

## **COLLECTION MANAGERS COMMITTEE Texas Association of Museums**

### **WORKSHOP RESOURCES:**

#### **Leaving Your Mark on History: Marking and Labeling Historical Artifacts and Documents**

*March 2010 — College Station*

Workshop Overview: This workshop covers labeling and marking techniques and materials to mark historic artifacts, works on paper, ethnographic collections, and scientific collections and much more. Ever wonder which pen or barrier coat works best on what materials or how to mark on plastic? Are there items that just shouldn't be marked? Learn about these techniques and how to identify different materials, take home some samples, and learn various numbering systems as well as learn about newer inventory techniques including RFIDs and barcoding.

#### Featured Speakers:

Lindsey Richardson, Collections Manager, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza

Sally Baulch-Rhoden, Curator, Austin Curatorial Services, Interpretive Services Branch. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Donna Meadows, Associate Register, Acquisitions, Houston Museum of Natural Science

Terri L. Carnes, M.A., Collections Manager, Anthropology Division, Museum of Texas Tech University

Cyndi Lopez, M.A., Conservator, Museum of Texas Tech University

Heath Garner, M.A., Curator of Mammals, Natural Science Research Laboratory, Museum of Texas Tech University

#### **Resources from Sally Baulch-Rhoden**

From Collections Trust (UK):

Labelling and Marking Guidelines (SPECTRUM Procedure: Acquisition - Step 13)

[http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/manage\\_information/landm\\_guide](http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/manage_information/landm_guide)

Assembling an Archival Marking Kit for Paleontological Specimens

[http://www.vertpaleo.org/education/documents/Davidson\\_et\\_al\\_2006.pdf](http://www.vertpaleo.org/education/documents/Davidson_et_al_2006.pdf)

American Museum of Natural History · PaleoPortal Collections Management

<http://collections.paleo.amnh.org/34/labeling>

Use of Acryloid B-72 Lacquer for Labeling Museum Objects. Conserve O Gram 1/4. National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/publications/conservoogram/01-04.pdf>

Labeling Natural History Specimens. Conserve O Gram 11/6. National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/publications/conservoogram/11-06.pdf>

National Park Service Museum Management Handbook Appendix J

<http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/publications/MHII/mh2appj.pdf>

Numbering Museum Collections

<http://www.collectioncare.org/ci/ccin.html>

How to Mark Objects in Museum Collections

<http://www.illinoishistory.gov/iam/members/PDFs/HowToN16MarkObjectsPtI797.pdf>

## **Reviewed by Allison Bouwman, Witte Museum**

The workshop, "Leaving Your Mark on History: Marking and Labeling Historical Artifacts and Documents" brought together an experienced panel of museum professionals to discuss the basics of numbering and marking the collections of museums and historical societies. Speakers included Lindsey Richardson, Collections Manager at the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza; Sally Baulch-Rhoden, Curator for Austin Curatorial Services, Interpretive Service Branch, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Donna Meadows, Associate Registrar, Acquisitions at the Houston Museum of Natural Science; Terri L. Carnes, Collections Manager Anthropology Division at the Museum of Texas Tech University; Cyndi Lopez, Conservator at the Museum of Texas Tech; and Heath Garner, Curator of Mammals, Natural Science Research Laboratory at the Museum of Texas Tech.

The first three panelists spent the morning detailing the process of numbering and labeling artifacts. Topics covered the least to most invasive techniques, preferred supplies for tags and physical markings, and the best choice for labeling various artifact mediums. The workshop provided hands-on instruction and samples of preferred archival supplies donated by Gaylord Bros and the speakers. Samples included Acryloid B-72, Stabilo pencils, Kaiser pens, Tyvek and Teslin labels, and much more.

The remaining panelists spoke about the emerging barcode and RFID technologies for museum collections. The museum of Texas Tech has fully integrated barcoding into their museum, and according to Terri Carnes, "turning a four year inventory process into four months." Barcoding offers the museum a linking tool to connect artifacts to database information and can save time, money, and effort during the inventory process. RFID or Radio Frequency Identification holds exciting new possibilities for museum. An RFID tag on every artifact could simplify an inventory down to hours. Both barcoding and RFID have the potential to change the standards for museum collections care. Museums looking for ways to organize their collection and simplify the inventory process should further research this topic.

Workshop attendance exceeded expectations and attendees came from state institutions, museums, and historical societies. In addition to presentations by the panelists, supplemental information was provided which details the standardized techniques for numbering and labeling different collections. A portion of the information presented in workshop can be found under more details from this workshop on the workshop archive section of the CMC website. Information includes labeling and marking guidelines, how to assembling an archival marking kit, and instructions for how to make and use Acryloid B-72. The workshop was generously hosted by the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum.