

SONOMA STORIES AND THE SONG WONG BOURBEAU COLLECTION:
A MODEL FOR AN EXHIBITION AND A PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM—
AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO CRM

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

AN INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT (Sue Doherty, CRM master's project, SSU, 2005)

“Fascinating!” “I learned a lot!” “The past was brought to life!” As producer of a prototype heritage-based museum display and public outreach program, these are the outcomes I am aiming for in this investigative project. Heritage interpretation is a craft. Providing intellectual and emotional engagement with the meanings and significance inherent in history displays requires understanding the audience and a clear focus. To be a success, audiences need to actively construct their knowledge and subjectively value their experience (Barrie 2001:27). In other words, the interpretive experience must be made meaningful (Barrie 2001:14). This interpretive plan strives to facilitate the conditions for meaningful interpretive experiences for a varied public.

The introductory section of this document will highlight the: project's objectives, goals of the host museum, museum collections management theory, themes and approach of the interpretive narratives, and sections in this manuscript. This is followed by a thorough examination of the social and historical context for the museum display and public outreach program. This is a key component to communicating an understanding of heritage resources, and it is enhanced in a separate section by relevant archaeological research. The public views archaeology as a fascinating field and easily sees artifacts qualifying as credible evidence gathered scientifically by experts (Barker 2003).

Museums must be perceived as knowledgeable interpreters for a meaningful experience to transpire. Therefore, this project uses all available sources—art, museum collections, archaeology, primary documents offering a “culturally sensitive perspective” (Beaudry, Cook, and Mrozowski 1996:281), and audio-visual components—in showcasing the exhibit. This is demonstrated in Section IV through images, interpretive context and suggested text for display items, and a list of audio-visual resources. As Elizabeth R. Barrie (2001:96-98) suggests, storytelling in museum settings can be an effective way for people to feel as though “the past was brought to life.” The next section is a synthesis of project data presented in narratives. These stories also compliment the curriculum guides and educational materials for interactive computer stations and the World Wide Web that are provided. This manuscript ends with a statement of findings and conclusions of this investigative project, which focuses on interpreting Chinese American history.

The Sonoma County Museum [SCM] received a federal grant in October of 2003 from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences [IMLS] to develop a plan to highlight part of its collection through exhibition, curriculum development, community outreach, and text based information. Implementation of the plan is proceeding under the moniker “Sonoma Stories” and will be first and foremost an education program. The objective is to enhance visibility of the Museum’s collections through innovative presentations. Beyond the traditional means of viewing exhibitions on site, access to its art and artifacts is experienced through lectures, panel discussions, video presentations, oral histories, and hands-on activities. In order to expand on these educational services, learning content will include text-based and reference material for teachers, families, and the general public. These will also be available through the Museum’s website, which will

incorporate Sonoma Stories material through web exhibitions, online accessibility of video clips, written histories, images of artifacts, and photographs. This opportunity will demonstrate how the SCM is a responsible steward in preserving, displaying, interpreting, and managing collections; it is similarly an opportunity for innovation in the field of cultural resources management [CRM].

This investigative project will, in association with the SCM, be a prototype multimedia plan for Sonoma Stories that focuses on the Song Wong Bourbeau Collection—a gift from a prominent Chinese American family with roots back to the early days of Santa Rosa’s Chinatown, ca. 1877. The assemblage catalogued in 1995 consists of 238 objects related to a family household, a restaurant (in business for over a century), and a Chinese temple. This large collection includes, among other items: photographs, documents, textiles, furnishings, ceramics, dolls, devotional artifacts, and 14 carved ivory artworks.

