

CARETAKERS OF THE COMMUNITY'S PAST: VOLUNTEERS IN NORTH DAKOTA
MUSEUMS

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The bulk of museum studies research focuses on professionalized museums. Little research has been conducted on the challenges of small museums. This study looks at volunteers in small North Dakota museums. Sparsely populated North Dakota lacks the funds and manpower to professionally staff their rural museums. While it is especially difficult for museums to recruit younger volunteers because they tend to be more mobile and have constricted schedules, North Dakota's small museums have adapted by staffing with older volunteers. Museums in Southwest North Dakota such as the Hettinger County Historical Society, Dakota Buttes Museum, and Mott Gallery of History and Art survive because older volunteers sustain their museums. These older volunteers do not always follow strict professional guidelines, but they do contribute life skills, knowledge of the community, and historical understanding to their work at the museums in North Dakota. Their contributions are vital to the survival of these museums.

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DEDICATION

To Papa, your cheerful stories and memories of the past inspired me to investigate my community. The story of you and your triumph over the badger are forever ingrained in my memory. This is for you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DBMDakota Buttes Museum

HCHSMHettinger County Historical Society Museum

MGHAMott Gallery of History and Art

1. INTRODUCTION

A trio of women assemble around a kitchen table in a small, blue house on the edge of a tiny town in western North Dakota. As fellow volunteers and board members at their local museum, they gather often. They brainstorm community engagement activities for their museum, plan art receptions for the museum's "Artist of the Month" program, write donation request letters to local businesses, and search for potential granting agencies to help fund the museum's many endeavors and ever evolving infrastructure needs. These women, all of whom are from 60 to 80 years old, contribute their time as retirees to developing and supporting the local museum. Older volunteers at local museums in North Dakota are common. In fact, not only is the sight common, but older volunteers are vital to the sustainability of the institutions themselves. Some museums, such as those profiled in this thesis, would not be able to open their doors without older volunteers.¹ These individuals form the museums' boards and provide the museums with manpower. They act as tour guides, curators, fundraisers, grant writers, custodians, carpenters, and advocates and preservers of community history.

The small museums that these volunteers staff in places such as southwest North Dakota are not open year-around. In the summer months when tourists and families visit the area, these museums function as hubs for community gatherings and they actively preserve community history. Small museums curate local artifacts and community memorabilia donated by local citizens. Unlike larger professionalized museum boards, the small museum board consists of local volunteers and residents that care about preserving their community's history and are committed to doing the work necessary to keep the doors open. Small museum boards do more

¹ Individuals volunteers who are retired and over the age of 60 are termed "older volunteers" in this thesis.

than supervise. These museum boards are active in repairing and staffing the museum. Small museums depend upon the generosity of donors and county mill levies to pay for their infrastructural needs. They neither hire paid staff nor do they follow strict professional guidelines, so the museums are sometimes impaired by a lack of education in museum techniques and best practices. On the other hand, museums in rural North Dakota collect the history of their communities without the constraints implemented in large, professionalized museums.

The Hettinger County Historical Society Museum (HCHSM) is one of the museums profiled in this thesis. Located in Regent, North Dakota, a town of fewer than 200 people, the HCHSM was started in the 1960s, by several people from the community. Over the years it has expanded, and today it consists of seven separate buildings. The HCHSM houses artifacts relevant to the agricultural history of the region such as tractors, farm tools, and equipment for planting and harvesting crops. It also displays artifacts relevant to the community of Regent such as medical equipment from their former doctor's office, paintings from local artists, school books and supplies from a former local country school, and yearbooks and other school memorabilia from the former Regent High School. The HCHSM is large in terms of square footage, yet it is a small museum that is run entirely by volunteers from the community. Its operating budget relies on what it receives from a county mill levy –a small portion of tax revenue –and visitor donations.² County museums receive a percentage of the mill levy each year to finance some of their operations.

² Kevin J. Glatt, Burleigh County, "Everything You Wanted to Know About Property Taxes.... And Then Some," Burleigh County, accessed January 22, 2017, <http://www.burleighco.com/departments/auditor/taxes-and-levies/>.

North Dakota museums like the HCHSM are directly affected by the region's environment. North Dakota is one of many states located on the Great Plains. The characteristics of the Great Plains as defined by Great Plains historian, Walter P. Webb are that the environment is flat and sub-humid.³ With little rain and few trees, states like North Dakota have fewer inhabitants in comparison to those farther east. Historically, this has directly affected the ability of the state's institutions to finance themselves as the smaller population means less funding for infrastructure and programs. It is important to keep in mind that the people that staff small North Dakota museums must work with limited and uncertain resources. In fact, older volunteers do a great job of adapting to the circumstances that are a direct product of the Great Plains environment.

Understanding the role of older volunteers in small North Dakota museums is important to the field of museum studies and understanding all museums. As the review of literature in Chapter 2 will show, museum studies research has tended to focus primarily on large museums with professional staff. Using data collected from face-to-face interviews, this thesis will contribute to the growing body of research on small museums. It will illustrate the feasibility of depending upon older volunteers as a resource in small North Dakota museums. Older volunteers are dedicated to service and involvement within their communities. They contribute to small museums through their service yet they do need more training and education in the museum studies field in terms of museum curation techniques and guidelines. Older volunteers lack the basic training needed to properly curate a museum, but with additional education their impact can be even greater than it is presently.

³ Walter P. Webb, *The Great Plains*, (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1931), 3.

