historical items, became an important learning tool as the students continued to search for more artifacts. The students were part of making the history or at least uncovering it, which in turn gave them more confidence in what they were doing. Many of the students made meaning out of what they were finding in the basement through the tangible items they were in contact with.



While discussing the presentation of artifacts in different settings such as a museum, and how one relates to tangible items, it was apparent that the students took more away from this experience because of their direct interactions, rather than seeing the artifacts in a more controlled setting such as a museum. Brown, a master's student initially involved with the project, suggested that "if I saw it (an artifact from the Theatre) in a museum... I would have thought that it was interesting... but by actually being part of the process it made it hit home more for me because I felt like I was a part of that process... and that made me feel like I was contributing to something new." Krile added, "I would compare it (hands-on work with artifacts) to if you saw one of your favorite actors on TV versus actually getting to shake his hand...it involves more senses in life." For many of the students, this hands-on experience working with historical materials created an intimate connection to local history and the Fargo Theatre far beyond what they experienced with museum artifacts in the past.

Being a part of processing previously undocumented information revived a sense of historical value for many students like Lubovich "you drive past places like this and you really don't think twice about it until you're like really in it." Many of the students like Anderson, Brown and Lubovich took the time to read through much of the information they were uncovering and found it a relaxing experience to escape from school and to be involved in something special. Others revealed that this project helped them better appreciate museum artifacts, and what an artifact had to go through to become visible to the public. "I felt like I was finding buried treasure, but sometimes it was just a bunch of crap! It made it worthwhile when you found something cool and got to share it with everybody" suggested Lubovich. Also, while dealing with many of these items students seemed to take great pride in what they were doing, like Brown, who felt "like I was a part of that process and more of the uncovering, and that made

me feel like I was contributing to something new.” Lubovich expressed that “I feel like I didn’t really find anything myself” but she continued to be enthusiastic about the project and interested in what others found in the Theatre.

This tangible aspect of history is something that few in life get to experience, but Busta suggests that “people are tangible, they like to see things, if they read it or hear it, it doesn’t really stick but if they see how great it is, or how interesting and important it is. I think its key in to how to get people into preserving history.” Flinn supports these interests suggesting that “community archives help communities not only remember and document their past but also to understand the present day and its connection to that past” (2007:159). Getting people to have hands-on experiences thus increase interest in historical records especially if more people have positive historical experiences in their everyday lives connecting them to their history, heritage and community.

### *Connecting with Community through History and Heritage*

The personal connections the students made towards the history of their community throughout these two stages became apparent throughout the interviewing process. How the students not only enjoyed the historical aspects of this project, but also became more rooted and interested in their own community’s historical background was also apparent. Brown revealed that “I felt like I was more a part of the community finding these things than if I had not worked on this project.” While she is not originally a Fargo native, she has now taken a greater interest in the town and its heritage as it is becoming part of her own identity. Busta also shared that “being involved in it (this project) creates that pride that you know that ‘I helped do this’... it created more interest for me to get more involved in the little things in our community to preserve

history.” In this statement, she also touches on her pride in doing the project as way to help out within the community. This concept of pride is also common with other student participants.

In looking back at this project, students know that they made a difference by saving the materials in the Fargo Theatre basement. Krile enthusiastically expressed that “We saved history!...they were going to throw it away before and we saved it!” going on to say “it makes me feel like I can make a difference and my time wasn’t wasted and that I can actually get something done that is beneficial to the community.” Brown also emphasized that “by going through and seeing these objects that we came in contact with and knowing that by cataloging and documenting these objects, that they do matter.” The materials uncovered do matter to the community and maintain memories of the Fargo Theatre as it continues to be an icon in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Many of the students mentioned spending more time in downtown Fargo because of their newly formed connections with and appreciation of its history. Lubovich shares that “I look at the theatre or downtown differently now after doing this project” and, “I was actually hoping to see if I could volunteer at some of the museum in Fargo.” Busta and Anderson also showed continued interest with this project as well as working on more cultural historical projects within the community. The perpetuation of historical projects such as this could increase interest for historical places in the area. The efforts to save many of these places are not wasted: the more people become involved with them, the more chance they have to survive.

### *Making the Work Count*

Because we were unable to complete the latter stages of the project, many students felt that little was accomplished in saving many of these artifacts. Students reactions included “I would like to see all our hard work go to something, and I would like other people to be able to

enjoy what we found” (Busta) or “I think it would be really cool if the theatre had a mini museum attached to it. So if people were waiting to see a movie they could go to it... it would be kind-of cool to see the progression of how it started and then after the renovations of how it is today, and what they did in-between” (Krile). Anderson also suggested “I would really like to see the things we found up somewhere to go look at. That would be fun because we were a part of finding this in a basement ... that would be a nice wrap up for me.” Brown also reflected on the possibility of future displays “because it’s a shame to hide these things.” Many of the students hope for a continuation of this project because they contributed time and effort but also gained personal meaning from this experience, which connects them to this community as a part of their heritage and shared history.

#### Practitioner Research Findings

Several local history and heritage professionals were interviewed to supplement the student research findings and better understand the working relationships people develop with historical materials. Their insights offered an overall picture of how, in this region, history and heritage are perceived within their professions; connections to and their ongoing relationships with history as well as their perceptions of students and volunteers working with historical materials were also explored.

#### *Historical Experiences*

For many of the practitioners, their interest in history started when they were children. Mark Peihl, Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County archivist remembers: “Photographs from my family got me interested in history. I love photographs... they gave me a real personal connection that I think a lot of people perhaps didn’t get with their grandparents.” Another

unidentified local professional revealed, “I have always been interested in history growing up, my grandma had a subscription to National Geographic and that’s what got me hooked.” Others like Trista Raezer, University Archivist for NDSU said, “going to an archive is what really made history seem real for me, and so I really want to help other students come to that realization. To make history less boring, less esoteric, and more real.” This notion of positive historical experiences and meaningful encounters with history have rooted themselves in these professionals from very young ages and all have to do with experiencing history and making meaning through those positive historical experiences.

Because of early experiences, positive relationships with history grew for these professionals and they sought real-world opportunities to pursue these interests. One local professional describes that “during my internship I got to work with photographs of houses which was so interesting to me and it made me want to go out and take photographs of houses to document them at the time I was doing the project... it gets you excited.” This excitement about history is explained by Peihl, who suggests that the intrigue of historical research lies in “mystery solving, and that’s a lot of fun! It is part of my job here and when we are doing research...we have to try to figure out what the story is.” Raezer also finds that “it is important for people to have a connection to something whether it be their heritage or where they live and a connection to the community. Those are just basic human needs and history can help fill that.” The personal connections felt by these professionals are similar to students’ experiences: their reactions to working with these valuable and interesting materials ignited a passion for historical research.

