Treasures of the Mathers Museum

Bloomington, Indiana: Mathers Museum of World Cultures

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Cover images (clockwise from upper left): basket, Mohawk people, USA; Yama mask, India/Tibet; detail from storage box, Inupiat people, USA; pot, Zuni people, USA; needle case, Inupiat people, USA; quillwork container, Ojibwe people, Canada; plaster bust, USA
TREASURES OF THE MATHERS MUSEUM

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Published by the Mathers Museum of World Cultures,
Indiana University
Bloomington
Foreword

The Mathers Museum of World Cultures is 50 years old. As its golden anniversary, 2013 is a year of celebration but also stocktaking; of reflecting but also planning. Thinking about the museum’s first five decades is helping its staff and policy committee develop goals and strategies for its next five years, thereby beginning its second half century. As the museum’s new Director, I am so pleased to be joining in this work as well as engaging with the history that led up to our celebratory year and all that will come after it.

The exhibition *Treasures of the Mathers Museum* is an important part of this year of celebration and course charting. As its name suggests, the exhibition focuses on objects representative of the richness and diversity of the museum’s collections. But the exhibition aims to do something further. It tells the history of the museum through the history of its collecting practices as these shifted over time in response to broader changes in the ethnographic disciplines, in the nation, and around the cultural world that is our focus.

While this may seem to be a Mathers-specific story, our tale of museum collecting illuminates a feature of museums more generally, one that is necessarily of secondary importance to their core mission of exploring and explaining the wider cultural and natural world. Yet, to get the most out of the museums with which we engage, it pays to learn something of how they have come to be and how they have come to steward the collections in their care. While thus a Mathers history lesson and a Mathers birthday party, *Treasures* also illuminates this process—and it does so by sharing some amazing and interesting objects from around the world.

This booklet is a companion to the exhibition, although it has been composed so as to have value on its own and after the gallery exhibition closes. Visitors to the exhibition will find an array of objects spanning the history of the museum. The staff chose these cultural works for a range of reasons and their explanations, which are presented in the gallery, illustrate the diverse purposes for which the museum actively collects objects. The exhibition focuses on specific items presented by decade. This booklet complements that exhibition emphasis by narrating trends in collecting over the decades and by introducing a sampling of collections and the collectors behind them.
On the occasion of its anniversary celebrations, I want to specifically thank the leadership of Indiana University for its vision and long-term commitment to the development of a unique campus museum of world cultures. Thanks also go to all of the many donors to the museum’s collections—only a tiny fraction of whom can be profiled here. As the newest member of the staff, I feel a special sense of appreciation for my Mathers colleagues and for the two long-serving Directors who proceed me—Wesley R. Hurt and Geoffrey W. Conrad.

Jason Baird Jackson
Director

Geoffrey Wentworth Conrad
Director
1983 – 2012

Wesley Robert Hurt
Director
1963 – 1982
What’s in a name?

The museum was created in 1963 as the Indiana University Museum, sometimes called the Indiana University Museum of History, Anthropology, and Folklore to more clearly indicate its purpose. For its first two decades it was housed in various locations in the older part of the Bloomington campus. Generous donations from IU professor Frank Mathers and his family enabled the university to construct a new building in the 1980s, dedicated as the William Hammond Mathers Museum at its opening in 1983. We are now known as the Mathers Museum of World Cultures, a name that better reflects our holdings and mission.
**Treasures of the Mathers Museum**

We are celebrating our 50th anniversary with an exhibit about the history of the Mathers Museum – from the perspective of the museum’s collections.

There are some 28,000 objects and 16,000 ethnographic images in the museum, but only about 5% of these are on exhibit at any moment in time. Usually the objects on display are chosen to represent certain themes or certain parts of the world, but for this exhibit we’re focused inward on the objects themselves and the various collections they represent.

*Our treasures*

It’s always fun for us, the museum’s staff, to have the chance to show you objects that we particularly like, and you will see some of these favorites here. We consider these to be treasures not because they are worth a lot, or are particularly rare or old. We’ve selected them because of the stories they tell us about culture and cultures, and because of their own life stories as objects belonging to one of the museum’s many collections.

