The University of Nevada, Reno Anthropology Research Museum

Interviewees: Catherine S. Fowler and Donald L. Hardesty
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Description

The Research Museum of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Reno, was founded in 1980 when the department inherited a number of archaeological and ethnographic collections accumulated by the UNR branch of the Nevada Archaeological Survey, a statewide organization that operated from the late 1960s through the 1970s. Through the years, the museum became the repository of excavated materials originating from faculty contracts in prehistoric and historical archeology—materials that required space for study and analysis as well as curation. Additional ethnographic collections (including the Lulu K. Huber Basket Collection and Gloria Griffin Cline Plains Indian Collection) were also acquired, so that the space and collections needed full-time care, including cataloging, storage, and conservation. The Museum, located for decades on the fifth floor of the Ansari Business Building alongside the Department of Anthropology, also has long served as a training facility for students pursing the interdisciplinary Museum Studies minor. This oral history project, conducted in 2002, interviewed two faculty members in the Department of Anthropology, Dr. Catherine S. Fowler and Dr. Donald L. Hardesty, both of whom outline their memories of the museum's founding as well as its role in curation and the education of UNR students in Anthropology and the broader university community.

The University of Nevada, Reno
Anthropology Research Museum

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An Oral History Conducted by Morgan Blanchard

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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Preface

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the "uhs," "ahs," and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete…or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

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Introduction

The following interviews, focused on the history of the Research Museum in the Department of Anthropology of the University of Nevada, Reno, were conducted by Anthropology doctoral student Morgan Blanchard in 2002 as part of an Oral History course he was taking. In these interviews, Donald L. Hardesty and Catherine S. Fowler, both Professors in the Department of Anthropology, outline what they remember about the circumstances under which the museum was created as well as its role in both curation and the education of UNR students in Anthropology and the broader university community. At the time of the interviews, the Museum was located on the fifth floor of the Ansari Business Building on the campus, where it remains in 2013.

The Museum began modestly when the Department of Anthropology inherited a number of archaeological and ethnographic collections accumulated by the UNR branch of the Nevada Archaeological Survey, a statewide organization, in 1980. The Survey was a grants-and-contracts operation that had begun in the late 1960s. Artifacts accumulated through contracts, along with some gifts, were formerly housed in the basement of the Physical Plant Building behind the Mackay Mines Building on the UNR campus. With the dissolution of the Survey in the 1970s, the artifacts and accumulated records were transferred to the Department of Anthropology. When the Department moved into the Ansari Building, new space was provided for the collections, along with potential space for developing exhibitions based on them.

The University also had started an interdisciplinary Museology (now Museum Studies) program at about the same time, combining and developing several courses in departments (Anthropology, Art, History, Home Economics, Biology) toward a Minor course of study. This wide-ranging program operated in cooperation with the Nevada State Museum and the Nevada Historical Society. Faculty in the Anthropology Department were also accepting contracts in both prehistoric and historical archaeology to benefit students,

and the materials resulting from these excavations required study and analysis space as well as curation. Additional ethnographic collections (Lulu K. Huber Basket Collection, Gloria Griffin Cline Plains Indian Collection, etc.) were also acquired, so that the space and collections needed full-time care (including cataloging, storage, and conservation). The new facility fit that need, and it operated with student employees under faculty supervision. Over the years, those operations continued, and the training given to students in all facets of museum operations became an active part of the Department's program.

Also over the years, in cooperation with the interdisciplinary Museum Studies minor, students have installed in the museum's display area more than twenty exhibitions, all as class projects. These themed exhibits have ranged from several on ethnographic basketry and prehistoric textiles to student excavations of historic and prehistoric sites. Through this program, the students learn artifact research techniques, principles of design and fabrication (including lighting, color, and specimen mounting), writing skills for label copy, conservation and minimal repair of artifacts, budgeting, and staging openings. These skills have served many of them well in their future employment when they are called upon to install small exhibits in workplace locations.

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Chronicler Bios

Catherine S. Fowler

Catherine S. Fowler, (BA University of Utah, MA and Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh), Professor Emerita, taught cultural and linguistic anthropology as well as museum studies in the Department of Anthropology, UNR, for 38 years. Her areas of specialization included North American indigenous peoples and cultures (especially Great Basin), ethnobiology, Uto-Aztecan languages, and material culture (especially textile and basketry analysis). She was Foundation Professor and Outstanding Researcher, UNR, and is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Science.

Donald L. Hardesty

Donald L. Hardesty (BA University of Kentucky, MA and Ph.D. University of Oregon), Professor Emeritus, taught archaeology, historic preservation, and physical anthropology in the Department of Anthropology at UNR for 43 years. His areas of specialization included historical archaeology, North American and Mesoamerican archaeology, ecological anthropology, and cultural resource management. He was Foundation Professor and Outstanding Researcher at UNR and has been president of the Society for Historical Archaeology, the Mining History Association, and the Register of Professional Archaeologists.

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Catherine Fowler

MORGAN R. BLANCHARD: I'm Morgan Blanchard, and today is November 7, 2002. This is an interview with Dr. Catherine Fowler. It is being conducted in Room 509 in the Ansari Business Building on the University of Nevada, Reno, campus. Dr. Fowler, thank you for coming and being with us. Could you begin with a brief biography? Tell me about how you came into anthropology and how you came to UNR.

CATHERINE FOWLER: I basically came into anthropology through an interest developed fairly early. When I was in my late adolescent years and early teen years, I was always interested in Indians for some reason. I was raised in Utah, and there were not necessarily Indian people anywhere around, so I have no idea why, but whenever it came to doing school projects, I always was interested in doing them on some kind of Indian-related topic. That interest was then solidified when I got involved with the Girl Scouts; and the summers that I was fifteen and sixteen I had the opportunity to travel the Southwest in Girl Scouts-sponsored trips that were conducted by Dr. Bertha Dutton of the Museum of New Mexico—a very well-known Southwestern anthropologist. She took ten to fifteen girls each summer on two-week trips to visit archaeological sites and Pueblo ruins and see dances and native gatherings throughout the area.

Up until that time, my primary interest was in becoming a veterinarian. I was still pursuing that during my teen years, until I got started in college and found out that being a veterinarian—especially a female who wanted to work with large animals—was not going to fly. I had already worked for a veterinarian for four summers in a dog and cat hospital, and although I loved dogs and cats, I didn't see myself ending up there and dealing with their owners. The animals were fine, but the owners were something else.

So I switched after my second year in college and pursued anthropology, going down to the University of Utah and entering the department as an anthropology major and basically finishing my BA there. The year that I was a senior, I took a class in Great Basin Indians from Warren d'Azevedo, and that further solidified my interest. I also took his class on North American Indians.

During the end of that senior year, I was hired by the Glen Canyon Project to begin work pulling together documentary material on the Southern Paiute occupation of the Glen Canyon area. The field crews in the Glen Canyon area had found very few traces of Southern Paiute occupation. There was plenty of Anasazi occupation, now called ancestral Pueblo, but the traces of Southern Paiute people who were still living there or certainly living there in historic times were very few and far between.

Jess Jennings, who was head of the project at the University of Utah, decided that perhaps a technique that was then called the direct historical approach—now known as ethnoarchaeology—might work there. So he gave me the field opportunity to basically go out with Southern Paiute individuals and a Mormon guide—so that we wouldn't all kill ourselves in the country—and go through the Red Rock country, especially the area around Escalante, Utah, and down toward the river, looking for Southern Paiute sites, using the native individuals as guides. I did that all the summer between my senior year and the first year of graduate school, and I continued with that work on the Glen Canyon Project through the following year.

Between my junior and senior year, I worked for Warren d'Azevedo on bibliographic assignments having to do with the Washoe. At the end of my senior year, Warren left and went to University of Pittsburgh. I had met Don Fowler in the Great Basin Indians class, and so we courted by mail for the following year, while he was in Pittsburgh. Then I decided to join him, and we got married and went to Pittsburgh, where we both ultimately finished our PhD's.