Three case studies conducted at small museums in southwestern North Dakota contribute to our understanding of the older volunteer as a resource in that new retirees sometimes volunteer and bring new energy to small museums. These studies were conducted at the following museums: Hettinger County Historical Society and Museum (HCHSM), Regent; Dakota Buttes Museum (DBM), Hettinger; and the Mott Gallery of History and Art (MGHA), Mott. Two of the museums are in Hettinger County and one is in adjacent Adams County. All of them are spatially isolated from the capital, university cities and other places with more population density. Research was conducted at each museum and face-to-face interviews were conducted with the older volunteers. A total of seven interviews were completed. The interviews provide the research for each case study, as they reveal the role of these volunteers in the small museum by illustrating their motivations, skills, and ideas.

As the research, will show, the study of the older volunteer brings new evidence to the museum studies field. Currently, there is more scholarship regarding large, professionalized museums, but it is important to develop strategies for all museums including those that are small. Older volunteers are integral to the operation of the small museum. They handle the day-to-day operation of facilities, fundraise, and curate. Such volunteers also can impact larger institutions, but they do not have to fill as many roles there as they do in small museums. Older volunteers can also be a resource for larger museums as more and more individuals reach retirement.

Research that contributes to the small museum is potentially a resource for every museum. Even though small museums operate differently than professionalized museums they do have common interests. Both need staff whether that be volunteers or paid professionals. Volunteers fill different roles in each setting and have different responsibilities, but understanding their role whatever it might be is important. Researching museums with older

volunteers and asking them questions leads to insights that can be used to contribute to every museum's well-being and future.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In public history or museum studies literature, very little scholarly attention has been paid to managing or educating older museum volunteers. Most contemporary research has focused on macro interpretations of museums in American history and “how to” guides published by organizations such as the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Even with limited publications that address the older museum volunteer specifically, some research points indirectly to the importance of small museums and their volunteers. Historians such as David Glassberg, Roy Rosenzweig, and David Thelen interpret the importance of museums and their visitors from a macro perspective. In *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*, Glassberg, a professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, concentrated his research on the importance of an individual’s sense of place and collective memory. He stated that people form a sense of place and create memories by interacting with each other, and much of this interaction has the potential to happen in a museum.⁴ Additionally, in an earlier work, *The Presence of the Past*, Rosenzweig and Thelen performed a national study to research the types of historical activities people were interested in and involved with. They found that public places a large amount of trust in museums, on par with what they are exposed to in academic texts and in the classroom. Thus, it is even more important to study and understand each museum’s volunteers because they help interpret and curate public history for its consumers.⁵

Historian Elwyn B. Robinson, whose work is outside the lens of public history but essential to broader traditional history, provides the context for this study by analyzing the place

⁴ David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

⁵ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

in which this research was done. Robinson writes of the history of North Dakota and the state's issues with overdevelopment in relation to the small population and a migration of the state's working-age population to larger cities and greater opportunities.⁶ An excessive number of small museums were a direct result of this overdevelopment, but they also were left to operate with a diminishing population and a growing elderly demographic. This historical context primed the state's present museums for staffing difficulties. Fortunately, the state's small museums have used the elderly population to their advantage.

In contrast to the macro focus of Glassberg, Rosenzweig and Thelen, public historian Tammy S. Gordon performed research at several small museums and argues for their importance. Her book, *Private History in Public: Exhibition and the Settings in Everyday Life*, focused on small, less professionalized museums in their many forms. Gordon advocated for continued research into the many facets of the small museum.⁷ Just a few history scholars other than Gordon have given significant attention to small museums; none have directly focused on the pool of older volunteers that small rural museums rely on. In *Private History in Public*, Gordon pinpoints the advantages and importance of such small museums. She wrote about community, entrepreneurial, and vernacular museums found in the United States that are unlike the typical, professionalized museum.⁸ "Exhibits in small museums attract people to converse about community, national, or international issues in the context of local history," according to

⁶ Elwyn B. Robinson, *History of North Dakota* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

⁷ Tammy S. Gordon, *Private History in Public: Exhibition and the Setting of Everyday Life* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2010).

⁸ Tammy S. Gordon, *Private History in Public*.

Gordon.⁹ No matter their size, museums have the ability to use their space as a forum for conversations about local and global events, crises, and issues.

Gordon also noted that the community museum is characterized by independent curatorial approaches, limited objectivity, a mix of professional and non-professional volunteers, and its heritage focus.¹⁰ Community museum exhibits are often created by local individuals. These curators rely on their life experiences to craft the exhibits and lean on traditional historical methods when useful.¹¹ Gordon realized that the community museum's interpretation techniques are much different than those at large, professionalized museums. "Scholarship, memories, nostalgia, experience, community exigencies, and rumor work together to inform interpretation of artifacts for community exhibits," she emphasized. "Some are highly dependent on academic knowledge; others are more suspicious of that knowledge and rely more heavily on experiential evidence or community oral tradition."¹² Small museums do things differently because of community ideals and constraints, but they offer an experience which visitors appreciate and find intimate. Part of this unique experience is influenced using older volunteers as curators, fundraisers, and tour guides in the community museum.

Gordon also wrote about three types of museums that do not adhere to professionalized museum standards. She laid the framework needed to categorize, understand, and appreciate these museums. The research conducted at three small museums for this thesis intersects with Gordon's assertions about the importance of community museum research. The study of older volunteers in the small museum contributes to Gordon's community museum research as it fits

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 17, 31.

¹¹ Ibid., 35.

¹² Ibid., 36.

within Gordon's community museum scope. It expands upon her research to focus on the importance of older volunteer's work in the community museum.

While Gordon offers analysis of the atypical museum, scholars such as Glassberg, in their macro approach, investigated how Americans interact with history in different situations.¹³ In *Sense of History*, Glassberg asserted that it is more important to ask people what they are interested in learning about the past than scrutinizing what they do not know about the past.¹⁴ Glassberg analyzed a variety of different situations where the public had deliberately inserted history into their daily lives without the influence of a professional historian. He examined war memorials, civic celebrations, popular history delivered through documentaries, and historic neighborhoods. His aim was to learn what types of history people cared about and how they made connections between themselves and the past.