## *Connecting with Historical Materials*

Historical materials seem to have a lasting impact on the practitioners who deal with them, and the same impact with the student participants. When discussing the project, the practitioners like Peihl were envious of the task, saying, “you just never know what you are going to find when you start digging around.” This digging around and uncovering new materials is still a thrill in many of the archivists’ minds, as Michael Robinson, Director of the Institute for Regional Studies, explained when he describes his favorite finds: “what’s fun is when you get in a scrap-book from fifty years ago and you can really get a snapshot of people’s lives.” He goes on to say “I thoroughly enjoy it [working in an archive] because basically you take something that no one even knows exists, and you take it and put it out there so now it exists.” Taking something that is a mystery or unknown, making it usable and once again available to the public is what the Fargo Theatre Material Cultural Heritage Mitigation, and Preservation Project was all about preserving the historically valuable materials and shedding light on them for a new audience.

Claudia Pratt, who designs exhibits and has previously held prominent historical and heritage positions within this region, discussed with me

how a tangible object can have a meaningful connection on people. I have seen that over the years with people donating things to the museum. Before it is donated, you can touch it and everything, but once it is donated, you cannot touch it! It now holds all this information.

New meanings are placed on these materials upon their entrance into a repository, and Pratt suggests this change manifests because “once you understand things...Context behind an object

especially a historical one], it makes it much more meaningful.” This sense of meaning becomes the basis for the power and history embodied by these items.

Our regional archives tend to attract researchers interested in genealogy and this activity is quite common across the United States as a hobby. Raezer explains, “A lot of people will often feel a connection or nostalgia from where they come from or where their people came from especially with genealogists. Finding those connections to a place is paramount.” Knowing more context for and content about a person’s past makes the history more real and grounds them in their world, offering a sense of identity. Local history can do the same thing and Peihl suggests that

Local history can connect people in a way national and international cannot... I’m really intrigued by local history because the story of things that happened just down the street or around the corner... every place has its own local history and there are a lot of really interesting and compelling stories out there... Those stories that are not only compelling but they have local connections.

Connecting people to the history of their towns and their regions can often be more meaningful to the community members because they have the ability to directly experience history that impacts their daily lives, not an abstract idea in some book. Raezer suggesting that “sometimes you have to ask yourself what is a town or a city without its history” She went onto say that “[history] helps give it [a town] meaning and ground it to give it roots.” Those roots or personal connections contribute to the vested interest in a community and the perpetuation of local history and the community’s interest in those events.

## *Interpretation*

For historical context to be established we identify an object or material artifact using the contextual information at the site and then combine that information with historical research.

Using both of these aspects, we can then use this information to form interpretation and apply historical context to an object using its original context from the site a supplemental research.

All of the historical professionals have had multiple and complicated experiences with interpreting materials. Peihl notes that while “it’s not that difficult to find what happened... but trying to figure out how people felt about the things that were going on, is much more complicated and much more difficult and evidence of that kind of activity or thinking is much more uncommon to come by.” Pratt describes her interpretive approach as

I’ve taken a subject or a package out there and I would connect it to people in our community somehow through programming or having more artifacts in there if it was a flat exhibit, creating an environment to help people experience something relating to it, to get inside the context rather than just having it written on a wall.

Another local historical professional describes an approach to interpretation as, “we try to do it in the most factual way that we know of...saying why it was important and in what way this influenced later events or the actions of other people.” this professional also suggested that “We don’t try to draw a lot of subject conclusions but we do have to provide a certain amount of interpretation to people so that they know why this is important.” Overall, history professionals attempt to interpret the information they are given in an unbiased manner, but Raezer also suggests that this does not always happen: “we are all human.” Said noted that subjectivity always occurs, where “no productions of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author’s involvements as a human subject in its own circumstances.” (1979:11) Even



though attempts to remain unbiased for the information presented, someone continues to make decisions concerning what is seen as relevant information to be applied to an item, object or historical record.

### *Professional Trends*

There are a number of challenges that come with any career, but there are some unique factors in being a practitioner in historical and heritage fields. A common misconception of archivists that Robinson points out is that “people are under the assumption that archivists are simply curatorial. Bright historians realize that archivists determine what gets processed and what does not get processed.” Who and how this information comes to exist in the historical record are not often considered when documents are assessed later on by researchers and the public. Peihl also describes the frustrations with evaluating documents describing appraisals as “one of the most challenging parts of the job; you are trying to second guess the future.” He adds, “I find very often that people don’t know what it is that we will be really interested in. When most of our collections come from unsolicited donations we have to rely on people’s gut intuitions as to what they think might be important.” A large number of unsolicited donations are many archives’ primary source of acquisitions, and thus, trusting the public is important to maintain continued presence within the community as an authority on local or regional historical records.

One of the primary guides for collections is described by another local practitioner: “[when collecting] we always try to go back to our mission statement which is pretty focused... and we try not to do too much duplication.” Raezer highlights the main challenges to collecting and acquisitions by describing how processes “you have to think about the mission, how much

room is in the archives, you know, is this really significant? Just because I find it interesting, does that mean it's interesting to someone else?... You have to think outside yourself and find out what the researcher wants." Robinson also reveals, "archivists throw out more than you can imagine duplicates or things that just don't make sense." These ideas emphasize the practitioners' responsibility for acquiring materials, interpreting, and presenting this information to the public.

Pratt discusses how we approach acquiring artifacts in the present versus the past, suggesting that "there is more of a collections approach that says we need to start saving these things. There's that active approach, as opposed to haphazard collecting." Pratt also highlights that "every generation has stages of having to save records before they are lost. That always happens when certain people start dying off." As an example of saving history before it is lost, Pratt described the Veterans History Project which actively interviewed aging WWII veterans before they are gone. These interviews will be a lasting legacy of WWII because of those who sought to actively save those memories and put them into a historical record. European countries have been proactively collecting historical materials for years, and these practices are becoming a more common practice. We can see active collecting tendencies with professionals including Peihl, but he also reminds us that we cannot always predict the future, and so to collect what we think will be important fifty years from now is dangerous.

### *History and Heritage Perspectives*

Several local practitioners expressed some variation within the community for how the terms history and heritage are used. One practitioner suggested "They do get mixed together a lot (history and heritage) and interchanged, but I do feel there is a difference and whether people

have enough background to recognize that becomes the issue.” Raezer understands the two terms as, “history is pretty open. It’s just anything that happened in the past. The importance to studying history is so you don’t forget” whereas “heritage is much more your identity, like what shaped you as a person and what from the past has made you who you are.” Peihl said “heritage is the things that come down to us and history is the process that we make sense out of it.” Pratt, who is considered more of an interpretive expert, suggests “history, heritage and culture to me are all wrapped together... its semantics... When you look at the history behind history, are the facts and dates and stuff, where heritage and culture I think are much more closely related.” She continues to explain “heritage is really culture and culture is really heritage. It just depends on what field you are in as to how you approach it. Because history is more sociological in its approach and understanding context, then heritage and culture gets all wrapped up in that too.” For these practitioners in the community, these terms can work together to satisfy many dimensions for how history and heritage are used.