By the time I got to Pittsburgh, Warren had decided to come *here* and founded this department, so as soon as Don finished his coursework, Warren brought Don in as one of the first members of the department in 1964. Since I had only finished the coursework for the master's by that time, I went into the Desert Research Institute here, where Joy Leland and I and one other individual basically set up the Western Studies Center. Mary Ellen Glass was the other person, who was actually the founder of the Oral History Program here. We set up the Western Studies Center that would focus on Native American issues here in the Great Basin. I stayed with that until 1967, when I got the opportunity to go back and finish my PhD coursework at the University of Pittsburgh. Now, that same year, Don had a postdoc at the Smithsonian, so he went to Washington, and I went to Pittsburgh and finished my coursework within a year. After that, we came back out here in 1970. *He* went into the Desert Research Institute, and *I* came into the anthropology department, first as a part-time instructor and then finally as full-time.

What were you teaching when you came back?

Great Basin Indians at first, in the evening division. Then I received half-time employment for regular day sessions and taught Great Basin Indians and also North American Indians. This allowed Warren to teach African courses and other things that the department needed. Then I added linguistics, as well. At the time we came back from Pittsburgh and the Smithsonian, Wayne Suttles was the linguist in the department. After he left, and I finished my degree in 1972, then I started adding some of the linguistics courses.

Who else was in the department when you came?

Well, when we first came, it was Warren d'Azevedo, Buck Davis—or Wilbur Davis—who was the archaeologist, and Wayne Suttles.

What did Wayne Suttles teach?

Wayne Suttles taught linguistics, general cultural anthropology, North American Indians. He was an expert in the cultures of the Northwest Coast and is still living. When he left here, he went to Portland State University in Oregon, where he had been originally.

He left in about 1972, somewhere near then. Davis had left before then, and Don basically replaced Davis as the archaeologist.

When you first came, you weren't here in the Ansari Business Building.

No, we were actually in what's now the physical plant building—the little, red-brick building that's immediately south of Ansari Business Building. We had the top floor of that building, and offices for the faculty were there. When Warren himself came here in 1963, the department was in the old gymnasium, which is the area where this building now sits, or at least in part, the plaza area that's out immediately south of this building and next to the library. The library was newly constructed at that point. This was an old gym that was ultimately torn down. The department started in the offices that were around the edge of the gymnasium playing floor, but by the time *we* got here in 1964, the department was in the physical plant. The basement of the physical plant then became the archaeological lab within a short time.

So when you came back, then it had moved into the Mack Social Science Building?

No, we were still in the physical plant when we came back, but it was not too long thereafter. This was also the period when, initially, anthropology and sociology were together. When Warren first came, it was anthropology, sociology, and political science, I believe, and then they split. When sociology and anthropology split, we stayed in the physical plant for a little while longer and then moved over to Mack Social Science, once they got it built. See, where Mack Social Science is now, was the old football stadium, so that building was not constructed when we were here.

One of the questions that I'm interested in is about collections and collection space. In speaking with Dr. Hardesty, he was mentioning that there was a real problem in Mack Social Science. I didn't even know that you had been in another building prior to that. So what was it like to try to move into that space?

When we moved into Mack Social Sciences, we retained space in the physical plant building. The archaeology labs stayed in the basement, and so collections were stored there. The archaeological

survey, which was originally started by DRI, had three branches: a campus branch, a UNLV branch, and a Nevada State Museum branch. The archaeological survey was based in the basement of the physical plant building, also, and that was with Bob Elston and Jonathan Davis and others. We had no space for collections at all in the Mack Social Science Building.

So everything was pretty much stored over in the old physical plant. Were you using those spaces for instruction? Was there any sort of a museum display?

There were no museum displays; there was really no proper curation in the physical plant. There was a ruling—I don't know exactly when it came down, but it was sometime after we moved to Mack Social Sciences—that we could no longer allow students to be in the basement. The faculty could be there, but it was too dangerous for students! [laughter]

Faculty was disposable?

Yes, exactly. So after that ruling, then we basically didn't have much in terms of laboratory space. We still retained the top floor, though, for a time being. The physical anthropology lab was in the south end of the building on the top floor, and the archaeology lab didn't have a separate space, but they could often use the physical anthropology space for a lab.

Now you're very involved in the anthropology museum that exists today. What was your relationship with those collections when you first came?

There *was* nothing. No, the collections, we didn't take over until about 1980, when the Nevada Archaeological Society went out.

I think, actually, 1978 is when they closed from what I've been able to figure out.

Yes, that's right. It was 1980 when we first started accessioning collections. We decided that we needed to do something about it, so we more or less inherited the collections. Otherwise, collections that had been gathered by our own staff, including Don Fowler, were largely curated up at DRI or at the state museum. We had no

curation facility, nor any designs on having one. During the time that Elston ran the survey, though—this was the beginnings of CRM—there was not a thought to curation problems, and *certainly* not a thought that one should be charging for curation of artifacts. It was just assumed they'd be absorbed into whatever institution was possible.

So the collection sat in a state of benign neglect for a long period of time, because there was no money to do anything other than field-catalog them and get them into shape so that you could write up your reports. But no thought of putting them into some kind of permanent housing. So when the survey collapsed, it was that idea that we were going to have to deal with the collections which were gathered under contract with the university. They became the university's responsibility, in essence. We basically started from the ground up, accessioning everything that we could. We are *still* actually accessioning collections from the old NAS days. Whenever things quiet down, and there's nothing else to do in the museum, whoever is in charge of the museum in any one given year is instructed to go out to Stead and find an Elston collection and bring it into the system.

Dr. Hardesty seemed to make something of a distinction between the archaeological collections and the ethnographic collections. Would you agree with that distinction?

Well, it's a somewhat artificial distinction in that, initially, there was nothing *but* archaeology, but we still saw the same responsibility; we had to deal with the archaeological material. So that's where we started. If you go through the accession book, you'll see that most of it is archaeology. There had been a few donations through the years, when the Nevada Archaeological Survey was alive, of some ethnographic pieces—nothing as sophisticated as a whole collection, but we had some Seri objects, the Seri of Mexico. We had a nice, little Eskimo collection of miniatures, largely toys. These are things that had been accepted, not so much by Elston, but by the previous DRI coordinator of the survey, Robert Stevenson. So they were *there*, but there wasn't really enough to deal with as an ethnological collection, and there wasn't much thought, really, of making an ethnological collection. We had no facility; we were having enough trouble dealing with the archaeology and getting that into some acceptable shape. Plus, we had no money, of course, to go out

and begin collecting. We had a few things from the NAS days, but there was nothing that one would call a systematic collection.

Now, at about the same time we took over the museum materials—the collections from the NAS—and started to put them into shape, the university entered into the museology program. So that was the catalyst to basically begin getting quite a bit of this work done. We had student apprentices working as part of their museum experience. At first, when we started the museum studies courses, we had students do their apprenticeships at the state museum. Then, as we started to take over the survey material, we started shifting them to that.

When did the museology program start?

I think it's about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, so it must have started about 1975. I'd have to look up the date. I recently did a history of it, but I don't have that in my mind. That was a joint program with art and biology, anthropology and history.

And that is still going on?

Yes. It leads to a minor in the undergraduate level.

Nineteen eighty-two was a big year for the department and the museum. That's the year that it moved over to this building late in the year. From what my research tells me, it's the year that we got the Kitselman endowment, and it was also the year that we got the Huber collection.

We were limping along, basically, accessioning the archaeological collections that we had, when the College of Arts and Sciences got the opportunity to add two floors to the building that was being built for business, which is what's now called the Ansari Business Building. It was decided that some departments would move, along with the dean's office. Those most crowded for space and having the most difficulty were anthropology, because we had such limited lab space and any kind of teaching space; mathematics, who are upstairs on the sixth floor; and the social work group, which has had several homes and now is no longer in the college. So they were the departments that were most out of space, and we had the opportunity to basically design some new space.