Glassberg saw a divide between historians and the public in regards to how each views history. Historians view history through an interpretive lens while the individual has a sense of history or ideas about the past which are informed by the places and people they care about.¹⁵ With a sense of history, both public and personal events become intermingled and result in public histories that interest those individuals, groups, or families that are integrated into that history.¹⁶ It is this sense of history that Glassberg analyzed throughout his book by examining different events in which the public had asserted interest.

An individual's sense of history is formed by the interactions they have with others. As Glassberg stated, "Through conversations with others, we learn about a past before our own

¹³ David Glassberg, *Sense of History*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

experience, share versions of that past with others, and seek our version of that past accepted in the larger society.”¹⁷ Conversations about the past take place in our communities’ social circles, at family gatherings, social events, and local museums. The histories that are important to the public are collections of individual and community memories.

Glassberg’s examination of the public’s sense of place, the past, and their memory intersect with the study of the small museum’s older volunteers. If a sense of place and memory is constructed through social interaction, a museum is the central location for this development. Museums found in small communities often display and interpret local artifacts. These exhibits tell the story of the community and region. Small museums interpret local history and those who are part of the community use that history to form their own sense of place.

Glassberg’s insistence on understanding an individual’s sense of place is in the same genre of research as Rosenzweig and Thelen’s examination of the general public’s interests in history. Rosenzweig, a professor at George Mason University until his death in 2007, and Thelen, the former editor of the *Journal of American History*, wrote of the ways in which people involve themselves in the study of the past in *The Presence of the Past*.¹⁸ Rosenzweig and Thelen questioned how the past mattered to people, so they surveyed a random sample of individuals nationwide via telephone to find out what specific types of history were significant to the public and what types of historical activities excited people.¹⁹ From March through June of 1994, students at Indiana University called individuals across the United States to inquire about

¹⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁸ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past*.

¹⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

their involvement in historical activities and attitudes about the past. These 808 individuals formed the national sample.²⁰

From the statistical data collected, Rosenzweig and Thelen deduced that a majority of Americans regularly participate in historical activities.²¹ These activities included taking and looking at photographs, watching historical movies, visiting museums, writing in a diary, and reading books about the past, to list just a few.²² After analyzing the survey results, Rosenzweig and Thelen found that respondents believed museums and historic sites to be the most trustworthy of historical sources.²³ When asked about their experiences at museums, respondents said that museums gave them a sense of connection to the past because the museum made history feel real. Museums give visitors a chance to reminisce about the past and make connections between what they see presently and what they had seen or been told about the past by their families. Museums are forums for people to discuss their history and their memories.²⁴

The result of Rosenzweig and Thelen's survey demonstrated the value of the past to the American people, notably that their historical involvement is larger than professional historians had previously considered. Respondents found the museum not only trustworthy but also a catalyst for conversation and examination. The museum is a key venue for mixing history with public conversation, so it is important to understand all facets of the museum. In the survey, Rosenzweig and Thelen spoke about the museum generally, so we can assume that the public holds most museums to a high standard of interpretation and curation. The small museum has the

²⁰ Ibid., 7-8.

²¹ Ibid., 9.

²² Ibid., 19.

²³ Ibid., 21.

²⁴ Ibid., 32.

privilege of sustaining conversations among its visitors and cultivating the dispersal of collective memory. A museum's volunteers are the caretakers of the collections that provoke such conversations, which may then lead to providing better service to its constituents. Better service means taking advantage of resources, including using older volunteers, so small museums can continue to preserve and interpret the past and provide an experience that allows the public to continue to engage and create memories.

Museums are only one of many institutions, organizations, and nonprofits that elicit the services of volunteers. Services provided by volunteers reverberate throughout society. Yet, museum studies research provides little, if any, data about older volunteers. However, sociological studies do provide data about older volunteers and their behavior. A group of European researchers from the UK, Italy, and Poland studied the organizational benefits of the older volunteer with seventy-four case studies conducted in eight European countries between 2009 and 2010.²⁵ Andrea Principi, a researcher at the Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Aging; Robert Lindley, director of the Institute for Employment Research in Warwick; Jolanta Perek-Bialas, a researcher at the Warsaw School of Economics, and Konrad Turek, a Ph.D. student at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, found that a tremendous amount of research about older volunteers centers around the physical and mental benefits they reap from volunteering.²⁶ On the other hand, they found little research about the organizational benefits of retaining older volunteers.²⁷ As a result, they conducted case studies about the

²⁵ Andrea Principi, Robert Lindley, Jolanta Pere-Bialas, and Konrad Turek, "Volunteering in Older Age: An Organizational Perspective," *International Journal of Manpower* 33, no. 6 (2012), 686.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 688.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 690.

organizational benefits of having older volunteers in Italy, Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, France, and Denmark.²⁸

Instead of surveying older volunteers, Principi and fellow researchers surveyed organizations to find out what they believed to be the perceived costs and benefits of retaining older volunteers. Previous research revealed that older volunteers are cost-effective, committed to their work, bring wisdom to their jobs, and can give more time than younger volunteers.²⁹ After completing their case studies, researchers found that organizations perceived five advantages and seven disadvantages to retaining older volunteers. The perceived advantages were increased knowledge and life experience, superior social skills, lower turnover, increased reliability, and lower recruitment costs.³⁰ On the other hand, outdated education, a lower tolerance for learning, difficulty in reducing organizational relationships, difficulty in matching tasks, struggling to perform well under pressure, health problems, recruitment bias, and physical limitations were listed as the perceived disadvantages of older volunteers.³¹ The study also found that, although valued, older volunteers are perceived to present just as many disadvantages as advantages. Currently, organizations capitalize on the availability of older volunteers through reward and recognition, providing training that suits the volunteer's skillset, and completing succession planning to deal with the outgoing stream of volunteers. Many of these practices can be applied to the younger volunteer as well.