There are some lively discussions with historical professionals when these terms are specifically noted. Overall, the practitioners recognized the differentiation between terms, but said that the terms do not impact their work directly. Some of these practitioners suggested that these two terms “history” and “heritage” work together instead of being individual entities in conflict with one another. While many professionals interviewed in this thesis contested that heritage has more of a cultural and abstract notion; history more is grounded in events. Culture can be much more experiential for each individual. There was no consensus throughout all the interviews as to the specifics of each term, making it difficult to pinpoint a concise regional meaning.

“History” and “heritage” used interchangeably by local institutions such as the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County in Moorhead, MN. This museum and archive have a strong emphasis on the local areas events and history of Clay County and their collections reflect that mission. Their focal point and permanent exhibit is the *Hjemkomst*, a large Viking ship built and sailed to Norway in the 1980s, which gives the building its name “The Hjemkomst Center.” The ship and Center are a testament to Norwegian and Scandinavia heritage as whole for the region and maintaining ties to Scandinavia. This ship as an artifact embodies the history of Clay County and also the heritage for many Scandinavians and their descendants, which immigrated to this area primarily in the 1860s -1880s. Smith states “like history, it [heritage] fosters the feelings of belonging and continuity, while it physically gives these feelings an added sense of material reality” (Smith 2006:48). Understanding history and heritage as interacting entities allows historical organizations to employ both concepts in practice. As defined by Smith

heritage is not a ‘thing’, it’s not a ‘site’ building or other material object. ... Heritage is a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present, and the sites themselves are the cultural tools used to facilitate, but are not necessarily vital for, this process(Smith 2006:44).

As Smith reiterates, heritage as a process that enables us to engage with the everyday and historical institutions or heritage sites. Heritage is an experience, and everyone has a unique perspectives and gained knowledge that they view this new heritage experience through. This heritage experience builds on and applies new identities to those who have the opportunity to experience such things. According to Smith “heritage can give temporal and material authority to the construction of identity” (Smith 2006:50). Identity is a formed set of ideas and values for

each individual, and there are multiple identities that can be applied all at once. Not just for an individual, but communities and even nations can have multiple identities and heritages.

Heritage and history sites are often the places that we can explore different ideas and values that make up heritage. Each of us can have something to gain from these sites. When we interact with materials from the past we engage with these items which can create new ties to the past and make meaning for the future. Even though we may interact with historical materials that do not encompass our specific identities at a historical or heritage site, we are still gaining knowledge that can be applied to our own identities make it into our heritage.

The Fargo Theatre students gained a new identity and a new appreciation for their heritage working and experiencing this project. Some of the students were able to link how working with these historical materials directly impacted their personal identities as they could relate more to their communities and felt a greater sense of belonging.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although we were unable to begin the archiving stages of the project, information on how historical records are initially processed and practitioner relationships to such tangible materials form the significant outcomes for this thesis.

### Connecting with Materials

The student participants provided interesting insights about the project as well as strong emotional connections to the workspace in the Fargo Theatre basement. Many of the students had a mild to moderate interest in history prior to their involvement in the project, but throughout the first two stages of cleaning and cataloging materials, significant growth and interest manifested. The ability of the students to connect with the history of the Fargo Theatre and in turn local history is in direct correlation to their hands-on work with the historical materials.

Anderson expressed her new connection with the Theatre

The experience of going to an old theatre is so different than going to other theaters.... There's a history there, and there is a history for me there. When I go I remember what it was like to archive the basement. I can remember what it looks like to go sit in the seats. I remember the basement here is really funny because it shrinks down really small...When I go into other theatres... I don't think about who sat in these seats before me it's just a movie theater... but I feel like when I go to the Fargo Theatre it's more of an experience like I wonder what other famous people have sat in these same chairs.

This growing emotional attachment to this project at the Fargo Theatre's history is a direct result of the students' hands on interaction with local historical artifacts. Brown suggests that this experience connected her to this area and the Fargo Theatre in that "it [Fargo Theatre] talks

about the history here, it's not about Chicago or New York it's about our rich cultural history here in Fargo-Moorhead. For someone who didn't grow up in this town I felt like I got a new identity in Fargo Moorhead through working with these artifacts." Her insights and those of the other students demonstrate the impact material objects have to influence historical experiences and "liven up" history. Also indicated is "how the links between identity and heritage are developed and maintained" (Smith 2006:48). I now can begin unpacking this relationship.

Many of the professional practitioners expressed a connection to tangible history as well. Each of them spoke about their own personal connections and experiences with history and historical materials/sites that excited their interests in history. These positive historical experiences eventually lead them into careers that allowed them to continue and develop their interests in history. Many of the practitioners also shared their experiences working with volunteers and students in their respective institutions. Pratt suggests that

I think why your students have had the 'Wow!' or 'A-ha!' moment is because they are seeing the physical application of everything that they were doing. It was very real to them because they had that personal connection, that hadn't happened in the classroom.

Raezer explains: "I had really the strongest reactions from students that were cataloging coroner reports at an archive for me. I think they were fascinated by how people died in the 1900s." She goes on to suggest that "The coroner reports were personal ...they were making connections to why these documents were important. I could see some of them making connections to things outside of these coroner reports". Connections such as this, were powerful meaning-making opportunities for these students during Raezer's project, and there were strikingly similar reactions from the Fargo Theatre students.

Hands on activities create a more meaningful and memorable experience for participants, no matter what they are, and many scholars have found that reactions to hands-on engagement with historical materials open pathways to learning and the retention of information because of the personal connections made. Bruce VanSledright (2002) studied how fifth-grade students were originally presented with historical information, and then he and his team altered the original method of education as he “engaged students in the practice of historical investigation as a means of enabling them to think historically, understand the past, and produce historical products themselves”(VanSledright 2002:1093). His students, as well as those involved in this project, got the opportunity to pass around some historical materials, and synthesize their own information through specific lesson plans. This synthesis created a deeper understanding of the material than reading about an event in a history book. The students were more engaged in these lessons, and retention of the information was enhanced as personal connections were made with the information because the students were able to utilize their own knowledge and relate it to the new information being presented. VanSledright argues that “learners develop deeper levels of historical understandings when they have opportunities to consciously use their prior knowledge and assumptions about the past (regardless of how limited or naïve) to investigate it in depth” (2002:1092) and in making these personal connections they form a relationship with the historical information presented. Students were able to explore the past and come to their own conclusions using this investigatory method which involved more aspects of their brains than regurgitating information.