I don't know whether you've ever been over in Mack Social Science, but when we went over there—and this was supposedly space that was going to be designed for us—it was to include laboratory spaces. What they gave us as labs were about the size of our present offices, but they had a sink in them. So there was absolutely *no* possibility of teaching physical anthropology or archaeology or anything else in those spaces. With this new opportunity, we had a chance to design some space, and, within reason, they told us they'd give us about half the floor—if we could justify it. So we did that and got the present space that we have, and we purposely designed a museum room in that, with the idea that we would display materials, but we would also use it as a primary curation facility for numbering things.

Was it hard to justify that to the administration?

It didn't seem to be at that time. They took it as justification. We also talked about it with reference to the archaeological programs that were going on and the natural tie-in that the museum would have to curating the materials from the archaeological work. When Don Fowler was doing the bulk of the archaeology and Don Hardesty doing prehistoric, before he started the historic archaeology, many of lab facilities they used were out at Stead or over in the old physical plant building. So we just flat out had to have some decent space in order to continue the teaching program. The historic lab, the prehistoric lab—or what became the prehistoric lab—the physical anthropology lab, and the museum were the *extra* spaces that we went after.

The Kitselman bequest came at the inquiry of the daughter of Mr. Kitselman, who had taken an interest in Nevada and in the department and wanted to leave some kind of an endowment to the department. I believe Warren d'Azevedo was chairman at the time. We decided that one of the things that the department really needed at that time was something to help pay for the museum and for a curatorship in the museum. We approached the Kitselman family with that idea, and they endowed the museum. I believe the initial endowment was $75,000, only the interest of which is spendable. That initially allowed us to offer the Kitselman fellowship to a graduate student, and it would pretty well carry a graduate student for a year. Hard times put a drain on the money, in terms of trying to add to the principal, which they have to do in order to keep the principal viable; and decreases in the stock market have made it less

viable, so that now it does not carry somebody on a full ride. Of course, tuition has gone up and fees and everything else. So now we can offer it usually every other year as a full fellowship, and then on the off year, there usually has to be a supplement of some sort. In recent years I've been paying the supplement out of my own funds, as an assistantship.

We're going to talk about some of the funding issues a little later; I want to ask you about some of those, but that all kind of came about the same time as the Huber collection came in, which is a large collection.

Gordon Huber, who ran Huber Business Systems here in Reno, the 3M distributor, was a Bay Area businessman, but he'd been in Nevada for quite a number of years and had run his company here. He felt that he owed something to Nevada, since Nevada had been good to him. He approached me in the late 1970s about the possibilities of taking the Huber basket collection, which was his mother's collection. Lulu Huber had started collecting when she was twelve years old and had amassed a collection of about 560 baskets. I said, "Well, we would love to have it, but we have no place to put it."

So he said, "Well, I'll wait, and we'll see what happens."

I said, "Perhaps, with the development of the museum in this new building, if they take our suggestions, we'll have a place, and if we do, we'll make sure that the collection is high on our list."

When we did move into the building, we designed a vault next door, which isn't an ideal vault, but at least it's a special room that would house the Huber collection for the basketry. The first shows that we had were of Huber material.

But, actually, it wasn't donated, it was loaned?

Initially, he talked about donation. When it came time to actually *doing* it, he decided on an extended loan, which he kept active until the time he died, but he died somewhat suddenly, and so we never actually got title to the collection.

And that caused a problem. I found in the paperwork there was a whole sale, and it looked like quite an effort for the museum.

Well, we were caught somewhat off guard, because we had assumed that the collection would come to us, but, apparently, since

Mr. Huber had not gotten around to formally doing that in his will, his children—he left three children—decided that they wanted to sell the collection instead, because by this time, of course, Indian baskets were very valuable in the art market. They had always been valuable to a certain realm of collectors, but now it was much more a popular thing to do, and so the prices of the baskets were escalating rapidly. The collection was wasn't really evaluated, but it was conservatively "guesstimated" to be worth probably about half a million dollars, not quite three-quarters of a million, at the time that he passed away. So his son, especially, saw the possibility of making that kind of money on it.

The first thing *we* knew about it, that we were not keeping the collection, was that the son wrote and said he had the catalog. We had gone to all the trouble, through paying our students on the Kitselman fund, to catalog the collection, identify it. We had Larry Dawson come up from the Lowie Museum at Berkeley to identify pieces we couldn't identify. So we'd put a fair amount of work into it ourselves, and a fair amount of money. The son, Gordon Huber Jr., had the catalog that we had produced, and he had shown it to one of the top basket dealers in the Bay Area, who immediately said, "I'll give you a hundred thousand dollars for twenty of these pieces." So the first thing we knew, that we weren't keeping the collection, was when he arrived to take the twenty pieces to sell. He then came and took another thirty or forty pieces that were Southwest to sell down in New Mexico.

So, given the bad shape of the bleeding of the collection, we asked him, "Is there anything we can do?"

And he said, "Yes. Buy it."

Then we launched an effort, which was partly spearheaded through the College of Arts and Sciences, to raise private funds to see if we could salvage at least some of the collection. I've forgotten the name of the individual who was the grant person for the College of Arts and Science at that time, but you can certainly dig that up through the archives. I think his last name may have been Bell. He wrote a grant to the Buck Foundation, and another successful grant was written to the E. L. Cord Foundation. We were able to acquire a fair amount of the collection. We also held three or four fundraisers within the community—one down at Sharkey's in Carson Valley, one here in Morrill Hall on the university campus, and people from the community came. This was advertised through the College of Arts and Sciences mailing list, and it was in the *Silver and Blue*. There was a write-up about the collection and the fact that we were

losing it unless we raised money. So through these fund-raisers, we raised an additional amount. Finally, in the end, I think we raised roughly $100,000 to maybe $125,000.

I found a mention in the records of almost $140,000—including the grants and everything. How much of the collection were you able to purchase?

We ultimately were able to purchase all but one of the Washoe pieces. We decided our highest priorities would be for the Great Basin and also California, since the Southwest was gone already. We were able to save the Washoe, Northern Paiute, and other Great Basin pieces, and we saved a fair amount of material from California. I think, perhaps, it was a little less than half the collection. I think we probably ended up with about two hundred pieces.

And what did the collection actually include? It wasn't entirely baskets, was it then?

Pretty much. There were some odds and ends that the Huber family had collected, particularly from the Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, a few bows and arrows from here and there. They were not particularly interested in selling that, because it had, they thought, very little value. It probably has a little more value now, but they were interested primarily in selling the baskets.

In addition to what you purchased, some of it was actually donated, as well?

Some of the pieces were donated. When we got down to the actual end, and there were, I would say, probably, *dregs* of the collection that were not worth very much, the Huber family decided that, in view of our efforts—we had cataloged it and had spent a lot of money and had been storing it for nothing for all of these years—that they could donate some of them—about thirty pieces, I think, at the end.

That's obviously, as far as I can tell, the largest collection or donation or effort that the museum has ever been involved in. What sort of things had the museum, on a more regular basis, been working on?

We had largely been working with the archaeological collections and trying to clean up the mess from the archaeological survey. The other very large ethnographic collection that we took in is the Griffen collection. That is a collection principally of Northern Plains—largely Blackfeet—beadwork, pipe working, all kinds of related materials that had been accumulated by Robert Griffen, who was the father of Gloria Griffen Cline, who got her PhD in history here at the university and wrote some of the first and most influential books on the Great Basin. She died in an accident in England, and when the family got to a point where they were trying to distribute their estate or figure out what to do with their estate, they decided to endow the reading room in Special Collections in the *then* new library, in memory of their daughter. So they basically gave the collection to the library at that time, and we oversaw it for them. We cataloged it, and we advised them on storage. We helped them with exhibits and displays. When the library decided that it really needed the space that the collection was taking up, for books, as they were flat out of space, they decided to give the collection to us, because it would stay within the university system.