Before developing best practices for working with older volunteers it is important to understand how the older volunteer differs psychologically from a younger individual. Barbara

²⁸ Ibid., 686.

²⁹ Ibid., 690.

³⁰ Ibid., 692-693.

³¹ Ibid., 693-695.

Newman, a human development professor at the University of Rhode Island, and Philip Newman, a former director of the Human Behavior Curriculum Project for the American Psychological Association, describe the transitions and thought processes of the older adult in their work entitled, *Development Through Life: A Psychosocial Approach*.³² Newman and Newman state that individuals over the age of sixty continue to grow psychologically until death. They pursue new roles in society and channel their energy and leisure time into new activities. It is during this period in their lives that they transition from their old selves to a community adviser and leader. It is also a time in which individuals evaluate their lives to see if they helped meet their community's needs.³³ Older volunteers are in a life transition period and are looking to channel their energies into work that is meaningful. They are community leaders because they advise their younger cohorts and they contribute to their community in meaningful ways. This is true of all older volunteers including those in small museums. The life transition that they make after the age of sixty contributes to their successes as volunteers and to their value as volunteers in small museums. The psychological state of the older volunteer is an incentive to retain them as volunteers in small museums. Age is not a setback but an asset.

To the small museum, a volunteer's years of life experience contributes to their value as a museum representative, just as involvement in a museum also has benefits for the older volunteer. Joonomo Son, an associate professor of sociology at the National University of Singapore, and John Wilson, professor emeritus of sociology at Duke University, write of these

³² Barbara M. Newman and Philip R. Newman, *Development Through Life: A Psychological Approach*, (Homewood, ILL: Dorsey Press, 1984); Cengage Learning, *Development Through Life: A Psychological Approach*, "Meet the Author," <http://www.cengage.com/c/development-through-life-a-psychosocial-approach-12e-newman>.

³³ Barbara M. Newman and Philip R. Newman, *Development Through Life*, 472-475, 489.

benefits in an article, “Volunteer Work and Hedonic, Eudemonic, and Social Well-Being.”³⁴ Volunteering does not offer monetary rewards but volunteers benefit psychologically from the work they do.³⁵ According to Son and Wilson, three groups of theories outline why volunteers reap psychological rewards from their work. The first group emphasizes the positive affect that volunteering has on a person’s mood. Volunteering, seen by most as a positive activity, can boost our mood.³⁶ A second group of theories emphasizes that volunteering benefits our mental state because it helps us figure out who we are. For example, volunteering makes people feel useful, and that contributes to their sense of productivity.³⁷ The last group of theories illustrates the link between our mental state and feeling connected to others. People that struggle with isolation and feeling alone can relieve these feelings by volunteering in their communities. When people engage in volunteer work they attach themselves to something meaningful which makes them feel less isolated.³⁸ In other words, volunteering makes people feel good for a variety of reasons.

Understanding how individuals process volunteer work psychologically helps museum professionals formulate best practices. Jeffery L. Brudney, a professor in the department of political science at the University of Georgia, examined best practices for volunteers in his article, “The Effective Use of Volunteers: Best Practices for the Public Sector.”³⁹ Brudney outlined nine best practices that have been recommended for government and nonprofit

³⁴ Joonmo Son and John Wilson. “Volunteer Work and Hedonic, Eudemonic, and Social Well-Being,” *Sociological Forum* 27, no. 3 (September 2012), accessed January 14, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23262183>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 658.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 659-660.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 660.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 661.

³⁹ Jeffery L. Brudney, “The Effective Use of Volunteers: Best Practices for the Public Sector,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 62, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1192274>.

institutions.⁴⁰ The first of these is for any volunteer program to get approval from an institution's upper management. This is helpful because most volunteer programs need a coordinator to facilitate.⁴¹ The second recommended practice is for each volunteer program to have written policies that direct and govern the program and its volunteers. Another recommended practice is to give each volunteer position a job description to guide the volunteer. This helps volunteers know what is expected of them. An orientation session is also outlined as best practice for volunteers. It gives volunteers an idea of the institutions policies, procedures, and mission.⁴² It is recommended that organizations use more experienced volunteers to manage younger volunteers. This allows older volunteers to lead others while the organization demonstrates their trust in the volunteers' abilities. Best practice also dictates that organizations both recognize and evaluate their volunteers. Recognition lets volunteers know that the organization appreciates them while evaluation informs them of what they can do to improve their performance.⁴³ The last two best practices recommended are that the organization offer a newsletter and liability insurance coverage to their volunteers. The newsletter informs volunteers of new policies and events while the insurance covers them from any risks involved.⁴⁴ Brudney's outline of best practices recommended for volunteers at nonprofits and government organizations helps museum professionals understand volunteer research and what can be done to improve the volunteer system.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 237.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 238.

⁴³ Ibid., 239.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 240.

Organizations such as Independent Sector, a company that performs nonprofit research, studies the volunteer sector as well. Independent Sector is a coalition of nonprofits that sponsors research and advocates for public policies that strengthen nonprofits around the United States.⁴⁵ *Experience at Work: Volunteering and Giving Among Americans 50 and Over*, published by Independent Sector along with AARP, chronicled the availability and use of American volunteers fifty and over.⁴⁶ Data collected from a telephone survey conducted by Independent Sector in 2001, revealed that eighteen million baby boomers have or were about to turn 50 years old. This will significantly increase the number of potential volunteers in coming years.⁴⁷ In the last decade or so, 4.4 million people were added to the over-65 age bracket. Research finds that this age bracket contributes the largest number of regular volunteers, and they also provide more volunteer hours than any other age group.⁴⁸

With a large influx of potential volunteers becoming available, organizations cannot be complacent in expecting that these individuals will choose to volunteer. Independent Sector suggests that organizations make a concerted effort to recruit the 50-plus population. When asked to volunteer by an organization, 65 percent of those 50 and older accept the invitation to volunteer compared to only 26 percent of older individuals choosing to volunteer when not explicitly asked.⁴⁹ Another way to locate and attract more individuals that are 50-plus is to target religious institutions and organizations. Independent Sector found that 73 percent of retired

⁴⁵ Independent Sector, "About Us," Independent Sector, accessed October 16, 2016 <https://independentsector.org/about>.