Shiwan art pottery from Foshan is of special interest. There are 16 figure sculptures—12 “Mud Men” and four of the less commonly found figurines that depict women. A sculptured vase with calligraphy of a rebus (local saying) is in the collection, which may be the work of these artists. Shiwan potters produced an array of crafts and utilitarian ware. Settlers brought over utensils and furnishings for their temples from bronze bells to statues and altar necessities. Among the temple appurtenances in this assemblage are a pair of *Fu* (motif of blessings) lion-dogs for altar use in a beautiful flambé glaze. Shiwan crafts people also perfected the art of porcelain, but may not have been the producers of the figurines in the Bourbeau Collection. Though it is quite possible they crafted the several Chinese opera dolls and soft body dolls of composite

material. Other artifacts associated with the temple include: bells, brass vases, incense burners, candles, and sticks, and an embroidered and lined altar cloth. The textiles in the collection include: a kimono, a child's dragon hat, collapsible screens of silk and wood, and a pair of Chinese women's shoes for bound feet. Documents consist of health records, identification cards, school report cards, adoption papers from China, business licenses and receipts, bill of lading, ca. 1916, Liberty Bonds from China, Santa Rosa bank passbooks, tax receipts and insurance policy statements, and bills of sale for automobiles.

It is a treasure for Sonoma County to have visible evidence of the presence of a community vital to its growth and development and rich cultural diversity. Indeed, few residents know that Santa Rosa and other parts of the county had Chinatowns, for no traces of these cultural enclaves remain today. By preserving and sharing the legacy of Chinese Americans, we can creatively and critically engage the public with the experiences, history, and culture of Chinese Americans while simultaneously encouraging the public to explore their own.

Museum collections demand the most thorough of investigative strategies, as they are often void of information regarding the specific location of their finding or the specific date(s) at which they were made and/or used. To articulate such an assemblage with historical documentation affords researchers the possibility of making better inferences and reconstructing broader patterns of cultural activity. Historical data from maps, census reports, property deeds, newspapers, and other written records, as well as ethnographies, help to connect the artifacts to the people who made use of them and the ideas that gave those lives meaning.

Unlike museum collections, archaeological collections generally generate data on the time and location of their deposit through excavation methods, surveys, and analysis. By sharing information and complementary displays of collections, museums and archaeological curation facilities can produce the most fully informed history and, as Adrian Praetzellis (1996: 527) argues, “create insights that are greater than either source could have contributed independently.” Praetzellis goes on to explain that archaeology is “an eclectic mixture of anthropology, history, and folklore, employing a wide range of interpretative models.”

We get the closest to accurately interpreting history and the archaeological record when we combine source material from several departments and expose the resources, people, and processes that shaped a region. Presenting accounts of the past is enhanced with oral histories recorded both by audio and video, and with interactive presentations both virtual and hands-on. Interpretive displays and oral histories compliment each other in contributing to the understanding of the dynamics of the communities and resource uses. As the mission of museums is in large part to educate the public, school curricula made available to the community, as well as recommended field trips to explore significant heritage sites are warranted. Selective excerpts from this manuscript will be useful in constructing computer based interactive displays alongside the exhibition of interpretive displays and/or on the Museum’s website, which will invite involvement and add valuable understanding. Indeed, this prototype plan for an exhibition and public outreach program fulfills the Board of Trustees (2000:53) goal articulated in its report-- *Building Greatness*: as the major repository and exhibitor of historical objects with county-wide importance, SCM aims to “provide active experiences for its audience,

rather than passive interpretations of, for, and about Sonoma County to educate, enliven, and engage.”

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Concurrently, with the beginning of this investigative project, the SCM is revising its Collections Management Policy, which will adopt and promulgate a code of ethics based on the Code of Ethics for Museums as adopted by the Board of Directors of the American Association of Museums [AAM] on 12 November 1993. Therefore, this investigative project will likewise follow the standards suggested by the AAM, which are quoted as:

- collections in its custody support its mission and public trust responsibilities
- collections in its custody are lawfully held, protected, secure, unencumbered, cared for, and preserved
- collections in its custody are accounted for and documented
- access to the collections and related information is permitted and regulated
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities are conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources and discourages illicit trade in such material
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities conform to its mission and public trust responsibilities
- collections-related activities promote the public good rather than individual financial gain
- programs support its mission and public trust responsibilities
- programs are founded on scholarship and marked by intellectual integrity
- programs are accessible and encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with its mission and resources and respect pluralistic values, traditions, and concerns (American Association of Museums 2004).