The accession number on the collection is 77, which means that it was initially cataloged in 1977. But we wouldn't have gotten it then. We got it, I suspect, sometime in the early 1980s, maybe even as late as the mid-1980s. We still retain some obligations to do exhibits for the library, although that's gotten less so. We have had exhibits there until just this past year; we have maintained their exhibit cases. We still have some materials over there, but they're now, again, out of space, and they're redoing the reading room again, and so most of the rest of the material is coming back over here.

How does the policy change over time concerning the acquisition of collections? Have you just been taking what you get?

We have no money to purchase collections, although we did purchase about three or four collections years ago, through a special grant that was acquired when we had the opportunity to get some well-documented Western Shoshone beadwork. The Arts and Science grant writer helped us. At one time there was a big basketry collection with that. Documented Western Shoshone materials are particularly lacking in museum collections around the country, so the college said that it would try to go after that.

There was also a very large collection that we thought about going after that had to do with Klamath and Northern Paiute from

the Surprise Valley area. The grant writer for the College of Arts and Science put together a package to the Buck Foundation and managed to get a grant of about fourteen thousand dollars. By the time we raised that, which was what we figured was about all we could raise, the asking price for the Klamath collection was seventy thousand, and we just could not see our way clear to start all over again with another grant.

Who had that collection, out of curiosity?

It was a local person in town.

I knew of another one called the Kober collection. It was sold, pieced off that way.

Anyway, we were active in those two efforts. Out of that, since we had gotten a grant for about fourteen thousand out of the Buck Foundation, but we couldn't buy the Klamath collection, and we didn't have enough to really do the bulk of the Shoshone collection, we were able to purchase some Western Shoshone beadwork, some piece of that collection. We also had enough funds left over to purchase a few beaded baskets that represent local artists and are part of the collecting area or policy for us.

When was this being done?

This was being done in the 1990s.

Those baskets were purchased from modern art museums within the native community locally?

Yes.

I was just wondering about that. That's kind of an interesting choice—to be gathering modern ethnographic materials.

Life hasn't changed. The native people are still producing things. They're still here, and they're very famous for their beaded baskets, in particular. This is a local, regional thing that has developed here, and there are a number of very good artists out there. Our general focus for the museum, of course, is Great Basin material, and our collections policy is that we will take materials *from* the Great Basin.

The Griffen collection already belonged to the university, and it technically isn't Great Basin, but it's useful for teaching purposes and also for display. Apart from what the staff does, which is largely in historic archaeology and in prehistoric archaeology, our own active collecting would be to collect contemporary materials and older materials. We take donations from individuals who want to give us materials, with an emphasis on local or Western collections. You can tell from the museum exhibit that's up now, which has to do with how you acquire collections. There are probably about ten collections now featured there that have come as private gifts or as purchases, but beaded baskets are a local thing. We have a number of excellent beadworkers here in the western Great Basin, who happen to be basket artists, in addition, so it's a natural for us.

What role does the museum play—or does it have a role to play—with the native peoples here in the Great Basin, as a repository for this material?

We have had some donations from native peoples—not a lot but some—who see us as a place to safekeep their materials. Until the recent turnover at the Nevada State Museum, with Gene Hattori going in as curator, their relationships with the state museum were nil, so they were much more amenable to having materials come to us. Now, of course, the state museum is being very active with the native communities.

How does the anthropology department use the museum in its interaction with native peoples?

Not so much directly, other than through our exhibit program. We do basket exhibits probably every other time, because they are showy, and they are worth seeing. We always feature something from the native community, something of the baskets. We've had a half dozen different thematic shows using the basketry collection as the main material, and we always make sure that local artists are included. They're always invited to participate and to come to the openings, but we do not, as you can see, have a facility that's big enough to *do* anything. Certainly, we don't have a facility that's worth going after a major NEH grant or anything of that sort to try to do a big exhibit. If we did, it would be a cooperative exhibit with the community, but whatever we do that has to do with the native community, we always have people involved.

We're not a museum in that sense; we are a small display facility for collections that are used for teaching purposes. The primary purpose of the museum is not to *collect*, so to speak, but to use what we have to display and to instruct. It's an educational institution.

How is that being used in the department?

Well, I don't know how other people use it, but the department participates in the museology program. We use the museum itself as an instructional facility, both to teach students how to manage collections and how to catalog them and how to exhibit them and display them, minimal amounts on how to conserve collections. We don't do anything heroic in the conservation line, although at one point we thought we might get more actively involved in things like metal conservation and other things, but we just don't have the facilities to do so. Neither do the labs, so that's out of the question, but we use it as an instructional device to teach those aspects of museum training.

We use it as an exhibit facility to teach students how to put together exhibits, how to do it without a great deal of money, reasonably inexpensively, so that it looks more or less professional, and that's our primary focus. Other than that, I use the individual items and parts of the collection in my teaching in Great Basin and also North American Indians and other courses. I don't know whether others do or not. It's up to them.

You mentioned early on that when the NAS was going, they didn't have any concept that there should be fees charged for storage. I understand that we have done that on occasion, and that that's brought in some money that is helping out in the museum. How does that work with the current policy?

Actually, as far as I'm concerned, everyone who curates through the museum *now*, including our own staff, should be paying curation fees, because if they don't, we have no operating money. But for a time, when Bob Elston and a few other contractors were fairly active, and they requested that we curate materials, we did set up a curation fee schedule. We do a minimal amount of this for outside individuals, but we do not have enough facility space. We have to use the space at Stead, which is not always properly secured and has its own problems. So we have taken in curation fees, but only on a very limited basis. If it were up to me, I would charge our own staff.

But our own staff doesn't seem to agree, so they've been getting away with nothing for a long time! [laughter]

And they like it.

They're paying the price, though, now, because there hasn't been any money to curate the material.

Right. That leads to an interesting question. What's going to happen with this? I mean, we have substantial collections at Stead; we have substantial collections here. Are we headed towards, in your opinion, deaccession?

Well, I don't know. It'll depend on how the department recruits staff in the future and whether they decide to change the policy and make local staff pay curation fees. If they don't, I don't see how the operation can maintain itself too much longer. This is all we really have as a budget, is the Kitselman fellowship.

Isn't there a semi-endowment, as well, from the Mule Canyon project?

Very, very small.

What would you like to have happen with this? There's rumors that you'll be retiring in the next few years, and it's going to be moving on to someone else.

Well, I personally would like to see the department recruit in the direction of somebody who has museum training, so that the museum itself can be maintained and also the teaching of museology can go forward. If that ends up not being a choice that the department makes, then I will work to have at least the ethnographic collections transferred to the state museum. I will not leave them vulnerable. Technically they are university property; they are state property. I don't want to see the state or the university sell them off, as happened with the loan collections that we had. In these financial times, who knows? I see very little interest on the part of the staff to really maintain the museum, so I hope they'll recruit in that direction. If they don't, then I'll work to have it transferred. The historic collections are not my business, nor are the prehistoric collections, other than the ones that are accessioned under our care,

and those I feel the same way about. If somebody is not going to properly maintain them or make sure that they're checked on and dealt with properly, then they should be deaccessioned and sent to the state museum, but that won't be cheap. We can't expect the state museum to take them for nothing. There's going to have to be a major settlement involved in making sure that they go. They probably will take the ethnographic collections without a fee, because they are so valuable, but I don't see them taking the archaeological material.

The cases of the debitage are probably not high on their list? [laughter]

Exactly, or all the tin cans and broken window glass and square nails—I don't see them taking that without a fee. So I think it's something serious that has to be dealt with. At one time, of course, we were going to have a university museum. It was going to have a separate facility; it was going to have a director, a permanent staff; there'd be joint appointments; there would be a big curation facility.