⁴⁶ Independent Sector, "Experience at Work," Independent Sector, accessed October 16, 2016, https://independentsector.org/uploads/Resources/experience_at_work.pdf.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

individuals attend a religious service weekly.⁵⁰ Organizations can vocalize their need for volunteers at local churches and senior citizens' centers.

Independent Sector recognized that those over 50 fifty can affect nonprofit organizations in a positive way, but organizations must plan and prepare for these new volunteers.⁵¹ Older volunteers can become valuable resources to non-profits including small museums. The number of older volunteers available to the non-profit sector is now greater than ever before. Organizations with limited staff now can grow their numbers with the increasing availability of those fifty and over. Organizations such as museums only must realize the potential of older volunteers.

Independent Sector's data is reinforced with the findings of Latasha Doyle, a NobleHour special contributor, in her article "Everyone Benefits When Baby Boomers Volunteer."⁵² Doyle states that baby boomers are the second largest generation in the United States. From 1946 to 1964, approximately 77 million baby boomers were born. This means that by 2029 this entire generation will be over the age of 65 and will consist of 20 percent of the United States' population.⁵³ The data provided by Independent Sector and Doyle not only gives researchers ideas for best practice in small museums but reinforces the ideal that the increasing availability of older individuals is a bonus for museums. Volunteer recruitment data collected from small museums such as the HCHSM, DBM, and MGHA provides comparisons for researchers.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁵¹ Ibid., 16.

⁵² Latasha Doyle, "Everyone Benefits When Baby Boomers Volunteer," Treetop Commons LLC, November 20, 2015, accessed March 28, 2017, <http://www.treetopcommons.com/noblehour-blog-base/2015/10/30/baby-boomers-life-changes-and-the-benefits-associated-with-volunteering>.

⁵³ Ibid.

In rural towns such as those in North Dakota, Independent Sector’s recommendations suit the areas’ volunteer needs. Historically, the region has suffered from a small population, outmigration, migration from rural to urban, and overdevelopment. These issues are not new but stem from before the beginning of statehood in 1889. In *History of North Dakota*, Elwyn B. Robinson outlined North Dakota’s statehood themes, two of which are the “too-much mistake” and adjustment.⁵⁴

When the state was settled, it was overdeveloped so there were too many railroads, churches, schools, towns, and newspapers. The Great Dakota Boom of the 1880s caused the state to grow too fast, resulting in what Robinson termed the “too-much mistake.”⁵⁵ Beginning in 1898, the Second Dakota Boom brought settlers to the western half of the state. “Everyone believed that rising values would quickly enrich landowners, so thousands who had never farmed before and had no idea of what farming was like rushed to get a quarter-section . . .,” Robinson wrote.⁵⁶ The new residents built and sustained new churches, schools, and colleges. They developed infrastructure and funded new roads. But financially supporting an abundance of institutions and a large web of infrastructure was difficult over such a large expanse. Even with a booming population, there wasn’t enough people to sustain these institutions.⁵⁷ Hyper-development in such a vast area could not be sustained for long. Schools suffered from a lack of money, improperly trained teachers, and low attendance. To combat their struggles, small

⁵⁴ Elwyn B. Robinson, *History of North Dakota* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), Xv.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 134-135, 155.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 235, 244.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

schools began to consolidate to combine their financial resources with the expectation they could offer better education to their students.⁵⁸

Beginning in 1915, the exodus from rural to urban areas began. North Dakotans moved from the countryside to cities. People also began moving out of state. In 1910, the federal census counted 647,000 residents but in 1915 that number dropped to 637,000.⁵⁹ Here, Robinson notes, that it was during this period in the state's history that its residents were forced to adjust to the semiarid environment.⁶⁰ This meant a movement away from the countryside to the city and to other states. Shuttering schools, churches, newspapers, and towns was imminent when there were not enough residents to support them. Post World War II North Dakota saw a continuation of the downward population spiral of earlier years. In 1940, the population was 642,000 but by 1960 it had dropped by 10,000 residents. The rural to urban trend continued as the rural population declined by ten percent after 1930 and the urban population increased by sixteen percent.⁶¹ The state had acclimated itself to its semiarid environment. A drier climate meant fewer people and institutions were sustainable in the long run. The North Dakota boom was over.

Carl Kraenzel, author of *The Great Plains in Transition*, understood the population decline in different terms than Robinson did. In his book, Kraenzel states that "...a humid-area type of civilization cannot thrive in the semiarid American Plains without constant subsidy, or, lacking this, without repeated impoverishment of the residents."⁶² Kraenzel believed that many of the institutions that existed on the Great Plains, such as the schools and local governments,

⁵⁸ Ibid., 300, 303.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 370.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 443.

⁶² Carl Kraenzel, *The Great Plains in Transition* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 4.

operated in a fashion conducive to the humid climates in which they were designed years earlier, not the semiarid climate of the upstart settlements on the plains. For the people of the Great Plains to thrive, they needed to change how their institutions operated so that the institutions better suited their needs. Kraenzel extended his argument to say, “The need, in the Plains, is for the people to make certain adjustments and adaptations to the fact of semiaridity. Otherwise many people must leave the region...”⁶³ If the people of the plains did not adapt, they would have to leave. Kraenzel said he believed that a key to the survival of plains people was flexibility.⁶⁴ The institutions of the plains needed to be flexible instead of rigid. If institutions did not adapt their ways to the plains, they would not be successful.