Terry L. Shoptaugh (1991) speaks of the importance of tangible objects to stimulate memory and increase personal connections to the world around us. Shoptaugh suggests that “memory is not really a ‘storage cabinet of the mind,’ so much as it is a process by which we, as



individuals, make sense of our lives through time” (1991:14). These tangible items or artifacts that were encountered throughout the Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project served as reminders of the past, but also created new meaning and memories for those who came into contact with them. The students not only made physical connections with the tangible items in the Theatre but also connected emotionally and cognitively with their local history and community and felt they had made a contribution to the historical record for the future. Overall, working with tangible historical materials also sparked greater student interest in history, heritage and the local community.

### *Mysteries and Context*

Throughout the interviews the looming question on many of the students’ minds was, as Lubovich who asked, “did we ever find out what that mystery box was?” but unfortunately, this mystery box has not yielded any clues to its context. Expert opinions from a Hollywood film archivists, a member of the Institute of Theatre Technology, a lighting expert, and several archivists, historians, collections managers and theatre professors were not able to identify this object. The mystery surrounding this item and its overall lack of context highlights some of the challenges presented for historical institutions.

How do we deal with mystery items such as this? In speaking with many of the professionals about this topic, it was argued that the context of the item is essential to its meaning and our understanding of it. Pratt suggested that:

Every museum or archives has lots of mystery items, and you never know when something may come along to explain that context...without context you only have a gut instinct, but with context you can understand what is going on around it, and you can

make a much better statement of what it was, but again, you have to get evidence from multiple perspectives.

Unknown historical or physical context is not unusual in archives or historical institutions, Raezer described her experience with an unknown lighting apparatus in a photograph saying, “it can be frustrating in archives when you come across something and you don’t know how to describe it or what it is, and the situation becomes frustrating and will come about often.” She then showed the photograph to her older volunteers who identified the item as a spotlight used in circus shows. Raezer suggests that elderly people are invaluable resources because “they have connections to a time we can’t remember, and it’s important to find out what they know before they’re gone.” Documenting knowledge that may disappear with the passing of generations is important and even the students from this project realized this and other aspects to the fragility of information. Brown commented on the “ethereal and fleeting aspect of history especially in a place like this that has so much history that hasn’t been well maintained.”

#### Gaining Pride and Looking Towards the Future

An increased sense of pride and historical awareness developed for many of the students as they reflected back upon the work they did at the Fargo Theatre. Busta explained that “being involved in it [this project] creates that pride that I helped do this... it created more interest for me to get more involved in the little things in our community to preserve history.” Krile likewise explained that her experience made her “feel like I can make a difference and my time wasn’t wasted and that I can actually get something done that is beneficial to the community.” Other students felt a similar sense of pride in the work accomplished but they also wished that it would have progressed beyond the basement. Busta, in representing that sentiment, said that she “would

like to see all our hard work go towards something...would like other people to be able to enjoy what we found.” Had we moved the items into the archive, this may have been possible. As Finn (2007) and Kettelaar (2000) notes, the European trend of community-based archives has successfully generated public support for maintaining local histories. The students working on this project clearly wished to continue their experiences with local history by extending work into community archives. Projects such as this could promote history and stimulate growth about the community within the community and create stronger ties within for many individuals and groups who have a stake in this area. . Finn (2002) and Kettelaar (2002) promote community archives as a European trend that has helped many people identify, control and support efforts to maintain a continued local history as an important part of the present. Getting more people interested in these projects can support the overall goals of perpetuating local heritage and history. The students showed a direct correlation in their work with tangible items to connecting with their history and some wanted to continue their experiences in local and community history by working on similar projects.

Our original intention was to create displays from the archival materials recovers as the students were anxious to show off the history and mysteries Fargo Theatre to the community as part of an important icon of the area and they thought it would be beneficial to the public to see this part of their history. Anderson suggested that “even if the Fargo Theater could put a little exhibit out I think it would increase the number of people who go there just because it is a piece of history and it has certainly increased my personal connection to this area.”

Positive and hands-on experiences may be the key to sparking future, vested interest in historical fields. Not only do these genuine experiences involve more people to be interested and connect with the past, but if promoted, local history could spark an interest in stewardship and

preserving history for future generations by highlighting the collection of historical records. The students as a whole also shared much of their experiences with their families. They want to continue sharing what they found in the Theatre with the public.

## Conclusions

Throughout this thesis project, I was able to participate and observe the initial processes of how historical records come to exist in an archive or other like institutions. By including both practitioners and students in this project, there were both well-seasoned and developing perspectives that were helpful for beginning to understand the power of working with historical materials. The key findings of this research include understanding the development of personal relationships to historical materials by students and professionals, the importance of context for the identification and interpretation of artifacts, and the importance of material heritage for individual and community identities. All of these phenomena point to how an object can embody the past.

O'Toole (1993) describes a perfect example for an artifact embodying history, in this case a family history that is diligently recorded in a family bible. The bible itself is quite ordinary but the pages are filled with births, deaths, confirmations, marriages and many more life events. The bible allows for easy access but these details can be found in larger more professional institutions often with much more accurate information. O'Toole suggests that by making such records "we make the family ours... the peoples whose name are thus recorded are different from the mass of humanity because they are *our* people. The power of that symbolic reconstruction of the family is often substantial and often, emotional" (1993:238-39). The Family Bible embodies the history of this family and becomes an important timepiece full of historical

value despite its duplicate information in other sources. It is the artifact itself that often embodies the history and can tell a more meaningful history.

Working in the basement of the Fargo Theatre was an adventure for all involved, and even the historical practitioners were very interested in the project and its material findings. Both student and practitioner experiences evidenced the transformative power of working with materials hand-on, something also supported in work from Freshwater (2003) and Gracy (2004). Student desire and need to save Theatre materials after their discovery became apparent as the students related intellectually and emotionally to the materials. Through their involvement in a local history project, the more closely connected they felt to their community not unlike the participants in research by Connolly (2011) and Flinn (2007). The students would have liked to see their work presented to the public in some way and not kept buried under piles of dust, however, they did contribute to making of history for this institution and their impact will inevitably remain in the records that they created. Their reactions are a direct manifestation from hands-on work with the tangible materials from the Theatre.