We're not the only ones on campus with this problem. The art department, biology department . . . . Home economics got rid of its problem, because when Marilyn Horn retired, she made sure all of the collections she had accumulated in clothing and textiles went to the Marjorie Russell collection at the state museum, but they *had* the same kind of problem. Collections on this campus are not at all cared for. It's only by a dent of our own efforts and our own money, in many cases, that we curate what it is we have, so I think it will be a crisis in the future.

Of course, nationally, with reference to archaeology, there's a *huge* crisis. Lots of places are just refusing to take collections anymore, because they're overburdened in archaeology, both prehistoric as well as historic. It's not happening in ethnographic museums, but certainly is for archaeological material related to CRM projects.

I hear intermittently about the idea of the university-wide museum. Was that ever really an option?

It was something that was being talked about by a number of us on campus. I would say it got almost to the viable stage. [laughter] And then it was decided that we might have to put up a little bit of money in order to get some good advice. University museums are

not things that make vast amounts of money. They tend to be sinkholes and tend to end up costing a lot more than paying. It was quite clear it would have to come from a private endowment, because the state has enough trouble trying to support the state museum and all of its branches. It's not going to put any money in the university budget to have a museum.

There was a time during the 1990s, when Ken Hunter was the vice president for research, when we were exploring the possibility very seriously, with a couple of donors. There was some interest on the part of the University Foundation to go out after people who might be interested in such a proposal, and then it all just fizzled. It went the way of the various proposals to link up with the city of Reno to have a university and city of Reno facility down by the river that would attract tourists and be part of the redevelopment of downtown and all of those things, none of which had gotten anywhere. So, largely, the museum situation is in the same boat.

Biology is still in as much trouble as we are. They have collections all over Stead—poor curation for them at present. They do what they can. The biology department itself finally transferred their herbarium over to wildlife and range, where it's at least secure. But it was in the same situation. When Hugh Mozingo retired, they decided not to recruit in that direction for a botanist. So, basically, if you come from a discipline that's collections oriented, and you get to the retirement stage, you have to start thinking about where it is those materials are going to go.

What are you planning on doing after you retire?

I plan on continuing to do research. I just won't be teaching. [laughter]

That's what everybody says! They get to do the fun part of this.

It's a profession; it's not a job. The teaching is a job—an enjoyable one—but that's not what it is we are. We're people who do research. I have enough research to last several lifetimes.

Well, good. I thank you for coming in and talking to me today. I thank you for your contribution.

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Donald L. Hardesty

MORGAN R. BLANCHARD: I'm Morgan Blanchard, and today is October 30, 2002. This is an interview with Dr. Donald Hardesty in Room 509 of the Ansari Business Building on the University of Nevada, Reno, campus. Dr. Hardesty, could you begin by giving me a little biography about yourself, your education, and how you came to UNR?

DONALD L. HARDESTY: Well, I was born and raised in West Virginia and spent a couple of years in Washington, D.C., after I graduated from high school in 1959. I was working for the National Bureau of Standards in their electronics miniaturization section. In 1962, I moved to Lexington, Kentucky, and began to work on a degree in anthropology at University of Kentucky, which I finished in 1964. From there I went to graduate school at University of Oregon. I left there in 1968, took a job at University of Nevada—at that point, there was only one University of Nevada—with the intention of spending a year here and then going on to do dissertation fieldwork in Mexico, which was my major area at the time. And one thing led to another; I got married, and I ended up staying. The job here became permanent, and I've literally been at UNR since 1968.

So you were ABD when you came here?

Yes.

When you came, the anthropology department wasn't in the Ansari Business Building.

No. It was in the Mack Social Science Building.

What was the space like over there?

It was somewhat similar to what we have here, except we had only office space; we didn't have as much office space. The offices were actually larger, and, among other things, they didn't have a pillar going up through the middle of the office. The space was fine, but it was very limited, and we certainly didn't have any room for laboratories; we didn't have room for any kind of storage of artifacts, field equipment, or anything else.

Before we start talking about the collections and what you were doing with those sorts of things, who was on staff at the time when you came?

Warren d'Azevedo was the chair of the department. Ken Knudtsen, who is now deceased, was in the department. Bob Winzeler came the year after I did. If I remember correctly, both Bob and Ken came in 1969. And Don Fowler, who joined the department in 1964, was adjunct at that point and in the Desert Research Institute. Kay Fowler, in 1968, was part-time. I think she taught a couple of courses in the department, but she didn't really become full-time for another couple of years. I'm trying to think if there's anyone I'm leaving out. No, I don't think so.

What was Ken's specialty?

Ken Knudtsen was a Pacific Islands ethnographer. He also was a graduate student at University of Oregon. In fact, I knew him up there, although he was basically coming out of the field when I came into the program, so he was actually a little older.

And Bob Winzeler is a specialist in Borneo?

Yes, and Malaysia, generally. He came out of University of Chicago and came here in 1969.

Kay and Don Fowler were from where?

From University of Pittsburgh. I'm trying to remember if there was another staff person. I don't believe so, because at that point, I taught both archaeology and physical anthropology courses in the department. So I played both of those roles, and all the rest of the courses were essentially cultural anthropology. We didn't have a linguist, for example.

It sounds like the research focus has changed since then, with a couple of Pacific Islanders and Bob Winzeler's focus on Borneo, Malaysia.

Yes, it has. Warren d'Azevedo basically had two research areas, one in the Great Basin and the other in Africa. He worked in Liberia for years and years, so that was one research area in the department. But the focus of the department was then—and in some sense still continues to be—Native Americans in the American West. The regional focus has always been the American West.

W*hen you came to the department, what was your focus, and what did you bring to that?*

Well, basically, what I did, was to add physical anthropology, which, when I came out of graduate school, was one of my major areas. And the other was archaeology, but with a focus on Mesoamerica and Central America. I taught courses in those areas. I also taught a course in archaeology of North America, so kind of a general North American area. I taught high civilizations, and I also did ecology courses. So that was what ultimately became my dissertation—a theoretical approach to ecological anthropology.

Obviously, you're best known now as an historic archaeologist. When did you start making that shift?

It really started in 1971, but I probably have to explain that. When I was working in Mesoamerica and Central America, especially later on, I tended to work more with later civilizations in the area, so that the idea of working with documents was not all that unusual, especially in the last ones I worked at in Guatemala. We were working at a site that had actually been burned by the Spanish, and there were Spanish descriptions of the site, so we were working a little bit with documentary information.

But in terms of what we now call historical archaeology, it didn't really exist as a recognizable field when I was in graduate school. For example, the Society for Historical Archaeology wasn't started until 1968, the year that I actually left the program ABD, so working with those kinds of materials in the very recent past was unknown to me at that point.

In 1971, I contracted with the U.S. Forest Service. In fact, this was the first contract work, the first CRM, or Cultural Resource Management project, that I was ever involved in. It was a project just outside of Lava Bed National Monument, and it was basically a survey, an inventory, of archeological sites in that area of the lava beds. Most of it was prehistoric, but some of it was associated with the Modoc War of the 1870s. And so, in a sense, that was my first exposure to what we now call historic archaeology.

In 1973, I did my first field school at UNR. It was in the Little Valley area, which is between Washoe Valley and the Tahoe Basin. It's kind of halfway up. Especially in the 1870s, it was a wood industry center for the Comstock. There were a lot of sawmills and things of that sort, and it was pretty much completely cut over by the 1870s. But we did archaeological work on some of the historical sites associated with that occupation, and one of them was a saw mill. Then we also, as part of a survey project, encountered some overseas Chinese sites associated with the wood industry during that time period.

Then in the following year, 1974, I had a field school in Guatemala, which was my last trip to Mesoamerica.