Robinson and Kraenzel understood the precipice from which the state had dangled while it grew during those first years of settlement. Remnants of those early days still linger in the state today whether it be the existence of a small rural population or the overabundance of small museums. Analyzing state census data reveals that a shrinking rural population persists and that a large portion of that population consists of older people. In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the disparity between the rural and urban numbers in its 2010 Population and Housing Unit Counts report. The data revealed that the urban population stood at almost 403,000 while rural totals stood close to 270,000.⁶⁵ In 1990, the numbers were vastly different. Rural totals stood at almost 300,000, while the urban population hovered around 341,000.⁶⁶ In two decades the states’ urban population blossomed while its rural population continued to shrink.

⁶³ Ibid., 283.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 342.

⁶⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population and Housing, *Population and Housing Unit Counts*, CPH-2-36, 2012, accessed January 15, 2017, <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/cph-1-36.pdf>, 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 1.

The rural population has continually declined throughout the state's history beginning in the 1910s and continuing to the present. The HCHSM, MGHA, and DBM all lie in rural regions of the state where the population has continued to decline. The HCHSM and MGHA are in Hettinger County while the DBM is in adjacent Adams County. As of 1970, the population of Hettinger County was 5,075 and Adams County was 3,832. U.S. Census data in 2010 showed the population of Hettinger County at 2,477 and Adams County at 2,343.⁶⁷ From 2000 to 2010, Hettinger County showed an 8.8 percent decline in population while Adams County saw a 9.6 percent drop.⁶⁸ In forty years, the population of each county and town declined significantly and few residents remained to support the region's institutions. Regent, located in Hettinger County, touted 160 residents as of 2010, a significant decline from 268 residents in 1990.⁶⁹ Both Mott and Hettinger also saw significant declines in population during the same time frame. Hettinger's population dropped from 1,574 to 1,226, and Mott's from 1,019 to 721 residents.⁷⁰

U.S. Census Bureau data illustrates the population struggles that rural North Dakota counties and towns face. As Robinson outlined, low population density is a direct correlation to the semiarid environment. Yet, even with such low populations, small museums dot many of the counties in the region as is the case in Regent, Mott, and Hettinger. Perhaps this is a direct result of the "too-much mistake." In North Dakota, there are 267 historical organizations or museums.⁷¹ This is worrisome when the population of the state is less than one million.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 10, 21.

⁷¹ State Historical Society of North Dakota, "Organizational Directory, 2017-2018," State Historical Society of North Dakota, accessed on October 25, 2016, <http://history.nd.gov/pdf/MuseumDirectory.pdf>.

A stagnant rural population means fewer residents and an aging population that will be shrinking. U.S. Census data in 2010 revealed that a significant number of residents in the communities mentioned above were 50 years or older. In Hettinger County the median age was 49.4 and in Adams County it was 49.5.⁷² In the towns of Mott and Regent the median age hovered around 52 while the median age in Hettinger was 48 in 2010.⁷³ A breakdown of census data reveals that in all three towns a substantial number of residents are over the age of 65 –in Regent, 58; in Mott; and in Hettinger, 397, all as of 2010.⁷⁴ This amounts to 25.2 percent in Hettinger, 34 percent in Mott, and 29.4 percent in Regent.⁷⁵ Thus, from a quarter to a third of each town’s populace is over the age of 65, which means that there is a significant number of retired residents that have more time to commit to volunteer activities.

As Independent Sector explained, a large group of older people are becoming and are available to organizations in need of volunteers. This is particularly important in rural areas with small museums in places such as southwest North Dakota. This is due to a small aging population with little growth –the birth rate is low, few people move in, and the aging population will naturally diminish. With these communities having a sizable older population, the volunteers interviewed in the three North Dakota museums in this study were over the age of 65.⁷⁶ Such a strong tilt toward the museums’ engagement of these volunteers, many well past typical

⁷² U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population and Housing, *Summary of Population and Housing Characteristics*, CPH-1-36, 2012, accessed January 15, 2017, <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/cph-1-36.pdf>, 2, 20.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 20, 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3, 21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

retirement age, begs us to look closer at what they do in their volunteer roles at museums and how they feel about their work.

3. METHODOLOGY

As shown in the last chapter, research concerning the small museum and older volunteers is limited to macro analysis by historians, a limited number of specific small museum studies, and some sociological research about volunteers and volunteering. Small museums disproportionately use older volunteers compared to their professionalized counterparts. This warrants a deeper analysis of older volunteers and their role in the small museum. There is an abundance of small museums throughout North Dakota because of its rural nature. Its small population has warranted the use of primarily older volunteers to staff its museums. To better understand the small museum and the older volunteer, case studies were completed at three museums in southwest North Dakota. A case study is an examination of an organization, subject, or entity which results in a collection of data that provides researchers an in-depth understanding of what they are analyzing.⁷⁷ In this instance, the Hettinger County Historical Society Museum (HCHSM), Mott Gallery of History and Art (MGHA), and Dakota Buttes Museum (DBM) were the three small museums examined. They were chosen for the case study because of the researcher's awareness of the regional culture and because of each museum's size. The data collection techniques for each case study included observation, interaction with the volunteer staff, individual interviews, phone calls, and emails. Extensive notes and, in some cases, recordings verify the material that was gathered.

⁷⁷ President and Fellows Harvard University, "Case Studies," (Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2008), accessed January 9, 2016, <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=qualitative&pageid=icb.page340344>.