*Many collections within the collection*

The American Heritage Dictionary defines a collection as, “A group of objects or works to be seen, studied, or kept together.” To elaborate on this meaning, “collection” is a word that get used in many ways in museums. The entirety of a museum’s holdings is called its collection, but that whole can be divided into various collections, based on types of objects, places of origin, methods of manufacture, and so on.

*Basket rattles*

**2003-10-0143, 2003-10-0144**

Rattle (pair)

Liberia

Objects can belong to many collections, as with this pair of basket rattles from Africa. A partial list of “collections” to which these belong includes:

- Musical instruments
- Liberian artifacts
- Basketry technique items
- Artifacts made from palm fiber
We also use the word collection to designate a group of objects acquired as a set from one source, so we can add to the list of collections to which the basket rattles belong:

Materials acquired in 2003 from a particular donor

Objects received at one time from one source are given an accession lot number, then individual item numbers within that lot number. 2003-10 refers to the entire batch of 430 items—the collection—received from a particular donor in 2003, while 2003-10-0143 and 2003-10-0144 are the catalog numbers for these two rattles. This formal use of the word “collection” is more than a convenient reference system: it ties the museum’s system of organizing artifacts to an earlier life stage of the artifact.

*Life stories of objects*

Most objects in a museum have (at least) four distinct phases of existence. First, they are created for use; second, they are obtained by someone who uses them; third, they are collected by another person; fourth, they are acquired by the museum. (There are, of course, many ways in which this story can be condensed or elaborated, but we’ll keep it simple here.)

Many of our exhibits focus on the first two phases, when artifacts were being made and used in their cultures of origin. We explore the various uses and meanings surrounding objects, and how their design, form, colors, and other factors can reflect cultural values and much more. This exhibit is different: we’re revealing a bit about the processes that have created the Mathers Museum’s collection.

Let’s take a look at the collecting phase, because knowing about this phase is crucial to understanding a museum’s holdings. Collectors are the brokers who connect objects with museums; we rely on them to tell us about the first phases of an object’s story. As you’ll discover when moving forward in this exhibit, what we learn from collectors can vary a great deal based on their training, knowledge, methods, and attitudes, but in all cases collectors help us fulfill and validate our mission to understand world cultures through study of the objects people have made and used.
The fourth phase, acquisition, in which the museum comes into possession of the object, can play out in many ways as well. Some objects are purchased or otherwise acquired “in the field,” perhaps even from their makers. Historically, the museum has purchased items from commercial third parties. In the past thirty years, most acquisitions have been by donation by the original collector or an intervening owner.

Throughout the exhibit we will be relating stories about these two artifact life phases, collecting and acquisition, so you’ll learn a bit about how the Mathers Museum’s collection has come to contain these treasures.

A turning point
As we look back at the museum’s fifty years of collecting, we also acknowledge an exciting turning point. The museum has been led by just three directors: its first, Wesley Hurt, served for twenty years (1963-1983). Its second, Geoffrey Conrad, served for nearly thirty years (1983-2012). We are happy to welcome our third director, Jason Baird Jackson, who began his directorship in January, 2013.

Museum “Prehistory”
In this area, we display items acquired before the museum existed. How’s that possible? These artifacts are actually good illustrations of one of the reasons the museum came into being: scholars and administrators on campus wanted to centralize holdings found in various departments. The Indiana University Museum (as it was first named) took charge of many existing collections in order to provide professional care for them and regulate their use.

The origins of some of these “inherited” materials is obscure, as you might imagine, but taken together they offer glimpses into IU’s past as well as possessing much potential for future use.