Was the field school actually done through UNR?

Yes, it was. It was combined with the State University of New York at Albany. A former mentor of mine at Oregon, who was at SUNY then, worked with me in this project.

In 1975, I went back to Little Valley, and we worked at one of the overseas Chinese sites. And then probably the next major historic project that I was involved in was in 1980 with what's now the Historic American Engineering Record. At that time it was NAER, the National Architectural and Engineering Record, which was a very short-lived combination of those two. We spent the entire summer basically doing a HABS/HAER, Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, documentation of the Comstock area, of Virginia City, and the surrounding area. While this was not specifically archaeological, it involved an archaeologi-

cal component, and it also involved architectural history and a number of other things.

From that time on, I began to focus more on the *mining* kinds of activities, in part because, if you look at what was happening during that period of time, there was a big mining boom in the later 1970s and into the 1980s. Gold prices were way up. I know they were at one point up to eight hundred and some dollars an ounce, and so there was a lot of mining going on. Simultaneously, there were more regulatory activities taking place. ARPA had been passed in 1979, the Archaeological Resource Protection Act. From that time period on, for the next ten-plus years, there was an enormous amount of CRM archaeology being done in areas that were being actively mined and in historic mining areas that were being reopened.

You were contracted through the university, having students do that work?

In many of these instances, I was doing a lot of the work myself. Students were also involved, but you have to recognize that at that time we had a very small graduate program.

Were you offering Ph.D.'s at that point?

No.

Just the master's program?

In fact, we only had a handful of students in the master's program at that point. Tom Burke, who talked two days ago, was one of those master's students. He's now the assistant state archaeologist for the BLM in the state of Nevada. So, basically, that's how I got into it.

The anthropology museum is the major focus of what we're talking about today. So what was happening to the collections that you were generating in these archaeological projects?

In most cases, collections weren't being gathered because, in most of those instances, the work that was being done would be described as phase one, basically surface survey, a minimal amount of testing, so that the whole phase three area of mitigation through excavation and so forth was not done through UNR. It would basically go

to other private contractors. And the Nevada State Museum at that point was also actively involved in contract archaeology. We also had the Nevada Archaeological Survey that did much of this work. So we had really a very minimal amount of artifact collections to deal with, and they were handled at that point in a very informal way. We had no specific place that they could be curated. The artifacts that we had were essentially kept in university offices. We had a small facility in one of the offices, as I recall, where we could do things like that, but for the most part, artifacts that were curated were curated in either the Nevada State Museum, or we were able to arrange with the Nevada Archaeological Survey to do that.

Can you tell me a little more about the Nevada Archaeological Survey? How did that fit in on campus and with what the anthropology department was doing?

The survey goes back to the later 1960s. I think it was 1968 or 1969 when it was actually started by a fellow named Robert Stevenson, who later moved to University of South Carolina. It's another story, but when I was on sabbatical there in the late 1970s, I at one point housesat for him there. [laughter]

Stevenson was brought in to basically organize the archaeological survey. And as I recall, Molly Knudtsen—who was a prominent, essential Nevada rancher and a regent here for years—was an active supporter of archaeology and actually helped fund the archaeological survey in the beginning and got it started. In the beginning it was housed at and was part of the Desert Research Institute. The dates are probably going to be a little bit confusing, but in the very late 1960s—1968, 1969, 1970—it was associated with the Social Science Center at the Desert Research Institute, which was directed by Don Fowler. I'm still a little bit unclear about the exact association between the Social Science Center and the archaeological survey. They were not the same at all, but whether or not the survey was administratively part of the Desert Research Institute then, I'm just not really sure. That's something you might want to talk to Don Fowler about, because he can give you more specific, detailed information.

From what you know of the NAS, what was their mission?

It was basically to do contract work in public archaeology. Again, this was the time when the National Historic Preservation Act had

been passed, and there was some archaeology, that we would call CRM, being done even then. In a sense, they were getting in on the ground floor of that. In addition to that, it was considered to be a statewide archaeological research program. I think that was the intent of it, initially. It was partly funded by private sources in the beginning, with the idea that they would be able to bring in money through grants and contracts to document and interpret Nevada's past. Most of the work that was being done was, of course, focused on the more remote past, but even the survey did occasionally get into materials that we would call historic today. But a lot of that tended to be ignored, and that was typical of that time period.

So my understanding is, in talking with Bob Elston, that the NAS, Nevada Archaeological Survey, died about 1978 through some funding issues, and that had an impact on the anthropology department, as far as I understand. Check me if I'm wrong, but from what Bob says, most of the collections from the NAS fell on the anthropology department.

That's exactly right. Yes.

How did you handle that?

Well, we had difficulty handling those collections, because, first of all, we had a minimal amount of storage space. We had no staff that could take care of the collections. And so, basically, for a long period of time the collections were just stored out at DRI, as they still are, but nothing was being done to them. They were on shelves in boxes that were falling apart. That was the case for quite a period of time, and to a certain extent it's still the case—that we're managing to go through many of those old Nevada Archaeological Survey collections and curate them properly, but there are still a lot that haven't been touched since they were first collected and boxed up in the 1960s.

When you talk about collections, what do these collections actually consist of? What sort of materials did we get?

They're primarily lithic materials from prehistoric sites. We're talking about both chipped-stone and ground-stone artifacts, for the most part. There are soil samples; there is faunal material. There are other things, such as textile fragments, beads, but the vast ma-

jority of it is basic lithic debitage, things like projectile points, scrapers, other kinds of stone tools, chipped-stone tools. There are ground-stone artifacts—manos, metates, mortars, pestles—just *everywhere.*

Along with all the artifacts, the anthropology department did get all the records, as well?

That's right. The records were basically given to us in the state that they were in when the archaeological survey disbanded. That is, they were in file cabinets, and they were filed in folders for the most part, but not really organized in any systematic way. That kind of goes back to the relationship between what was then the Social Science Center at DRI and the survey, because, basically, the collections from the archaeological survey and the records were stored, and still are stored, in the old Social Science Center facility, which is the DRI Fox Building at Stead in that old air force base. That's where the Social Science Center had been housed when it was in existence in the later 1960s and into the 1970s. In fact, Don Fowler was brought out and hired in 1968 specifically to run the center. Or, if he wasn't hired initially for that purpose, he was hired very shortly after he came here for that purpose and then remained in that position until he moved into the position he's in now as director of the Historic Preservation Program. So, at any rate, the facility that was the Social Science Center became then the repository of the collections and the records from the Nevada Archaeological Survey.

So, from what you're saying, not much has been done with that collection since it arrived here.

Within the last two or three years, we have made some inroads, at least getting into those collections and repackaging them. Theresa Solury, for about a year and a half, actually worked on those collections. She's a current master's student. That was one of the things that she was charged with doing, and she is getting those collections in some kind of manageable order, as well as the later collections that came in as a result of field schools and other activities that took place primarily from the late 1980s through the 1990s.

From my research, I understand that the department actually moved from the old social science building to the Ansari Business Building in late 1982. At least for the archaeological collections, that didn't

have a large effect. The development, when that happened, is when we got a formal anthropology museum and space to do that in the department. It sounds like it didn't have a giant impact on the archaeological component of those collections.

No, not at all. The idea of the museum had been around for quite a while, and the intent was to basically link the museum to the Nevada archaeological collections, so that we could more effectively manage it. But the big emphasis of the museum was ethnographic collections—the baskets, the beadwork, these kinds of things—that the museum today still focuses on.

You mentioned that we started to generate collections of our own through field schools or other projects. How did that really come about? When did that start to become more prevalent?

The first major field school that involved collections of any sort was the one in Little Valley. So in both 1973 and 1975 we had some collections that were housed in the department. In fact, most of those ended up at Stead in the facility that we have now. The next major collections were 1981, 1982, and 1983, with the project that was going on in the Cortez mining district in central Nevada. This is an area between Austin and Battle Mountain, the very north end of Grass Valley, Nevada. We had field schools out there all three years, and those collections came to the university.