Similarly, a group of Hopi youth were part of a program called “The Footprints of the Ancestors” created as a collaborative effort to reconnect Hopi youth to their culture was undertaken by the Hopi Tribe’s Cultural Preservation Office, Northern Arizona State University and the Museum of Northern Arizona. George Gumerman, Joëlle Clark, Elmer J. Satala, and Ruby Chimerica created and carried out a long term program to perpetuate the culture values, ideas, traditions, and ways of life for the Hopi youth to reinforce the importance of their heritage (Gumerman et al 2012:154). The Footprints of the Ancestors program was created as a response to the deteriorating involvement in Hopi the cultural traditions and languages because of increased pressures from the modern world. This program focused on Hopi Youth is a

collaborative effort involving elders, educators, anthropologists, and multimedia professionals where the youth take part in visiting meaningful Hopi sites/landmarks relevant to their heritage. Gumerman and Clark acted as facilitators, creating the curriculum which would connect the youth to the elders and physical locations grounding the tribe's belief systems (Gumerman et al 2012:152-3).

The Hopi Tribe has a population of nearly 12,000 people and is a federally recognized tribe in Arizona. They are organized under the Indian Reorganization Act and are a political organization that supports the tribe by offering many services to their people. The Hopi have aboriginal claims that span parts of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah where they have sacred grounds, which are now considered archaeological sites. These sites to the Hopi people remain alive as physical places grounded in historical and religious events. These sites became the places considered 'footprints' for the program to build from and create more meaning to the youth. Active participation of the Hopi youth was the focal point to these excursions as "it is important for youth to take responsibility and make efforts to give back to their community while at the same time gaining knowledge of their history and culture" (Gumerman et al 2012:155).

Throughout the footprints fieldtrips to Hopi landmarks such as Chaco Culture National Historic Park, the Homolovi State Park and Mesa Verde National Park students became familiar with their heritage, values and history of their people but also created new meaning from these locations as one Hopi youth reflected "through the memories we created, stories we shared and different things we learned along the way, this program has not only helped me grow as a person but as a Hopi"(Gumerman, et al 2012:151).

The result of these experiences and explorations of Hopi culture by the younger generations of Hopi tribe members was the development of a museum exhibit focused on the core values of the Hopi culture presented by the youth. This younger generation was able to create a website, film series and a museum exhibit, which all properly represent and relay the youthful perspectives on Hopi themes including their struggles with balancing cultural/tribal responsibilities with modern pressures of daily life. The films showcased elders and faces of the Hopi youth telling and retelling their cultural values and core ideas which sometimes clash with modern life. The film screening and exhibit opening coincided with the three person panel discussion about Hopi values and cultures in a modern world; this event was open to the public and well attended. A community mural exploring the future of Hopi culture was also created and later installed in the exhibit.

The Hopi youth had the opportunity to explore their culture through new ideas because of the Footprints of the Ancestors program, which brought forth a very real issue in their culture today which is the cultural traditions and language being left behind because of the pressure of the modern world. This generation was given the tools to explore what it means to them to be Hopi and part of this culture and they rose to the challenge of expressing these ideas to the surrounding community. The students lives were impacted by the hands-on experiences which the field trips to Hopi sites, an exploration of their core values, and the creation of a museum exhibit, website and film series that highlight the important notions of their heritage. The youth were more grounded in their heritage with more knowledge and understanding to better deal with being an active member of not only the Hopi community but a member of the surrounding region. Balance here, was important to the Hopi, but not leave behind their heritage to deal with modern life was key.

In a similar way, the students with the Fargo Theatre Mitigation project were able to use the Fargo Theatre as a footprint of their communities past and better understand their role in the community as it stands now. Their hands on activities reinforced learning, understanding of the community and left a lasting impression to make them better equipped to deal with the communities' future as a place of meaning and importance.

The Footprints of the Ancestors project linked the past to the present generations of students by creating a hands opportunity for the students to experience their history and heritage or “footprints,” as Gumerman et al describes the process that “the interactions created a context in which cultural knowledge, continuity, and change were shared in a relevant and meaningful ways” (Gumerman et al 2012:155). The Fargo Theatre Material Heritage Mitigation and Preservation Project also served to provide a similar opportunity for students to immerse themselves into their community heritage and experience meaningful relationships with their community adding to their own individual identities and knowledge. The students themselves, picked up on the positive hands on experience by working on the project and recognized an increase in their knowledge and understanding of local history, and also saw the potential for continued interest in the Fargo Theatre if project were to continue within the community. As Anderson and others noted “I would really like to see the things we found up somewhere to go look at. That would be fun because we were a part of finding this in a basement somewhere... that would be a nice wrap up.” The desire to share what was found also suggests that the students care about what happens to the artifacts and other materials found as well as believes that these items could become an asset to the Fargo Theatre if they were to present this historical knowledge to a public audience.



Interviews with practitioners working with historical materials provided support and in that interest in history often, increases after individuals have the opportunity to directly work with materials and records with historical significance. These practitioners also shared some of their own experiences with history and what first drew them to the field, all of which were hands on experiences. The practitioner perspectives reinforce the idea of connections and meaning especially when dealing with materials with ambiguous context that come from archival institutions as discussed by Breakell and Worsley (2007). The power of archives and how information is presented to the public is also explained by the practitioners, highlighting how context plays a very important role in defining history through objects.

In the Fargo Theatre project, we only have context from the existing knowledge from the Theatre's and what we can uncover through the records and materials present in the basement. The artifacts discovered can be used to build on what is previously known about the Theatre's history, and add context to the community as a whole.

The historic Fargo Theatre will remain an important icon for the Fargo-Moorhead community, it is both internally and externally an embodiment of the past (with a few modern amenities) as a site of entertainment and sociality for generations of patrons. It will continue to be an icon because of the surrounding community's appreciation of this landmark and the heritage it represents as a place full of history and present activities that are "history-in-the-making."

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## APPENDIX A: INVESTIGATIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

**NDSU**

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

*Institutional Review Board*

*Office of the Vice President for Research, Creative Activities and Technology Transfer  
NDSU Dept. 4000  
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive  
Research 1, P.O. Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050*

701.231.8995

Fax 701.231.8098

Federalwide Assurance #FWA00002439

Friday, May 11, 2012

Dr. Joy Sather-Wagstaff  
Sociology & Anthropology  
202 Geosciences

**Re:** IRB Certification of Human Research Project:

**“Fargo Theatre Material Culture Recovery and Mitigation Project”**  
Protocol #HIS12203

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **Amanda Asselin Nordick**

Study site(s): **varied** Funding: **n/a**

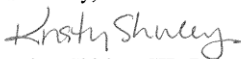
It has been determined that this human subjects research project qualifies for exempt status (category # 2) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on the protocol form received 5/10/2012 and consent/information sheet received 5/10/2012.