The Collection Management Department’s revised policy statement presented to the Board for review and acceptance (Sonoma County Museum Policy Manual: 2004) reads:

The primary responsibility of the Sonoma County Museum is to exhibit, collect, preserve, and interpret artifacts and art (both historical & contemporary) which

reflect important knowledge about the past and present culture, and to provide related educational services with the emphasis on the relationship of history, art, and the environment of Sonoma County, for the purpose of increasing and enriching public knowledge to its community and its visitors.

The purpose of this investigative project, in accordance with the proposed Collection's Management Policy for the SCM, will be (1) to assist the Museum in interpreting a thematically based multimedia presentation of a portion of its collection; (2) to emphasize a certain continuity in the Museum's and county's material culture and landscape; (3) to contribute to the inventory of collections prior to the Museum's major expansion; (4) to foster a partnership between the Museum and the public it serves; and (5) to involve other repositories of the county's material culture (e.g. the Archaeological Collections Facility [ACF] at Sonoma State University [SSU]) through collection loan agreements and exposure of archaeology and related disciplines' "grey literature." This project investigation will document through text, oral histories, a proposed exhibition, images and photographs, curriculum guides, and field trip suggestions the "heritage" of Sonoma County's Chinese Americans.

An important component of this endeavor will be the transcription of an audiovisual interview with Song Wong Bourbeau conducted by Gaye LeBaron in 1994. This investigative project coincides with an exhibit marking the Sonoma County Museum's 20th anniversary opened in March 2005. The exhibition highlights the Museum's permanent collection of photographs and oral histories, along with selected art and artifacts, to reveal Sonoma Stories, one of which is Song Wong Bourbeau. Recently recorded oral histories conducted by the writer will comprise a portion of the exhibit. These oral histories of Chinese Americans and Sonoma County residents intimately

familiar with the county's material culture and landscape are a vital part of the project and are integrated into several of its aspects; the full transcriptions appear in the Appendices.

Oral histories are essential components to scholarship such as this because they allow participants an opportunity to engage their social memory and impart their own individual testimony to important local events, people, and places. Their willingness to share opens a dialogue between the past and present and between the private and the public. Such oral sources deepen our knowledge of the process of and profound need for oral histories as records of the past. It is a necessary approach to cross-cultural understanding and a complimentary component to historical research and scholarship. Indeed, storytelling proves invaluable in comprehending the events and actions that aid an individual's or a group's ability to adapt and adjust to new cultural settings, and to survive hardships of loss, displacement, and social injustices. Helping the public understand the value of unique oral histories will protect the past for future generations.

The need for a model exhibition and public outreach program such as presented here is both practical and social, including a desire for tourism, education, cultural heritage, and preservation of the landscape. Sonoma County's bucolic beauty and its rugged and expansively protected coastline beckon many to visit the area. The SCM aims to attract tourists with a state-of-the-art facility, exhibitions, and public programs. Tourism can create jobs, encourage migration flows, and changes the local social and cultural dynamics. Visitors to the museum and its website will find a sophisticated presentation of a complex story, and will be encouraged to discover the history of Chinese Americans in Sonoma County at significant heritage areas. Evidence of Chinese

labor in the quarry pits and stone buildings is preserved on public landscapes such as Annadel State Park and Jack London State Historic Park, while other evidence is in private hands such as Buena Vista Winery. Paradoxically, it is crucial to recognize cultural resources in the face of rising tourism that may threaten their preservation. All across the globe, archaeological resources are being destroyed (AlSayyad 2001:3-4; Renfrew 2000:9; Skeates 2000:39) whether by looting or being trampled to death. As Christopher A Bergman and John F. Doershuk (2003:95) argue, “A well-informed public introduced to historic preservation issues can mitigate destructive anthropogenic processes.”