Stevens-Esarey Collection (1930-01)
Warder Stevens, born in Kentucky in 1845 and a long-time resident of southern Indiana, was well aware of the changes taking place in the way area folks lived and worked. He saw the value of preserving examples of the material culture evidence of those lifeways, collecting hundreds of objects used by 19th century farmers and homesteaders.
His particular interest was in utilitarian objects used by rural residents wrestling a living from the land. Thus the collection has a large proportion of items used in extracting resources, and in shaping those resources into tools and food: plows and horse and oxen trappings; axes, saws, chisels and other wood harvesting and woodworking tools; spinning and weaving equipment. Some of the objects Stevens collected were as much as a century old when he acquired them, while others date to the later 1800s.

1930-01-0006
Hay fork
European American people, Ohio, USA
1835

1930-01-0001
Cowbell
European American people, Indiana
da. 1860

In 1914 Indiana University purchased Stevens’ collection at the urging of history professor Logan Esarey, who believed that classroom studies were immeasurably enlivened when students could learn directly from objects, not just words. Professor Esarey wrote about the tools needed to support life on the Hoosier farmstead, so in addition to the objects themselves we have some perspective on how he used them in his teaching. We are very grateful for the foresight of both these men: The Stevens-Esarey Collection is even more important now than it was a hundred years ago because it is impossible to recreate, and because it is embedded with their ideas on what was important to know and remember.

Plaster Busts (1949-02)
First time visitors to the museum’s collections storage space are startled to turn a corner and find themselves staring down about 200 life-sized plaster busts. What are these, where did they come from, and why does the museum possess them?

1949-02-0122
Molded plaster bust
USA
late 19th century
While at first glance the busts appear similar, they represent two distinct goals: to learn and to teach. Half of the busts represent individuals from southern Mexico, and were created by a physical anthropologist in the late 1890s in order to study skull shape and features. The others were also made in the 1890s, but were created specifically for exhibition so that Americans could learn about people from other world areas. The bust on display here is one of these: it was made by making a mold of the face and head of a man from the Philippines, and was part of a set meant to represent different ethnic groups from around the world. Both types of bust are thus artifacts of an earlier age of anthropology, when scholars were attempting to understand human diversity by dividing and subdividing the world’s population into distinct, mutually-exclusive categories, and were promoting that approach to the general public.

The 200 busts came to IU through one of its first anthropology professors, Georg Neumann, who arrived in Bloomington in the 1940s from the University of Chicago, where the busts had accumulated. When that university decided to dispose of the busts, Professor Neumann obtained them for IU as teaching specimens.

*Williams Collection of Alaskan Materials (1957-01)*
Collecting seems to be a human habit, widespread while not universal. What and how we collect varies according to circumstances. Museums such as ours attract collections made elsewhere, acquired when someone from “here” lives “there.” Such is the case with one of the initial world cultures collections obtained by the university, the Williams Collection. Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Williams were from Scottsburg, Indiana (here), and worked as teachers hired by the government to teach in the then-territory of Alaska in the 1940s and 1950s (there). While living on St. Lawrence Island and in Pt. Barrow and Nome, the Williams collected objects made by inhabitants of these areas.

That much is straightforward, but let’s look at the collection in more detail: What did the Williams collect, from where, and why? And how did the university acquire it?

What: Small objects, most made from bone or walrus ivory.
Where: We don’t know, other than via the clue of the three places they lived.
Why: We don’t know this, either, other than they were interested in the materials.
How: The Williams donated the collection to the university in 1957, presumably because they thought others, too, would be interested in the materials.

1957-01-0077
Needle case
Okvik or Old Bering Sea
prehistoric culture, Alaska, USA

And we are interested in them! There is something definitely attractive about this small object, with its delicate engraving and well-used appearance. From a research perspective, though, we wish we knew more about it: Where did the Williams acquire it, and from whom? Who made it? Who used it? When was it made? And we wish we knew more about the collection as a whole: Why collect small objects? Was it because they were easier to find, keep, and transport? A simple preference for miniatures perhaps?

While we have no wish to look a gift donor in the mouth, especially after nearly sixty years, in that span of decades collectors and museums alike have learned to ask more questions about the context of both artifacts and collections.