Please also note the following:

- This determination of exemption expires 3 years from this date. If you wish to continue the research after 5/10/2015, the IRB must re-certify the protocol prior to this date.
- The project must be conducted as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, pre-approval is to be obtained from the IRB, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to subjects. A *Protocol Amendment Request Form* is available on the IRB website.
- Prompt, written notification must be made to the IRB of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to participation will be reported in writing to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB policies.

Thank you for complying with NDSU IRB procedures; best wishes for success with your project.

Sincerely,



Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

NDSU is an EO/AA university.

APPENDIX B: IRB INFORMER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

My name is Amanda Nordick, and I am a graduate student working on my thesis project for the Masters in Anthropology at North Dakota State University. The purpose of my thesis project is to understand the social processes of creating historical records. This project focuses on a materials recovery project with the Fargo Theatre as a case study for following the creation of historical records from materials recovery through incorporation into an archive.

Interviewing both practitioners and students working with historical and heritage records is necessary to understand these processes. These processes include understanding how meaning and interpretation is created through processing historical records, increasing the understanding of how historical documents are developed, and establishing how professionals and students working within the field view and define heritage and historical value

You are invited to participate in this research study as an interviewee. As such, you will be asked various questions pertaining to your relationships and experiences with historical or heritage documents and materials. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw your participation at any point. The interview will last about an hour and with your permission, an audio recording will be made for future reference to the information provided by your interview. If you wish not to be audio recorded, please indicate so on the last page of this document. If you wish to remain anonymous from any references throughout this thesis work including the mention of your name, occupation, or position within the community, please indicate so on the last page of this document. You are also entitled to review any information collected about you, or from you interview; requests must be made to the co-investigator (Amanda Nordick), and note that only your information will be released to you. All information collected can only be accessed by the Principal Investigator (Dr. Joy Sather-Wagstaff) and Co-Researcher (Nordick) and will be maintained on a password protected computer for up to one year after the study is complete, at which point the information will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this project please contact:

- Amanda Nordick: (218)234-7390, [Amanda.Asselin@my.ndsu.edu](mailto:Amanda.Asselin@my.ndsu.edu)
Dr. Joy Sather-Wagstaff :(701)231-6498, [Joy.Sather-Wagstaff@ndsu.edu](mailto:Joy.Sather-Wagstaff@ndsu.edu)
NDSU Human Research Protection Program: (701)231-8908, [ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu)

Informed Consent: I, (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

- Do ( ) Do Not ( ) Give permission to be audio recorded.
Do ( ) Do Not ( ) Give permission to identify me by my name and/ or occupation.
Do ( ) Do Not ( ) Give permission to use direct quotes from my interviews.

Other notes:

Your participation in this project is greatly appreciated, thank you.

Researchers Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Informed Consent, Participant Copy

I, (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Do ( ) Do Not ( ) Give permission to be audio recorded.  
Do ( ) Do Not ( ) Give permission to identify me by my name and/ or occupation.  
Do ( ) Do Not ( ) Give permission to use direct quotes from my interviews.  
Other:

Your participation in this project is greatly appreciated, thank you.

Researchers Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about this project please contact:

Amanda Nordick: (218)234-7390, [Amanda.Asselin@my.ndsu.edu](mailto:Amanda.Asselin@my.ndsu.edu)

Dr. Joy Sather-Wagstaff : (701)231-6498, [Joy.Sather-Wagstaff@ndsu.edu](mailto:Joy.Sather-Wagstaff@ndsu.edu)

NDSU Human Research Protection Program: (701)231-8908, [ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu)

## APPENDIX C: GUIDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions served as the primary interests throughout the interviewing process. Participants were asked to expand on various ideas which may lead to alternative interests in a conversational manner however, these questions also served as a launching point for the interviews throughout this study.

### Questions for Students:

- When we talk about heritage, what does that mean to you, or how would you define heritage?
- What do you think about the process of working with these materials?
- What do you think overall about the things we have found? Are they valuable? Are they relevant?
- What has been the most interesting thing to you during this project? A particular artifact? Did you gain new knowledge about anything?
- What do you think is the difference between history and heritage?
- What role did you play in shaping the historic records of the items you worked on?

### Questions for Professional/Practitioners:

- When we talk about heritage, what does that mean to you, or how would you define heritage?
- What is your working relationship with historical records?
- How do you compare and contrast history versus heritage?
- How do you feel about the community involvement with archives or other historical institutions?
- Do you think that historical records are can be skewed or presented inaccurately?
  - To what extent?
- What role do you play in shaping the historical record of various items?
- Do your personal feelings play a role in the creation of certain documents that you have created?
  - Or have you seen or had any instances where others have influenced records with their own views?



## APPENDIX D: FARGO THEATRE CATAGORISED LIST OF FINDINGS

- Backdrops
  - Deteriorating- no known information.
- Blue Prints-
  - FT Orchestra Lift- framing plan 2-17-1987
  - Fargo Theater 1998, Fire/Water
  - Plumbing Engineering Plans
- Documents-
  - “Encore” at the FT information booklets
  - Awards/Certificates
    - Certificate of Commendation- for outstanding contribution to the quality of life in Moorhead. From Gov. Rudy Perpich- Framed c. 82-90(?)
    - Certificate of Merit from Fire prevention Bureau and Fargo Fire Dept- for cooperation in fire prevention activities (1946)
    - Citation of Excellence to FT from Promersberger company- 43<sup>rd</sup> annual FM advertising award competition – used grand reopening brochure-(99)
    - Citation of Excellence to FT-44<sup>th</sup> annual FM advertising award
    - Finnish Relief Fund Certificate- (40)
    - From Chamber of Commerce
    - Merit Award from ND chapter of the American institute of architects- to Foss Assoc.
    - Motion Picture Industry Certificate
    - US Treasury Department (44,45)
  - Bank Deposit (03-05)
  - Bank Statements (96-97)
  - Billing Reports (00-01)
  - Board of Directors Papers/booklets (97-00)
  - Box Office Reports (99,01-06)
  - Boyde & Company Marketing request (04-05)
  - Budgeting (96-97)
  - Capital Campaign Accounting Binders
  - CPA Financial Statements (04-05)
  - Deposit records (99-00)
  - Donations (96-02)
  - Drawing of Renovation (1937)
  - Fargo Theater Management Corp Papers- (01-04)
    - Daily Program \$
    - Financial Statements / working papers
    - Members