Cultural heritage sites allow multiple interests and issues to be addressed and combine not only tangible evidence of an important historical event, but also speak to the intangible qualities of the time through the telling of the everyday life of the people involved. The ubiquitous quarry pits dotting Annadel State Park may have been predominately the work of European Americans, but Chinese American’s also labored there. Museum education programs can begin to redress marginalization of communities in the past by defending their mere existence within the larger story (Kaufman 2004:68). Public awareness of heritage areas is important in the education of citizens and the hopeful promise of contemporary heritage management. This must also include awareness of archaeological evidence of Chinese home sites and businesses lying beneath our cities pavement. Educational programs need to include reflections on the spirit of place by imparting consciousness of the vibrant communities that once lived there, even if it is no longer visible (Kaufman 2004:68). Barbara Little (2002:16) reminds us that we

have allies in this effort, as she says: “Planners and citizens find that archaeology can contribute to a sustainable community where cultural heritage is valued and nurtured.”

A collaborative community model will be the basis for research methods of this investigative project, as well as the final products presented to the public in multiple forms. Research will proceed with the involvement of the Redwood Empire Chinese Association [RECA] in understanding the meaning of objects in the collection, as well as soliciting criticism of the planned exhibition and texts. Experts in Chinese artifacts will be consulted, including archaeologists working with the Asian American Comparative Collection [AACC] and the staffs of the Chinese Historical Society of America [CHSA] and Chinese Cultural Center of San Francisco [CCCSF]. Curation needs will be noted and discussed with the SCM’s collections manager regarding the long-term, professional management and care of objects and associated records.

GOALS OF THE SONOMA COUNTY MUSEUM

Sonoma Stories is an ongoing project of the SCM that began through the acquisition of funds awarded from a grant in 2003. The mutual objectives of both this investigative project and Sonoma Stories in general coincide with the conceptual program for the History Galleries at the SCM. This can be inferred by reviewing the Museum’s design objectives articulated below:

History Galleries – Visitors will begin their experience at the Museum at “Gaye LeBaron’s Time Machine,” [sic, SCM will not use Gaye LeBaron’s name (Roberta Harlan, personal communication 2005)] a multimedia presentation of “the eight states of Sonoma” drawing on this celebrated journalists writings over the past 45 years. History galleries will be organized into eight specific themes – *“Picturing Sonoma, Sonoma History Timeline, Sonoma’s Visionaries, Inventors and Entrepreneurs, Faces of Sonoma, Sonoma’s Living Treasures, Competing Dreams for Sonoma, and Science, Industry and Agriculture.”* The history galleries will incorporate elements of the Museum’s collections augmented by new acquisitions relevant to the mission and the stories to be told in the exhibits.

Together with a changing exhibition gallery, these exhibits will provide an engaging and educational introduction to Sonoma's rich and diverse past.

Learning Center – A museum resource center for teachers, professionals and the public will enable the Museum's collections, archives and library to be available through a variety of printed, computer-based, audio and visual media. The learning center will incorporate classrooms for museum programs and for use by the county's educational community and business organizations . . . To create this exhibition will entail a new collecting policy and a commitment to acquire new thematically based collection materials through gift, purchase, and loan (AMS Planning and Research 2002:4-5 and III-II).

The SCM is fulfilling its primary purpose to safeguard and preserve the heritage value of the Song Wong Bourbeau Collection by facilitating its analysis required to understand and establish its meaning. SCM has demonstrated its commitment to serve the interests of the Chinese American community by conserving its artifacts and audio testimony and by giving voice to their cultural aspirations.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Collections managers are typically the staff in the museum's organizational structure with the primary responsibility of caring for and preserving collections. They are called upon to assist curators and exhibition managers in carrying out programs; they also are employed to audit collections from time to time. In small museums such as the SCM, audit functions are often incomplete due to understaffing and lack of funds. This is unfortunate, because as museums seek to gain stature, visitors, and donors they may find it difficult to convince the public that they can be entrusted with valuable artifacts or works of art (Cowan 1998:117). Audits include routine inventories of collections, which would be insurance that the museum operates with continuity in its care and preservation of its collections. In its most basic function, the inventory is undertaken in order to determine the exact location of objects and the accuracy of associated records.