The 1960s
Once the museum was established and various campus collections gathered under one roof, the museum’s first director, Dr. Wesley Hurt, started actively adding to holdings. He used two primary tactics: he went on collecting trips in the U.S. and elsewhere, and he obtained, or even commissioned, collections created by Indiana people who temporarily resided in other parts of the world. The museum also obtained an important collection of Native American materials by way of a bequest during the 1960s.

First Director: Wesley Hurt
Dr. Hurt’s areas of expertise were Western U.S. and South American archaeology, so his collecting for the museum was focused mainly in those regions. His U.S.-based acquisitions were almost entirely made by purchases from third-party establishments. He did not “field collect” in the sense of acquiring items directly from those who made or used them, but instead bought items at trading posts, galleries, curio shops, and the like. Thus we don’t have much direct knowledge of how these
objects were made or used, though occasionally the sellers were able to supply some information.

Madge Minton and her husband, Sherman Minton, Jr., were already resident in Pakistan when the museum was created. Mrs. Minton contacted Dr. Hurt when she learned of the new museum, and offered to provide a large collection of materials acquired during their 1958-1962 residence in Karachi. She had taken dozens of photos as well, which she provided to the museum. While Mrs. Minton did not provide detailed notes of where she purchased items or information about specific uses and meanings, the materials are nonetheless a fine resource from a particular time and place. The collection is a wonderful example of intentional collecting by someone who wasn’t an academically trained anthropologist or folklorist.
IU-Bloomington’s African Studies Program was established in 1962, and so in a sense grew up alongside the museum. The program has always encouraged field work among its faculty and graduate students, and this had led to the museum’s acquisition of several collections of African materials beginning in the mid-1960s. Two such collections represented here were created by Roy Sieber, IU professor of art history, and Arnold Rubin, one of his graduate students. Dr. Sieber’s material was acquired in Ghana, and was often collected from third-party sellers, including roving traders who’d bring the artifacts right to the doorstep and beyond. Objects acquired from these itinerate traders weren’t restricted to Ghanaian artifacts, and in some ways these purchases are analogous to the Hurt acquisitions from trading posts. Dr. Sieber noted information provided by the seller about artifacts as well as details of when, how, and for how much the items were acquired, and the museum has copies of these almost-legible ledgers. The objects acquired by Rubin are a more cohesive collection, most coming from the area in northern Nigeria where he was conducting field work, though in this case we don’t have many written records of their acquisition.

**1965-17-0080**
Miniature stool
Ashanti people, Ghana
ca. 1964

**1965-17-0088**
Door
Senufo people, Ivory Coast
early 20th century

**1966-26-0085**
Hoe blade
Rukuba people, Nigeria
early or middle 20th century
Ellison Collection (1967-30)
Robert Ellison lived in Oklahoma in the 1930s and worked for a gas company in a position that required him to travel around the state quite a bit. He had a great interest in Native American artifacts, and would acquire them from shops and individuals during his travels. Mr. Ellison was originally from Indiana and he and his wife, Vida, remained connected to IU even after moving west. In 1967 the museum acquired by way of Vida’s will about 300 objects collected by Mr. Ellison. The objects alone are of great interest, but adding immeasurably to their value to researchers are letters sent to Ellison by some of the folks he met in Pawnee, Oklahoma. His correspondents appreciated his interest in their heritage and provided him with information about their traditions, sometimes relating the data to particular objects.

1967-30-0057
Amulet
Plains Indian people, USA
20th century

1967-30-0105
Vest
Plains Indian peoples, USA
early 20th century

The 1970s
Collecting trends of the 1960s continued into the 1970s, including commissioned purchases such as the West African materials acquired by several IU graduate students. New types of acquisition were also made in the 1970s, including the first major “missionary” acquisition, and more focused purchases of contemporary U.S. objects.