- Payroll
    - Year end Docs (02, 04)
  - Financial/ Tax Information- (96-97, 99-05)
  - Folders w/ FT logo
  - Grant Proposals/Papers (89-90)
    - Honeywell 89
  - History of the FT booklets (85)
  - Invoices-(99-00, 08)
  - Mail/ Letters
    - A Request of seats for showing of “War and Peace” handwritten (56)
    - Asking for celebrity donations (96-98)
    - Fargo Theater Renovation and restoration capital campaign
    - From Blue Key (38)
    - From Ginny(?) to Hildegarde with songs
    - Hilder Shaw to Ed Krause- Typed (53)
    - Returned mail
    - Robert Letherer to Hildegarde about George Gershwin
  - Meeting Minutes (89, 96-97)
  - Membership Files (92-98)
  - Miramax Film Grosses
  - MN Production Guides (05)
  - Newsletter for reopening (99)
  - Newspaper Clippings- (03-04)
  - Paramount Pictures Grosses (91)
  - Postcards
    - Board of Directors in Hard Hats(1997) 200 count
  - Production Information (91-91)
  - Program Reports (01)
  - Restoration + Renovation Feasibility (95)
  - Tax deductions from 1993 auction.
  - We’ve only scratched the surface” campaign (95)
    - Booklets
    - Pamphlets
  - Working Papers/Finance (01)
  - Year End Office Reports (03)
- Equipment
  - Amplifier
  - Am/Fm stereos
    - In wooden box
    - Sankyo

- BSR Stereo Frequency equalizer
- Cassette Pkayers/Recorders
  - Arion
- Laser disc
  - Sony CRV laser recording system
- Programmable remote
- Telex Slide sync recorder
- VCR
- Video Camera
- Wireless Microphone System- “Shure”: 5M58
- Fargo Film Fest
  - Booklet (06)
  - Documents- (02)
    - Audit (02)
    - Box office (02)
  - Press Packets (04)
  - Programs (06)
  - Schedules (02)
  - Submissions (02)
  - Lodging, Panels info (02)
  - Featured Films (02)
  - Passes and ticketing info (03)
  - Press Packet (02)
  - Spirit Fest Midwest
  - We-Fest Passes (01)
  - Fabulous Fifties- Broadcast
  - Much Ado About Nothing- booklet
  - Submission Papers (02)
  - Volunteer lists
  - List of Films shown (01-08)
  - Materials (lanyards)(02, 06)
  - Entries (00-02,04-05)
- Light bulbs- various shapes, sizes and models.
- Manuals-
  - A/C manual
  - Epson printer manual (2 ink cartridges)
  - FT Renovation Manual (98)
    - Proposal Drafts
    - Electrical Circuits
  - Ice-O- Matic Manual

- IDL 1000 User Guide
- JBL Speaker Installation
- JLB Speaker Guide
- Portable Video camera operating manual
- Reineke Lobby Renovation
- Simplex 35/70 Instructions
- Stage Equipment
- Xcalim VR128 Users guide
- Xenolight
- Material Items
  - Christmas Carol- Scrooge Ledgers
  - Cardboard Cutouts
    - James Dean
    - Marilyn Monroe
  - Film and containers
  - Film Reel Cabinet (2) c. 1930
  - Film Reels
    - A walk in the forest
    - Fritjhod Holmboe
    - Gone Camping in Alaska
    - Gertrude Stein “When this you see”
    - Man Without a Country
    - Remember Me parts I-III
    - River Boy
    - Roger Ramjet
    - Skyscraper
    - The living Desert
    - The station Agent trailer
    - Unknown
    - Weapons of Gordon Parks
  - Film themed decorations
    - Film Reel Flowers
  - Fletcher Glass cutter #02a
  - Guest Book from Funeral of Ed Kraus (1962)
  - Ice Shaver c. 1952 wiring seems to be missing
  - Janet Leigh Shower curtain-signed
  - Keys
    - “Extra for Ticket Machine” Key
    - “Old Concession” Keys-(3)
  - Kitchen Props

- Levin Brothers Armchair
- Mad Frank Pins
- Medicine Cabinet
- Miscellaneous Keys (4)
- Motor- Misc 5count.
- Musical Instruments
  - Maracas
  - Tambourine
  - Rain stick
  - Cow bell
- Neumade Wall Cabinet
- NDSU window ornament
- Outside Publications (99-03)
  - Film conditions report
  - Film Preservation Tour Brochures and Programs
  - International Film Fest Booklet- April 2003
  - Journal of the American Theater Organ Society
  - Theater magazines, Nonprofit Newsletters, readers digest, American educator
- Power Curtin Controller
- Saw Table
- Ticket Machine (3)- ‘Automaticket’ c. 1980s
- Valentines Decorations
- Wallpaper- hand painted 3 rolls
- Wooden Plaque
- Wooden Chest (writing on inside) no date, handmade.
- “You are entering Fargo” Window Plaque
- Marble/ Fresco Pieces. Some of each (4 total)
- Marquee Letters
- Music
  - Debora Harris- Reverie (3) -1997
    - Coates Duo- Dances in the Mad House- (3)- 2000
  - Creative Processes 473- Music from Film (29)
  - John Chisum- Let Your Kingdom Come (1)- 1999
  - Mike and Linda Coates
    - An Early Spring(7) 1996
    - Fall in Love (8)-
    - The Summer Air (6) -1998
  - Sarah Morrow- to hold you (3) -1999
- Newspaper-

- Framed (1926, 1937-07)
  - Cartoon Drawing of FFF, 2007
  - Original opening multiple page spread
  - Remodels from the Fargo Forum
  - Screening of “61” with Roger Marris, Mickey Mantle, Billy Crystal, Bob Vostas. June 28<sup>th</sup> 2009
  - Theater Opening- 15 copies( half from 26, other from 37)
- Loose Articles- (1945,53, )
- Photographs-
  - Film Productions(1930s, 78-91)
    - Madness of King George
    - Madd Frank –signed
    - Signed-Janet Leigh from Psycho
  - Framed/ B+W and Colored
    - 3 Fargo Organists’
    - 4 color prints of theater framed together
    - Alfred J. Sandberg Jr.- His motion picture machine operator license
    - Babe Ruth- Specifically to the Fargo Theater (1927)
    - Billy Crystal at Theater (2009)
    - Bison Booster Club-Homecoming Parade (38)
    - Dancing Couple- signed “to Ed Krause –What’s wrong with this floor!!”
    - Del, reads to my love, Hildegarde (77)
    - Ed Krause w/ Henrietta the hen w/ newspaper clipping in frame (April 14, 1947)
    - Florence Klingensmith w/ plane signed/ dedicated
    - Fredrick Martin Hotel with group of men. Tues Jan, 25<sup>th</sup> no year
    - FT sign at night
    - Gary Burghoff (MASH) poster and photo- To the Fargo Theater
    - Hildegarde w/ two men- signed to her by “Dave and Manny”
    - Iron Will photos of cast in front of FT
    - Joan Crawford and Babe Ruth (print on poster board)
    - Orchestra Photo
    - Planes in front of theater on Broadway
    - Scenic of Fargo Theater 2 count
    - Some poor reprints- have not found originals of many of these
    - Special Dollar Day Ticket- 4 admissions for \$1
    - Third House 25<sup>th</sup> Assembly(37)
  - Poster board/ Blown Up
    - 2 actresses and 2 actors, signed unknown
    - Band playing- signed, unknown