Research began at the Hettinger County Historical Society and Museum in Regent, North Dakota. The historical society was formed in 1962 by local county residents.⁷⁸ The museum was founded six years later in 1968 by the society after Dr. S. W. Hill, a retired local physician, donated his main street drugstore to the society.⁷⁹ The two-story drugstore and physician's office with its accompanying medical equipment was the first piece of community history preserved and interpreted by the HCHSM. From 1968 to the present, six buildings have been added to the HCHSM, a result of the pioneering efforts of community members. Today, the museum interprets community and regional history with artifacts that are donated by members of the community. The HCHSM is open Monday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. Memorial Day to Labor Day, a summer-only schedule common among small museums. Visitors may make appointments to tour the museum from September through May. Admission is free, but donations are welcome and appreciated. The HCHSM is a county museum so it does receive a mill levy which is its primary source of income other than donations.⁸⁰

Currently, the HCHSM consists of a curator and a seven-member board.⁸¹ Don Wagendorf, the museum's curator, is not paid by the HCHSM but by a third party, Experience Works. Formerly known as Green Thumb, Experience Works is a nonprofit organization that strives to improve the lives of job-seeking people 55 or older across the United States by helping

⁷⁸ Hettinger County Historical Society Museum, "Our Museum," Hettinger County Historical Society Museum, accessed March 5, 2016, http://hettingercomuseum.org/?page_id=49.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Hettinger County Historical Society Museum, "Visit Us," Hettinger County Historical Society Museum, accessed March 5, 2016, http://hettingercomuseum.org/?page_id=65.

⁸¹ Hettinger County Historical Society Museum, "About us: Staff and board members," Hettinger County Historical Society Museum, accessed March 5, 2016, http://hettingercomuseum.org/?page_id=73.

them find jobs in areas in which they have adaptable skills or find training opportunities in fields that may be new to them. Another facet of their mission is to help citizens over 55 and with limited incomes find part-time work and/or community service training. A third part is to train volunteers for similar situations. The HCHSM provides Don Wagendorf with the opportunity to learn new skills and in return the museum gets a paid part-time volunteer funded by Experience Works.⁸² Although Wagendorf receives payment for his work, he is not being paid by the HCHSM so he fits the demographic profile of the profiles of volunteers in this study. Wagendorf is 78 years old and has worked at the museum for the last three years.⁸³ He acts as curator, custodian, host, and tour guide among other roles.

Research at the HCHSM was completed in June 2015. Data was collected for one month, and the researcher shadowed and helped Wagendorf with various tasks. Observation was the primary mode of data collection. Wagendorf performed a variety of daily tasks such as clerical work, cleaning, leading tours, organizing exhibits, and performing general maintenance of the museum grounds. Observing Wagendorf provided a complete picture of his actions and level of commitment. He performed hands-on activities that included welcoming guests, cleaning artifacts, and consulting the researcher about exhibit changes. The researcher also attended a board meeting to better understand the dynamics of the museum.

Following data collection at the HCHSM, research was completed at the Mott Gallery of History and Art in Mott, North Dakota, in August 2015. The idea to establish a museum in Mott began in 2003 when members of the community were gathering history for the Mott Centennial.

⁸² Experience Works, "Discover Who We Are," Experience Works, accessed March 20, 2016, http://www.experienceworks.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Discover_Who_We_Are.

⁸³ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016.

These community members decided it was imperative for the Mott's well-being that the region's history be preserved. In September of 2003, they held a meeting to officially organize the MGHA. The museum was originally housed in the former Mott Methodist Church and later moved to the former Bank of Mott building.⁸⁴ The MGHA interprets the history and culture of Mott while also allowing for the display of new art from regional artists monthly during their summer season from Memorial Day to Labor Day. During this time, the museum is open every Thursday and Saturday from 1p.m. to 4p.m. Unlike the HCHSM, the MGHA is not a county museum so its financial sources consist of donations and grants.⁸⁵

Currently, the MGHA has a ten-member board but not a specific, permanent curator like its regional counterpart, the HCHSM. Instead, various MGHA board members perform roles such as art director, fundraiser, etc. The board members work as a team to curate exhibits, fundraise, clean, and complete essential museum tasks. Two board members act as host/hostess each day that the museum is open. If board members are available to oversee the daily operation of the facility, phone calls are made to preselected community members to request help.⁸⁶

The Dakota Buttes Museum in Hettinger, North Dakota, was the last data collection point in August of 2015. The idea to form the Adams County Historical Society and a museum arose in 1969. By the 1970s, the DBM was constructed.⁸⁷ Today, the DBM consists of an eleven-member board and a staff of approximately seven volunteers.⁸⁸ The museum's budget consists of

⁸⁴ Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016.

⁸⁵ Joyce Hinrichs, e-mail message to author, March 13, 2016; Mott Gallery of History and Art, *Mott Gallery of History and Art* (Mott, ND: Mott Gallery of History and Art).

⁸⁶ Joyce Hinrichs, email message to author, March 13, 2016; Joyce Hinrichs, telephone communication with the author, January 22, 2016.

⁸⁷ Betty Svihovec, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

the county's mill levy, donations, grants, and membership fees. Much like the HCHSM and MGHA, the DBM interprets the local history and culture of the county and region through artifacts donated by local citizens. Notably, the DBM also attracts traveling exhibits like "Women Homesteaders of the Great Plains."⁸⁹ Like the MGHA, the museum is open limited hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm to 4pm in the summer.⁹⁰

Once research was completed at all three museums, it became evident that older volunteers made a significant contribution to each of these museums. At each museum, older volunteers were the only personnel. Personal interactions and conversations between myself and the older volunteers at each site also revealed that a significant majority of the volunteer staff were older than the age of 65. It was determined that further investigation into this older volunteer network should be completed. Phone calls were made to several DBM and MGHA museum volunteers from general museum information found online. From these phone calls, contact information was identified for all the volunteers at both museums along with general background information about each institution. Each volunteer was contacted via telephone to ascertain their involvement in their respective museum's activities. The volunteers were questioned about their duties at the museum and how much time they contributed to the museum. I contacted the volunteers that expressed a substantial commitment to their respective museum to schedule face-to-face interviews. These volunteers were genuinely interested in discussing their activities at their museums and discussed a small portion of the large amount of work they contribute to their organization. A total of seven volunteers consented to interviews. Three

⁸⁹ "Tourism," Hettinger Area Chamber of Commerce and Adams County Development Corporation, last modified October 5, 2016, accessed November 9, 2016, <http://www.hettingernd.com/Tourism.html>.