The field schools—were these contract jobs for the BLM or forest service?

This was probably the first major project that involved collaboration between UNR and a government agency. These three field schools were basically subsidized by the Bureau of Land Management, and the university, in effect, considered the curation of the collection as part of its contribution to the project. It was about that period of time, in the 1980s, when this became much more common—the relationship between government agencies and universities in the conduct of archaeology. The idea was that the government agency would provide a certain amount of funding; the university would provide funding through fees and tuition for the field school and would also curate the collections, although, quite frankly at this point, there was very little discussion of collections per se. The emphasis on curating according to particular

standards was not something that really got off the ground until the 1980s. There was some discussion of it in late 1970s, and there was not much active concern for the collections. They were basically just boxed up and stuck someplace with no real consideration of the long-term care of the collections.

So, in the early 1980s, we had those collections from field schools. There were field schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Shermantown, and I'm just mentioning some of those that I was involved in that had significant collections. The next major ones were those in Virginia City, starting in 1993, 1994, 1995. Oh, we had field schools in Virginia City that had substantial artifact collections.

What sites were they working on?

Well, these are the saloon sites, basically. The first one was the Hibernia Saloon and the lot adjacent to that, and those were both in 1993, 1994. The other saloon was done in 1995, the O'Brien-Costello Shooting Gallery. So those all had major collections associated with them.

We now also have projects that graduate students have been involved in, like the Boston Saloon project and the Island Mountain project, all of which have substantial collections, as well. The issue now has become, how do we properly manage those collections with a minimal amount of space? Also, we're probably going to have to move away from the idea of using collections as part of the match for government contracts, as we have in the past. So we'll probably end up having to budget for curation on a much larger scale than we have before.

Yes. To let the listeners of this tape know, I am a graduate student, doctoral student, of this program, and I'm working in Alaska. As both Dr. Hardesty and I know, one of the concerns was where that collection goes, mostly because we didn't want it! [laughter]

Yes. Exactly.

Can you tell me how that shift occurred? What do you think that's going to look like? I understand that people are actually charging per square foot for storage spaces. How do you think that that's going to work for us and affect our collection policy?

Well, it very much is going to depend on whether we are able to acquire any more space at the university. We're trying to get some additional space, and we're trying to hold on to what space we have at the Stead facility, for one thing. If we're able to do that, if we're able to hold on to and also increase the amount of storage space out there, then we will be able to acquire more collections, but with a cubic-foot cost. Right now we have a standard fee of $750 a cubic foot, and it would be at least that. The Nevada State Museum, for example, charges $1,200 a cubic foot, and they're an official state repository. Actually we're considered to be an official state repository, also, by the government agencies. We can continue to curate collections, however, only if we get that additional space. If we *can't* do that, then any collections that come from research projects or field schools will have to be curated at another institution. And if, for example, the Nevada State Museum agrees to curate them, then we have a major charge of what could be $1,200 a cubic foot. Now, sometimes for larger collections, rates can be negotiated. But the main point is that that's going to be a major budgetary item in whatever project an agency has funded, and it certainly means that we'll no longer be able to use the curation of the collection as a match for contracts that come from government agencies.

Right. Now, I understand from doing some research, that the actual anthropology museum has charged substantial amounts—in one case in particular, $25,000—to store some items. Have we had the archaeology side of this done? This particular match came from a CRM firm, and it came in through that side.

The research and contracts from archaeology within the department have not contributed a lot to the maintenance of the collection, quite frankly. And that's certainly something that's going to have to be done. We have, on a few occasions, agreed to curate collections for a fee, such as the one that you mentioned.

It was Mule Canyon, I think.

Yes. I think that's right.

It wasn't something we'd done. It came in from Bob Elston's firms.

Yes. And it was arranged for a particular fee that that would be done, but we're now to the point where, unless we get additional

space, that will not really be possible. We've tried to curate collections that are of local or regional interest, so we have agreed, for a fee, to curate some collections from the Truckee area, for example, and they're usually small collections. In fact, I have a telephone call later this afternoon with a person up there about just that. But we're to the point where we can't really curate much additional material until we have a major increase in space.

Let me back up a little bit. You mentioned that Theresa Solury, who was a master's student here at the time, was working on these collections. How is that getting funded?

Actually, that was done through a graduate assistantship. In that particular case, instead of assigning Theresa to a course specifically, she was assigned the responsibility of working with those collections. In one semester that was actually done as part of a course, a lab methods course, basically. She was able to work with students who were working with some of the collections out at Stead, not only doing analysis, essentially, of the collections, but also getting them into some sort of properly curated condition.

So it doesn't sound like there is a budget at all for dealing with these collections.

No. There's not a specific budget, and we were able to do that with Theresa because we had this pressing need. The collections, particularly the old archaeological survey collections, were literally starting to fall apart. The boxes were collapsing, and the whole facility was in a state of disorganization, because nothing was really being done to it. So, as a pressing need, we could make that kind of allocation, but that was a very temporary kind of thing. We have one student this semester who is doing basically the same thing that Theresa was doing, but in the spring he will be moved back to regular classroom activity.

So, just as an ideal—and I know that things rarely get to the ideal point—why do we want to collect this stuff? Why are we interested in maintaining it?

It's part of the responsibility of doing either research archaeology or field schools. Since this is basically the database that we have, and we're collecting the data, we're responsible for preserving the

data. The issue then becomes how that can best be done. The one issue that is going to be important, and is coming up more and more, is one of deaccessioning—whether a lot of that material can be deaccessioned, that is, basically *removed* from the collections and disposed of in some way without compromising the mission of archaeology, what archaeology is all about. And that's going to be the issue of the twenty-first century, as far as I'm concerned.

In the past, there have been a couple ways of looking at it. Archaeology, up to the 1970s and into the 1980s, probably, in this area—and this is true in a lot of different places, too—would tend to see archaeological collections that were of the more remote past as being incapable of deaccessioning. That is, you should keep everything, because we don't really know what information might be useful in the future, and we don't even know what *might* be information in the future. So there has always been this idea that you should collect everything.

But then, at the same time, if you encounter artifacts from the more recent past, then a lot of times that was considered disposable. People either wouldn't collect it, or if they did, they could throw it away; they could do basically whatever they wanted to it.

Then as we move into the later 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, when there's a lot more work being done with the more recent past, there's also the feeling that those artifacts should be treated in the same way as all archaeological collections. There was an *enormous* amount of material that had to be conserved, curated in some way, including huge, massive amounts of tin cans and things of this sort.

Then we move into the period in which we are questioning it, whether everything needs to be curated but, interestingly enough, not for philosophical reasons, although there is some of that, but more for practical reasons that curation faces—just disappearing everywhere, especially in the West, but it's also true all over the country. So now people are saying that, well, we don't really want to save everything, and now the question is how to devise appropriate procedures for identifying and then deaccessioning things that we don't want to keep.

It's obviously a pressing problem, but in terms of our own collection, it seems like the bigger problem is not keeping *it; it's keeping* track *of it once we do have it, and maintaining it. What do you see as the problems with dealing with these large collections in preserving the information? For example, the NAS thing: it doesn't sound*

like there's a consolidated database that would tell you what was even there. We're not even sure what's there.

Yes. That's exactly right. It obviously has to start with basic inventory of the collections that is accessible. If you go into the archaeology labs now, or even into the museum, you see a lot of this going on. A lot of what you see is actually entering data into computers or wherever. But there are some important issues, because if you make decisions about what should be kept and what shouldn't be kept, you have to have a philosophical framework, as well as a strategy, in mind for that.