Greist Collection (1972-12)
Mollie and Henry Greist were medical missionaries from Indiana who spent much of the 1920s and 1930s in Point Barrow, Alaska. While there, Mollie made special efforts to collect many types of artifacts as
a way of sharing their experience with the folks back in Indiana. She acquired items made by contemporary local residents, natural history specimens, and a very large number of prehistoric material found washed up on the coast. Though her collecting was very deliberately educational in intent, Mrs. Greist believed that the objects spoke for themselves, for she rarely recorded information about the particular contexts of her acquisitions.

The Greist materials arrived at the Mathers Museum in a roundabout way. A set of several thousand items was sold to the Indiana Historical Society in 1956, in care of Glenn A. Black; it was stored at the Angel Mounds Site then later conveyed to the Indiana University institution that bears Black’s name. In 1972 the Glenn Black Laboratory’s Director, James Kellar, transferred the material to the museum, though numerically the bulk of the collection is prehistoric.

1972-12-0179
Storage box
Inupiat people, Alaska, USA
1920s

1972-12-1103
Doll
Inupiat people, Alaska, USA
1920s

1972-12-1202
Basket
Inupiat people, Alaska
early 20th century

Gullah Materials (1970-69)
In the 1960s and 1970s there was a great deal of interest in demonstrating the contributions of citizens of African descent to the larger culture of the United States. Particular emphasis was given to
non-material aspects of culture, with various musical genres offering some of the clearest evidence of African influences. Scholars of material culture were harder pressed to find “Africanisms” in objects, and were quick to pounce when they believed they’d done so. An Indiana University folklore student, Mary A. Twining, focused her dissertation research on one such instance: the handcrafts of the Gullah peoples of the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Twining collected a number of baskets that are quite similar to certain West African types, and also obtained quilts whose style she attributed to an African aesthetic. Scholarship is progressive, advancing by way of accumulated knowledge as well as the occasional do-over. Research in the decades since Twining’s work has supplied specific causal links between the worlds of the coastal southeastern U.S. and rice-growing regions of Africa, while also demanding more rigorous standards of evidence for cultural connections when exploring aesthetic realms.

Indian Crafts (1973-18)
A museum is a place for old things, right? Much of the collecting of Native American material done by the museum’s first director, Wesley Hurt, would support this. Correspondence between Dr. Hurt and vendors contains many instances of old and “genuine” items offered to the museum, and the reader has the sense that the museum was reaching back in time with its collecting effort, attempting to scoop up obsolete items while they were still available.

A more nuanced approach was beginning to emerge in the 1970s, though, and is shown in collections made at various Native American
crafts venues. In a way this approach was a blending of an “art museum” approach with an “anthropology museum” approach: paying attention to individual creators, their backgrounds, influences, and motivations meant that we could better understand particular objects in their cultural contexts. It’s also possible that the museum’s curators in the 1970s saw in these contemporary creations enough evidence of “traditional” craft forms to satisfy, relatively inexpensively, their need to obtain genuine Native objects. Regardless of their motives, these curators retained enough information about their purchases that these collections help document a resurgent craft production movement with implications for how we look at broad issues of culture, tradition, and creativity.

1973-18-0010
Basket
Mohawk people, New York
20th century

The 1980s
What do a small-town family from Indiana, a missionary in the Congo, an officer of the U.S. Trust Territory in the Pacific after World War II, a globe-trotting ethnomusicologist, and an avid collector of crèche scenes have in common? Yes, you guessed it—they all created collections acquired by the museum in the 1980s. Funding issues meant that the museum was purchasing much less than in the 1960s and 1970s, but this lack was more than taken up by key donations of collections received during the decade and used for educational and research efforts ever since.

The Lundys (1982-19)
The Lundy family created a kind of collection we haven’t yet mentioned. Most collections are made on purpose as collections—as sets of items meant to be saved, not used. The Lundy collection was created by and for people going about their everyday business, and features hundreds of items used in and around the house by a family in Bloomfield, Greene County, Indiana, in the 1930s and 1940s. The family preserved these items well beyond that era, then gave them to the museum in the 1980s. These materials have seen a great deal of museum use
since then in exhibits, which illustrates an interesting point. Though the collection is unusual, it epitomizes what the museum seeks to do: understand human life from the perspective of the objects used in living it.