Discrepancies or omissions in the physical location of a particular object are then rectified. In the process objects that need conservation are identified, records are updated (now into a digital catalogue), plans are made for future projects, and the need for collections development or deaccessioning are noted.

The Song Wong Bourbeau Collection was to be subject to a complete inventory for this investigative project--the goals of which are synonymous with those stated above. Limiting the scope of an inventory to one collection allows the process of thorough audits to proceed in an organized and manageable fashion section-by-section. Complications and errors with the Bourbeau Collection quickly surfaced as it became evident that an inventory had not been performed in many years. The result was the completion of only a spot inventory that looked at a small percentage of the collection. It was enough access, however, to report that there are objects in the collection apparently stored in an offsite facility that has no inventory list. Catalogue mistakes were noted, object location data was missing or inaccurate, and objects were found improperly stored. This is somewhat expected given the nature of small museums that rely heavily on volunteer help. Nonetheless, it is hoped that SCM will acquire sufficient funds to budget adequately for routine inventories of the collections under its care as an accountability measure.

THEMES

Intensive research has been undertaken to construct the context for interpretation; the thematic focus of "Sonoma County's Chinese American heritage" will give necessary parameters to the perspective. Many topics resonate with the artifacts, documents, and images available for display through exhibits and field trips including--labor, agriculture, commerce, governance, immigration, and religious practices. This investigative project

serves as a model for future Sonoma Stories, which will have various themes. For example, “governance through time” (applicable as a sub-theme to this project) may be applied to objects in future exhibitions, as it is found in a continuum framework from pre-contact Native American trade items to the Museum’s Christo Collection of the Running Fence.

Cultural diversity is a hallmark of this state, although prohibitions based on race and gender have defined our past. Investigating our shared history through the implementation of law and order upon the populations of the land is both compelling and educational. Subject subcategories might include: boundaries, settlements, community spaces, criminal activity, inventions and patents, transportation, communication, agriculture, ranching, timber, immigrants, laborers, water rights, entrepreneurial businesses, and tourism. Indeed, material culture does reflect the laws and norms the maker and user lived under. The Museum’s collection of maps, wanted posters, agricultural implements, various business accoutrements, paintings of timbered areas, cattle brands marked on hides, letters of request for railroad rights or telephone company rights, and artifacts from Santa Rosa’s Chinatown are just some of the resources available. Collections are uniquely augmented with an extensive library of Gaye LeBaron’s oral histories on video. Though regional in focus, SCM collections reflect global affiliations and can connect Sonoma County’s rich history with contemporary artistic and cultural currents, as objects from the Sonoma mission, Fort Ross, the Running Fence, and, this project’s focus--the Song Wong Bourbeau Family Collection--attest.

The knowledge vitally important to impart is that the human condition includes profound resilience in the face of hardships; that diversity is the cornerstone of the

Western experience and the strength behind its accomplishments; that respect for each others past will allow us to experience the cultural currents of today; that environments and societies change; that there is a need to think about the meaning of place, how we form our identities, and are represented by others; that our society is full of complexities in belief systems; and that we live in a world marked by contested access to rights, authority, and social control (Alisse Waterston 2005). We must write public history to be inclusive of the plurality of communities that make up America.

THE TELLING OF SONOMA STORIES

Perhaps the best way to meet the challenge of integrating discursive material is through storytelling. Indeed, using narratives is a fledging paradigm shift in the way in which museum exhibits and archaeology are presented to the public. As professor, scholar, and past secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, Ira Michael Heyman (2005), explains, “We went from the collection of objects, curiosities, paintings, etc., to being places of narration. We've gotten now more interested, at least from time to time, in using the objects to tell a story.” The Los Angeles County Museum of Art suggests that strategies for the presentation of exhibitions encompass “thematic as well as chronological organizational modes” that will engage audiences through “compelling stories and opportunities that engage all the senses” (Barron 2000:28). Elizabeth R. Barrie’s (2001:96-97) research into “meaningful interpretive experiences from the participant’s perspective” supports the need for the “use of pictures and artifacts, good storytelling techniques, appeals to multiple senses, and immersion in the experience.” Moreover, Barrie (2001:98) argues that the most effective experiences occur with “the use of compelling language combined with ample information” with special attention to

“the choice of words and the perspective from which they were presented.” According to the National Art Education Association, in the late 1990s there was a noticeable rise in the use of storytelling in multiple ways by art museums (Matthias and Walton 1997).