- Lawrence of Arabia
    - Signed with posing female, unable to read.
  - Art
    - 4 photos together, “Moscow, London, Paris, Fargo”
    - Artist render of street view of FT with courtyard, circular foyer
    - Renovated Theater w/ paint, and upholstery samples
    - Watercolor of FT. Ellen Jean Diedench 18/5036
- Poster
  - Event/Concert some autographed
    - Alf Clausen, June 23, 2009- 3 count
    - An Evening with Doug Jones- March 3, 2001
    - Arlo Guthrie- 3 pictures with signatures (99)
    - Blenders- signed
    - Buddy Holly Cover Band- Signed.
    - Church basement ladies- musical- framed
    - Creative Process 473
    - Elephants of Broadway by Shrine Circus- 2007
    - Fargo Film Festival March 2-6 2001. 2 count
    - Fat Possum Mississippi: juice joint caravan- autographed
    - Fever- A Tribute to Peggy Leigh- signed/unsigned
    - Film Restoration Tour- Signed
    - Funny Men- created by Bill Bates c. 1965
    - George Winston- solo piano concert- (Oct 8, 03)
    - Grease (94)
    - High Plains Reader issue signed by Monkees drummer- (June 14, 01)
    - Janet Leigh- 2 Psych Photos- signed
    - Jim Brickman- framed autographed
    - Johnny Lang- Wander this World Tour-signed (00)
    - Keb Mo- 11/4/07
    - Last Red Hot Lovers – signed by Gary Burghoff
    - Last Red Hot Lovers- micro posters- signed- 12 count
    - Madd Frank!
    - Man on a Wire
    - Margo at the Wedding
    - Mystery Train (89)
    - NSP- Plugged into the community
    - Possibilities Show-signed Chris Burke Sep 7 no year
    - Robert Cray Band- signed- Sep 11, (02)
    - San Carlo Opera Company
    - Screening of “61”

- Steven Wright, comedian (Feb 1, 03)
  - Sonny Liston Vs. Cassius Clay Poster advertising fight pictures c. 1964
  - That's Entertainment
  - The Blenders 3 count
  - The Egyptian-
  - The Odd Couple w/ signatures
  - Tonic Sol-Fa a-capella- signed
  - Veloz & Yolanda Sat Jan 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Vitaphone! (6 deteriorating ) posters advertising its arrival (late 1920s early 1930s)
  - Von Hook-written phone numbers for producers
- Movie Posters
  - Framed
    - Iron Will- signed
    - Marvin's Room- signed- (1996)
    - On poster board-61, Europa Europa, Of Will and Wickedness, Cinema Paradiso, Triumph of the Spirit, Give us a Hand.
    - The Badlands of Dakota- 1941
    -
  - Unframed/ Rolled (1990-2011)
    - 99 rolled posters. (Date range 02-11)
    - Dakota- John Wayne- on Foam Board-9 others flattened not mounted (97)
    - Wooly Boys – Thanks from cast and crew- (fall 00)
    - Wooly Boys-signed
  - Water Damaged 25 count. (75, 91-97)
- Oversized
  - Outrage Posters 1964 measure 80x40 inches (2)
  - Silver Jazz poster, measures 4 feet in diameter.
- Water Damaged- (75, 91-97)
- Projector-
  - Eastman Projector (2)
  - Keystone Moviegraph
  - Lavezzi Gears LA307 G (2)
  - Lens- 8+
    - Simplex, Eastman (2) \*several more which are yet to be identified
    - Bausch & Lomb lens- 6.00 service II Cinephor front
    - Ross Lens- DPL #120777
    - Snaplite- Series II bx-163
    - Super snap lite f/1.7 kollmorgen optical



- Slide Projector (3)
- Simplex Projector
- Simplex Drive Gears
- Misc. Box of parts
- Wiko Projector Lamp
- Promotional Materials-
  - ‘Boys’ Screening flyer
  - “Crying Towel’ napkin
  - Better lighting Proposal
  - Christmas Carol Pamphlets 91
    - Ann Reed Show Sound Contract
    - Script/ alterations from text
  - Commemorative Booklets of Fargo Theater (70<sup>th</sup>)
  - Elephant Man flyer
  - Encore at the FT- Daniel Cornejo- Booklet
  - Event Files- (80,93 99-05)
  - Faces Campaign
  - Filings on many events ( late 1980s and 00-05)
  - Film Preservation Tour
  - Forever Plaid-
    - 100+ movie stubs
    - Flyers and Programs
  - FT Ads (on poster board)
  - FT Logo 800+count
  - Give Us a Hand (on poster board)
  - History of FT (85)
  - Holiday Postcards for Marquee Opening (98)
  - How to talk Minnesotan – Charge Slips/ refunds
  - John Wayne – Dakota Postcards
  - Just for You- Stage pass (02)
  - Make a Night of It!- free movie ticket w/ dinner purchase from Passages
  - Mighty Wurlitzer Show- (09)
  - Mile Post 398- Flyers- (07)
  - Opening of 2<sup>nd</sup> room in Theater
  - Oscar Night (99)
  - Public Relations Folder (02)
  - Reineke Lobby Opening (87)
  - Rent this theater!
  - Reopening Gala- March (99)
  - Rieneke Lobby opening/ ribbon cutting ceremony mailer (87)

- Save the Fargo Camp (86-87)
- See and Hear the Mighty Wurlitzer
- Silent Movie Night (02)
- Silent Movie Night Flyer
- Street Smart Directory 100+count
- Summer Film Camp Informational Mailers
- Two Summers Press Kit
- Versailles et les Trianons booklet
- Sheet Music
  - (copyright :1908-73) significant amount in the 1930s and1940s
  - Handwritten (No Date)
    - I'll Build Us a Cottage
    - Sing a Little song
    - Beautiful Lady
  - Signed by Rudy Vallee "Deep Night"
  - Some bound most loose
  - The Incomparable Hildegard- music with hand notes (possibly from Crape Tyler)
- Slides (unknown context)
  - Charlie Chaplin
  - Grauman's Chinese Theater
- Software
  - Floppy Disc- Logo's, Banner and fonts
  - Great Plains
  - Manuals
  - Music to my Ear- Art
  - Love Hollywood Style- Promo Photos (06)
  - Windows 98 Install w/ discs
- Theater Tickets- (02)