**Henry and Cecilia Wahl (1983-28)**
Among the museum’s most generous donors are Henry and Cecilia Wahl, who over the course of 20 years made many gifts of materials from two distinct world areas: southern Indiana and the Pacific. Hoosiers by birth, the Wahls lived on the island of Palau in the Pacific after World War II, where Henry served as an economic development officer for the Navy and the U.S. Department of the Interior. Thus their two spheres of life were also their spheres of collecting, with a shared theme of the natural resources available in each place.

The Wahl’s Indiana acquisitions focused on Hendricksville pottery made from native clay—including fragments and scoria as well as whole pots—while most of their Pacific artifacts are made of fiber from an array of plants.

**Major White (1983-29)**
John White was an American educator who served in the 1920s as a missionary in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo in
central Africa. He was there to teach engineering, but seems to have spent much of his time learning what he could of the local Tetela people, their beliefs, and how those beliefs were expressed in material objects. He collected a wide variety of items in this effort, artifacts used for hygiene and hunting, music and magic; he kept good records, and made an effort to learn the purpose of objects. Though he went to Africa as a missionary, intent on sharing information on his religion with people there, he came back to the U.S. a missionary in reverse: he spent a great deal of time, energy, and effort telling Americans about the Tetela people of the Congo. He wanted this work to extend beyond his lifetime, which led him to donate the six hundred or so items he collected to IU in the 1980s.

**1983-29-0437**
Head pillow
Tetela people, Democratic Republic of the Congo early 20th century

*Laura Boulton (1986-12)*
Laura Boulton traveled the world over the course of 50 years studying music, collecting instruments, making recordings, and taking photographs. Hers is an example of a multifaceted collection: the instruments she acquired and the photographs are held here at the Mathers Museum, while the Archives of Traditional Music on campus contains hundreds of her sound recordings. The instruments, from over four dozen countries, make up the nucleus of the museum’s renowned world music collection.

**1986-12-0015**
Flageolet
Tarascan people, Mexico 500s

*Mary Joan Collett (1986-25)*
Is there a fine line between collecting and obsession? Is there any line? In terms of sheer exuberance, it’s hard to surpass the materials amassed by Mary Joan Collett. Ms. Collett also traveled the world for many years, as an employee of the foreign service. She had a penchant for collecting sets of things: crèche scenes, for example, and crowds of ceramic figurines. Though much of the material was created to sell to tourists,
and is relatively undocumented, the museum’s staff have found it useful over the years as a means for animating exhibits with objects that are fun to look at.

1986-25-0290
Candelabrum (candelero)
Mexico
1975

1986-25-0243
Hide painting
Quichua culture, Ecuador
d.ca. 1980

1986-25-0414
Cross (cruz)
Mexico
20th century

1986-25-0380
Miniature building
Japan
1981

1986-25-0655
Basket
Rwanda
mid-20th century
The 1990s
The museum experienced a bit of a lull in the pace of its acquisitions during the 1990s, perhaps because more energies were going into its teaching, exhibits, and outreach programs. There were some interesting acquisitions during the decade, though, including representatives of a class of collector we haven’t yet discussed.

The Investor-Collector (1992-01, 1994-01)
There are times when a museum benefits from the counsels of lawyers and accountants. Over several years in the 1990s, the museum received gifts from a collector whose acquisitions were often made with an eye to monetary value in addition to artistic interest. Periodically this type of collector discovers that it is in her or his best interest to donate materials to offset tax liabilities. While often this sort of donation goes to art museums—the higher economic value of individual art objects making this a better fit—our museum does occasionally receive inquiries about such donations. As you might imagine, there are many legal and ethical considerations associated with such transactions, but done properly these tax-deduction-driven donations can lead to acquisitions of great value to the research and educational aims of the museum—always our primary consideration.