The leading journal in the field of archaeology, *American Antiquity*, departed from traditional formats to begin to include book reviews in essay form, the first of which articulated support for the storytelling approach. Adrian Praetzelis’s *Death by Theory: A Tale of Mystery and Archaeological Theory* inspired the reviewer, Margaret W. Conkey (2002:166-167), to admit her admiration for those who write such works. She defended her praise saying, “These remind me of how much we can say about fundamental human issues.” This is one significant reason to incorporate archaeology into historical displays and interpretive experiences. To elaborate, consider Conkey’s contention: “These books are all about how archaeologists work and how we can ‘know’ the past; they are about the centrality of material culture; they are about the importance of the past and history in our contemporary world.” According to Michael K. Trimble and Eugene A. Marino (2003:94), archaeological collections should be valued, curated, and studied, not just by archaeologists, but by everyone with a professional interest and the results of those studies should be made widely available.” It is an ethical imperative, for the profession of archaeology is one of public service and stewardship. Robin Skeates (2000:118) found that “dialogue, access, questions, and stories” are the kinds of experiences of the archaeological heritage that the public wants and deserves. Likewise John H. Jameson (2003:157), in examining new ways of communicating archaeological information in educational venues such as museums, recognized the value and power of “artistic expression.”

The National Park Service (2005) states that, “The mission of interpretation is strategic and inspirational. It is a combination of science, history, and art that aims to create memorable and meaningful experiences for visitors.” Therefore, a new and more potent direction in historical inquiry requires a cohesive collaboration that integrates oral histories, historical traditions, folklore, ethnographic data, written records, and archaeological literature (from field reports to stories in novel form). The utility of archaeological collections and associated records is enhanced by responsible use. Cultural Resources Management [CRM] professionals make up roughly 90 percent of the archaeology workforce today. The CRM process of identifying and surveying sites in accordance with mandated environmental and historic preservation laws requires producing a report meeting the strict standards of the State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO]. Accessing the enormous amount of information generated in this process exposes the investigator to, in the words of archaeologist Thomas G. Whitley (2004:23), “the most up-to-date site specific studies and analysis available.” Likewise, theses from the social sciences on aspects of Sonoma County that line the shelves of SSU are a valuable resource.

THE PROJECT’S SECTIONS

The following will be a brief explanation of each section of this investigation into Sonoma County’s Chinese American heritage through a host of perspectives. It proceeds in the belief that Henry Glassie (1982:85-86) was correct when he urged: “The way to study people is not from the top down or the bottom up, but from the inside out, from the place where people are articulate to the place where they are not, from the place where they are in control of their destinies to the place where they are not.” Much research is

required in the study and presentation of material culture; fully informed stories of the past provide chronological information and cultural context—this is demonstrated in Section II of this manuscript. In order to conduct thorough research, primary and secondary sources are extensively used. Some sources, such as Sanborn Company Insurance maps, are frequently referenced; they are incorporated in this document to illustrate the discussion and their future incorporation into interactive website designs and curriculum components. Historical newspaper accounts give us some understanding of the intersection between the political climate and the various social milieus. It is impossible, however, to ascertain true historical events and activities associated with our Chinese American residents of the past through nineteenth century newspapers, for they are too often marred by inflammatory commentary and caricatures. Surveying these data with appropriate primary and secondary sources and collaborating with the Chinese American community of today allows us to uncover aspects of their history and heritage otherwise distorted or unknown.