Ultimately, you always go back to one of the reasons why people argue that you should keep everything. There are two ways of looking at it: one, if you're looking at artifacts as a source of information about the past, obviously, there are questions that we haven't asked yet that artifacts might be able to answer. If we simply throw them out because now it doesn't look like they're going to be important, then you won't be able to do it. The other thing is that the *techniques* of *acquiring* information from artifacts change dramatically over the years, so that now there are physical techniques for acquiring data that were not available even ten years ago. So, on the one hand, there's a problem of information and how you're going to effectively manage it through preservation, and, on the other hand, deaccessioning.

The other thing is the idea that [laughter] artifacts are sort of a piece of the true cross. In a sense, they're the real thing, and for exhibition purposes and interpretation, there's no substitute. As you begin to make decisions about categorically throwing some things out and categorically protecting others, or conserving others, then there's the issue of, well, in the future these things may have value as a piece of the true cross that we don't really recognize now, in the same way that we don't recognize some information of value now. So there are different kinds of *values* that are there.

So it sounds like this is a real interesting time to be involved in collections management.

Yes! Absolutely, and everybody's struggling with it, too.

What's the current policy of the University of Nevada, Reno's anthropology museum concerning archaeological materials, which is mostly what you're involved in?

Basically, we still have a policy that we will accept collections for a fee, which now is $750, I believe. It used to be $600. But everything is more or less contingent on our ability to maintain the space we have and add to it. We are devoting as much time and resources as possible to curating existing collections. The emphasis is going to be, I think, more and more on the management of and upgrading of the care of the collections that we have. And even for things like thesis projects, we may begin to encourage students to work with existing collections, rather than going out and excavating and collecting more collections.

As far as the interaction between the collection and management of archaeological material and the museum itself, the museum is acting as the front end for that? They're actually doing the accessioning now, and so it's all part of the museum, but it's fairly distinct from the other half of the museum, which is the more ethnographic.

Exactly, yes. All of our collections are accessioned into the museum's database. When a new collection comes in, it would be given an accession number and entered into the museum database, but there are still lots of existing collections that have never been accessioned, and that's one of the things that we're also going to be working on.

Is that because they don't meet the accessioning requirements, or they just haven't been done?

It's just never been done. The vast majority of the Nevada Archaeology Survey collections, for example, have never been accessioned.

I noticed that when I went and looked at the accession book. The earliest accession date is 1980. So all the stuff that's prior to that, we know we have it, but it doesn't seem to be showing up in the museum's official record.

Yes. Some of the old archaeological survey collections, *are* beginning to be entered into the museum's accession records, but they are given an accession number, and the accession number will reflect the *year,* so some of them are going to have very late dates. But still, the vast majority of those collections haven't been accessioned.

The number one priority was the *care* of the collections, so we put the emphasis on getting them into proper storage conditions,

but the next thing is the problem of accessibility of the records relating to those collections. What's in the collection? Where is it? All of that is another high priority.

We are talking about what the museum is going to be doing, as an overarching body, with these collections in the future.

Yes. The other thing we talked about is the databases that we're trying to manage in the case of the museum, as opposed to those that are being developed in the two archaeology labs. The museum database is essentially a management database. The concern is, first of all, being able to say what is in a collection and where it is, and then give information about when it was first acquired by the museum. The archaeology labs have databases that are research oriented, and so they're very different kinds of things. We talked about possibly changing the computer database in the museum to something like PastPerfect that is being used a lot across the country now. We still have an ancient database in the museum for management purposes. It's one that Ken Fliess developed years ago, and I think it was one of those dBASE programs.

Dr. Ken Fliess is currently a professor here at the university.

Right. One of the things that we had talked about at one point was trying to develop databases that could be used within the museum and in the archaeology labs simultaneously, but they have two very different purposes. The archaeology labs now use Access a lot, which is fine, and we talked about FileMaker Pro as another one. These databases are useful for research purposes, in particular, where you can have very detailed categories for sorting artifacts. The museum database, as an overarching sort of management device, has to be quite different, so that is something that we're going to try to upgrade in the future.

What do you see is the purpose of the anthropology museum? What has it been, and what do you think it should be in the future?

There are probably a couple of things. One is what we've just been talking about, the museum as an overarching management tool for collections that are tied to research programs in the department—the archaeology collections, the ethnographic collections.

Another purpose is educational, and we have students who participate in the museum studies program, museology, that will, on occasion, work in there to learn museum methods. Graduate students do the same thing. This includes designing exhibits, for example, as a way of learning how one designs exhibits. I think, certainly, that is one of the primary purposes of that museum.

The other is public outreach, because the museum is open during the week at set times, and it has exhibits that the public can view. It also serves, in some cases, as a source of information to the public about various collections or categories of things, such as the baskets.

How public is that? One of the things I ran into, as I started the preliminary investigation for this project, I would say to people, "I'm going to be doing this oral history on the anthropology museum at UNR."

And everybody I talked to said, "They have a museum?"

[laughter] No, that's exactly the issue. In fact, when we do our museum studies class, and I tell people that this is one of the projects that you can do, the reaction *always* is, "I didn't know there was an anthropology museum here."

Interestingly enough, it is more of a local public. People here in town actually do learn about the museum by going to other museums sometimes. While we don't advertise as much as we might, there still is information that gets out, and I think that's probably one of the things that we might want to work on more. But the main public probably is the research public. I don't mean professional archaeologists or anthropologists, but avocational people who are interested in some aspect of the past, or they're interested in something about Native American baskets or something of this sort. They find out about the museum, and they come in and look at the exhibits. Sometimes they can have access to the collections, as well.

So most of the folks that have been involved in the museum and are still involved in the anthropology department at UNR—they're getting on in years. I know Kay Fowler is talking about retiring in the not too distant future; Don Fowler, who has a role this and has been mentioned in this interview, is half-retired now. What do you think is going to happen with the museum when the institutional shift happens, when we get new people in the department? What do you think should happen to it?

One of the high priorities in future hires is going to be a person who can handle a museum and can participate in the museum studies program, as well. That's specifically linked to Kay's retirement. Whether we're able to work that out with the university is another issue. But as a department, that's one of our recognized needs, that when Kay retires, we will be able to replace her with a person who has some museum background and who would be able to take over this museum, in effect. In my case and in Don's case, we don't tie a museum aspect to the replacement, but that would be something that the department would be looking for—somebody who could work with the museum and could move into basically the same position that we're in now.

Some people have mentioned—and I've never seen anything about this that was official—that there's been a movement in the past to have a university-wide museum. And that was possibly something that this museum might morph into or had been intended to morph into.

It's still something that we talk about as a museum studies committee, especially, not just within the department.

I didn't realize there was a museum studies committee.

Oh, yes. There has been for a long time. There's a museology *minor*, basically a museum studies minor here, and we teach an introductory course, and in the department we teach one advanced course. There is a group of people, including Howard Rosenberg in the Art Department, Tom King from oral history, Alan Gubanich from biology, and Ginny Vogel from theater—she's a historic costumes person.

And these people are all managing, in one way or another, museums within those departments?

No. They are involved in teaching some of the courses for museology. The art department has a gallery area that is a quasi-museum. The biology department doesn't have a museum, as such, but they've got exhibit cases in the hall, and they also have collections of fish and other reptiles that nobody over there now is really interested in, because the guys who did it have retired years ago. But those collections are still there. There has for years been this

talk about trying to get a university-wide museum. That idea is still there; it's just never happened because it's not a high priority on the university's capital improvements list. I mean, it ranks below a new library.

Parking garage. [laughter]

Right, exactly. At one point, there was even talk of trying to get the university foundation involved in a fundraising effort, because the idea probably was that if it's going to happen, it's going to have to be from private sources. The university foundation is in such a state of disaster at the moment that that's not going to happen for a while.

So there is that idea. And if the university museum does materialize, certainly this museum would move into it. That's the way we'd go.

OK. That's basically the questions that I have, and I appreciate you coming and spending so much of your time.

My pleasure.