1992-01-0001
Shield
Papua New Guinea
early 20th century

1994-01-0009
Mask
Konde people, Tanzania
20th century

The 2000s
Collection acquisition picked up again in the 2000s, with one new partnership leading to many new donors, and other acquisitions resulting from patient attention to seemingly random and sometimes surprising inquiries.
Scholarly Collecting, Part One (2002-04)
As a university-based museum, the Mathers is in the fortunate position to be able to work with scholars in many ways, including developing exhibits and obtaining collections. Twice in the past ten years we have combined these two aspects of museum work, by planning both collections development and a related exhibition at once. In the first of these experiences we worked with IU anthropologists Eduardo Brondizio and Andrea Siqueira, long-time researchers among the Caboclos people of the Amazon basin. These scholars collected over 180 items for the museum and worked with staff to create an exhibit (Forest Farmers of the Amazon Estuary, 2003-2006) that served to introduce the museum’s audience to the Caboclos by recreating parts of a Caboclo home, village, and marketplace.

2002-04-0040
Kerosene lamp
Caboclos people, Brazil
late 20th century

The IU Liberian Collections project exists to collect, preserve, and make available a comprehensive range of materials and information about Liberia for researchers, students, and teachers. The focus of the project is mainly archival, with holdings including newspapers, field notes, manuscripts, photographs, and other material donated by scholars of Liberia. Many such scholars have amassed collections of objects, as well, while working in Liberia. The Mathers Museum has partnered with IULC in accepting many significant collections, some of which correspond to field notes and photographs to enrich their research value.

2003-10-0390
Matchbox
Liberia
mid-20th century

2004-03-0007
Mask
Liberia
early 20th century
Three disparate collections illustrate how unexpected acquisitions can bring depth to a museum’s holdings.

2004-02. Rebecca Parrish was the first female graduate of Indiana’s school of medicine in 1901, and shortly thereafter moved to the Philippines where she established a maternity hospital. Over the course of several decades, Dr. Parrish delivered hundreds of babies and in doing so made many friends. At times a grateful family would present her with special mementos representing their culture, and these were passed down in the family over the years. A telephone call in 2004 led to the museum acquiring a number of these objects that exemplify a connection between two cultures.

2004-02-0011
Sash
Philippines
20th century

2005-16. An email from the IU Foundation in 2003 led to another donation, though this one took a couple of years to come to fruition. Neyde Azevedo was an IU folklore student when she conducted fieldwork in her native Brazil in the 1960s, and though her dissertation remained unwritten, Ms. Azevedo very much wanted researchers to have access to the objects she’d collected during her research.
2008-03. This time it was a letter delivered by the U.S. Postal Service that initiated a donation. The museum was thus informed that David Porter—a long-time Bloomington resident who had recently succumbed to cancer—had named the Mathers Museum as a beneficiary to his estate. Museum staff members spent many hours exploring David’s rambling, two-story historic house, ultimately turning up over a hundred objects that could be used to fill gaps in existing collections. Some had been collected by David while others likely had been acquired by David’s parents; all three were well-traveled individuals drawn to handmade objects. Unfortunately, there were no documents to help us understand this collection, so we had to go by instinct once or twice when selecting items we thought surely must be of educational value. This statue was one such object, but its meaning eluded us for some years, until by chance we discovered that the uncle of one of the curator’s high school chums knew exactly what it was, having in fact edited a documentary on the subject.

The 2010s
Though we’ve only just embarked on this decade, already we are fortunate to have acquired several significant collections of great research value. These collections have come to the Mathers Museum
due to the donors’ strong desire to have their materials cared for by an institution committed to an educational and research mission.

**Scholarly Collecting, Part Two (2010-08)**

Another opportunity to work closely with an IU researcher resulted in the exhibit, *Botánica: A Pharmacy for the Soul* (2008-2009). Selina Morales, then a master’s student in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, spent the summer of 2007 working with her grandmother, Jerusalén Diaz-Morales, who had formerly owned a botánica in New York. Selina learned how her grandmother had stocked and run her store, as well as how her work there integrated with the lives of many others. Selina’s exhibit recreated Jerusalén’s botánica so that visitors could learn about botánicas and the important role they can have in a community. Though the exhibit is no longer here, we have the nearly 200 items Selina collected in 2007 and frequently use them on tours to continue the learning that Selina began.