A wealth of information is available by researching and exhibiting the archival material generated by archaeological investigations in a number of artifact classes, whether it constructs chronologies and resource uses or documents manufacturing techniques, production patterns, or ethnographic studies. Section III explores other Chinatowns and Overseas Chinese archaeological sites in the West and thus offers, as Adrian Praetzellis (personal communication 2005) suggests, “the immediacy of archaeological remains.” Such evidence shows direct association with people who sought to construct their lives at a specific time and place, the ethnic and cultural affiliation of which adds appropriate depth of description and representation to our

analysis. By its interpretation of material remains and contexts, archaeology fills gaps in the chronicles of history and enlarges our understanding of historical events and experiences with unique insights (Jameson 2003:153). In this way, the study is garnered for its direct relevance to a better understanding of particular material culture and its relation to social and historical conditions, as well as the meaning of social life to those who enacted it (Beaudry, Cook, and Mrozowski 1996:274).

The collections displayed at the SCM are important because they have a direct relationship with the county of Sonoma and the people and events that shaped its history and environment. An innovative approach to public interpretation of artifacts and museum collections involve the use of storytelling. The techniques used to interpret exhibition objects (which have been photographed and incorporated in this paper) on display include: excerpts of oral histories, relevant autobiographies, and primary and secondary source material. These are used as supportive texts selected for the Chinese American voice; this is demonstrated in Section IV. Also included in Section IV are suggestions for the augmentation of the Song Wong Bourbeau Collection with other objects to be obtained by loan agreement from such repositories as the ACF at SSU and the Oakland Museum.

The process of investigating objects in the Song Wong Bourbeau Collection included, as previously mentioned, photographing them. This resulted in a spot inventory of the collection, as well as creating a portfolio of images useful to SCM in the creation of a computer based interactive presence for educational and promotional purposes. Likewise, suggested objects to be acquired by loan or acquisition have been photographed or scanned into this manuscript. Tangible examples of Chinese heritage

present on the Sonoma County landscape have been photographed and are discussed in this section. Stone buildings and fences and rock quarry sites are some of the important components of this “cultural landscape,” which the National Park Service defines as: geographic areas and the cultural and natural resources therein associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values (Birnbaum 1994).

A synthesis of the material gathered in the process of this investigative project is presented in Section V in the form of concise narratives appropriate for all ages; they include questions and a recommended activity. Ethnographic data, Sonoma County history, and information on other Chinatowns and Overseas Chinese archaeological sites in the West are woven together to tell two stories of Santa Rosa’s former Chinatown. These resources will emphasize the need for teachers and the public at large to identify the forces and conditions that shaped the lives of the Overseas Chinese and Chinese Americans. It will foster the challenge to trace their history and that of the greater society as legacies, continuities, interconnections, and transformations (Alisse Waterston 2005).

Section VI addresses the interactive computer component of the exhibit, as well as the website interface and the curricula for teachers. In order to understand artifacts as a cultural experience, the material introduces Chinese cultural heritage in Sonoma County, defines material culture studies, explains collection’s management in museums, and discusses the roll of archaeology and cultural resources in heritage preservation. There are also suggested readings, website links, and a glossary. Heritage preservation is represented by museum collections and historic places; however, there is a serious shortfall of ethnically and culturally diverse historical experiences made available to the

American public. According to Ned Kaufman (2004:70), “of over 77,000 properties listed in the National Register as of April 20, 2004, only 1,300 are explicitly associated with African-American heritage, 90 with Hispanic, and 67 with Asian.” Professionals in heritage conservation working in museums and archaeological collection facilities can help to alleviate this lack of diversity by facilitating virtual and on-site heritage- and culture-based exhibits and educational public outreach programs. This means of revealing heritage is vital to conserving heritage.

Section VII concludes this investigative project by offering some findings and recommendations that will be useful to consider in the management and public interpretation of repository collections. Lastly, the Appendices will include necessary forms of consent for copyright and to participate in an oral history project, full transcriptions of oral histories, and a series of Sanborn Insurance maps. References cited conclude this project’s manuscript.

Sonoma County’s rich diversity and variegated sense of place is beautifully reflected in the Song Wong Bourbeau Collection. It is hoped that this investigative project helps to heighten the Museum’s profile as a responsible steward in preserving, displaying, interpreting, and managing collections; and likewise proves to be an innovative model in the field of cultural resources management.