**MacDonald Collection (2010-11)**

Nancy and Roderick MacDonald lived in Liberia in the late 1960s, while Rod worked for U.S.A.I.D. as an engineer. Nancy is an artist, and together they built a large collection of African material culture items, informed by their shared sense of aesthetics of form and construction. The MacDonallds very much wanted the materials to go to a university-based research museum, and after conversing over several years with the museum’s collections curator, the donation of over 400 items was realized in 2010.
William Simmons is another collector with a strong interest in having material culture objects used for educational purposes, though he also has a very keen appreciation of the aesthetic value of objects. He worked with the curator over several months to select from his collection objects that would add to the museum’s holdings in useful ways, resulting in the donation of nearly a hundred items; half of these are pots, representing a significant expansion of the museum’s holdings of African ceramics.
Davis Collection (2010-13)
The two masks displayed here are part of a remarkable collection of materials from central Africa centered on regalia associated with royalty. The donor, Allen Davis, collected as full a set of such ceremonial objects as was possible, using scholarly writings to guide his collecting. Thus, though the material is not a working set used together in its original context, it approximates such a set that can be used for exhibit and study.

Michael Owen Jones (2016-02)
This is a collection which began in the 1960s and continues into the future, as you might note from the accession number. In the mid-1960s Michael Owen Jones was a graduate student at IU in what was then known as the Folklore Institute. He learned through a news magazine story about a Kentucky chair maker named Chester Cornett, and after following up on this lead worked very intensely with Cornett for many months. The result was Jones’ Ph.D. dissertation, two books, countless articles, and—for the Mathers Museum—a collection of works by Cornett. Those 1960s collections have recently been joined by additional works by Chester Cornett and other chair makers, thanks to their donation by Jones. (If you’re wondering about the 2016 accession number, Dr. Jones has pledged to legally transfer material to the
museum in that year. The object itself is here, and can be seen in the museum lobby.)

2016-02-0001
Rocking chair
European-American people,
Kentucky
1966

Mary Warren Collection (MM244)
The clothes make the collector! Like the Lundy Collection received in the 1980s, this set of objects was assembled to be used. Mary Salawuh Warren was born and grew up in Ghana, then lived in the US after marrying American anthropologist (and IU PhD) M. Dennis (Mike) Warren. Their primary residence was in Iowa, but the Warrens returned frequently to West Africa, where they had houses in both Nigeria and Ghana. All who knew Mary appreciated her sense of style, and she acquired and devised many exemplary ensembles over the years. The Mary Warren Collection includes about 450 garments making up some 150 outfits. The Warrens’ daughter is working with museum staff to donate these materials so that her mother’s wardrobe can be preserved for future study.

MM244.042
Woman’s shirt
Ghana
late 20th century
Elinor and Vincent Ostrom were IU scholars of international stature whose work creatively joined analyses of human and natural resource systems. After their passing in June of 2012, museum staff learned that they had named the Mathers Museum—together with the IU Art Museum—as a recipient of their collection. Much of the collection consists of Native American works, including carvings, baskets, prints, paintings, weavings, and pottery. It includes a large number of items from the Great Lakes region, heretofore underrepresented in the museum’s North American holdings. Thus the Ostrom materials add a great deal of cultural and educational value to the Native American collections initiated fifty years ago by the museum’s first director, and are already being used for teaching and research.

Students in Director Jason Jackson’s Curatorship class study a Navajo textile (MM249.016) from the Ostrom collection. March 6, 2013.
MM249.163
Pot
Iroquois people, Canada
late 20th century

MM249.080
Pot
Zuni people, USA
mid-20th century?

MM249.008
MM249.106
Quillwork containers
Ojibwe people, Canada
late 20th century