⁹⁰ Betty Svihovec, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

volunteers from the DBM, the HCHSM curator, and three volunteers from the MGHA were interviewed in February 2016.

In preparation for the February interviews, a list of twenty questions was compiled. (See Appendix A) They were developed to target the older volunteer's life experiences, career experiences, and their experience working at a small museum. Questions ranged from personal background information such as birthplace, education, career path, skillsets, and relationships, to specific queries about their respective museums. These interviews provided the core information used to analyze the place and significance of older volunteers in small museums.

These questions were designed to answer the following basic inquiries concerning the involvement of older volunteers in small museums:

1. Does the older volunteer's level of education and previous career choices affect their usefulness and abilities in the small museum?
2. Does a previous attachment to the region affect an older person's desire to volunteer in the small museum?
3. Do older volunteers have a high level of investment in their work at the small museum?
4. How do older volunteers view their role in the small museum?

Each question was designed to uncover if and how older volunteers make contributions to museums in rural North Dakota. Knowing why older individuals volunteer, the jobs they perform at their respective institutions, and how they view their contributions informs researchers.

The questioning began with personal information about the volunteer. Where were you born and raised? The answer to the question reveals the significance of their attachment to place and history. Do volunteers come from the region or from other parts of the country? This

answers questions such as these: Does regionalism preclude strong volunteer patterns in older volunteers? Does growing up within a short distance of the museum mean that older volunteers can better interpret the history of the community because they were included in the history? Is attachment to place insignificant, meaning that older volunteers from outside the region are just as likely to desire to volunteer in their local museum?

The next set of questions explored educational attainment and career choice. With older volunteers acting as small museum curators and fundraisers it is important to know about the participant's education level and job experience. Addressing older volunteers' educational level gives insight into whether higher education and their career before retirement affect their interest and performance. Credentials are generally important to museum staffing, but in small museums it is not the only qualification to take into consideration. Having some volunteers with lower educational attainment is fine when the pool of volunteers is limited. In the case of some small museums, volunteers with little experience and no professional or academic training do a lot, and without them some small museums would not be able to open their doors.

Engagement goes hand in hand with understanding a volunteer's role in the organization. That is why volunteers were asked how they view their role at the museum. For example, they were asked what skills they bring to their organizations. This question gives insight into what older volunteers think about their abilities and how their abilities benefit their organization. Do they believe they have something to contribute? What do older volunteers think they contribute to their museum? Is it their belief time is their contribution or that their skills, abilities, and ideas make their museum stronger? Understanding how older volunteers view their presence in the small museum, enables researchers to decide how they fit into its structure.

After developing interview questions, two days of face-to-face interviews followed in February 2016. The interviews were completed in three sessions. Two interviews were at museums while one was at an interviewee's home. In each case, the interviews were completed with the use of a digital audio recorder and a notepad for additional notes. Each interview was recorded for transcribing. In two of the interviews, there were three interviewees on hand. During these sessions, each interviewee was questioned individually while in the presence of the rest. While each answered questions, some crossover conversation ensued. Interviewing the volunteers in a group environment allowed each individual to feel comfortable answering questions. Being surrounded by their colleagues allowed each volunteer to chat candidly about their experiences at their museum. Instead of being scripted due to nervousness, their answers were truthful and enlightening. Each interview session took approximately two hours and was closed by asking if the interviewees had anything else they wanted to contribute. Each recording was analyzed with the following criteria:

1. What topics did the volunteers want to discuss?
2. What questions did the volunteers find confusing?
3. What topics were the volunteers passionate about?

The interviews with all seven volunteers were not only a way to collect valuable research, but they also revealed just how passionate and committed these volunteers were to their museums. The questions were formulated and asked to make the volunteers feel comfortable and relaxed. Thus, the volunteers spoke freely about many things, and through their excitement it was easy to see that they genuinely cared and wanted others to know about their work. It seemed that they were excited to contribute to research that might help their own museums someday.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The interview responses provided during the interviews at the HCHSM, DBM, and MGHA reveal that these volunteers had little exposure to professional museum practices or education. When asked what they did after graduating from high school, they described their pursuit of a college degree or lack thereof and their past jobs. Of the seven volunteers interviewed, four attended college or university and earned a degree, while three did not. Their college degrees ranged from teaching to accounting and business. Of the seven volunteers, none had a museum studies education.⁹¹ As retired individuals, each volunteer acquired their museum skills while working at the museum or they performed roles based on their expertise from previous jobs. This was evident as interviewees answered questions about their careers. They had been employed in education, finance, agriculture, insurance, government, and two had owned small businesses. Their job expertise helped the interviewees perform museum tasks. Wagendorf, for example, changed careers several times. At different periods during his lifetime he was a farmer, crop insurance agent, bus driver, bar owner, and factory worker assembling electronic components for airplanes. He –nor any of the other volunteers interviewed –worked at a museum before volunteering at their local museum.⁹²

The older volunteers' lack of experience in the museum field was evident in some aspects of their museum curation. At the HCHSM, the accessioning and deaccessioning techniques lacked the professional standards found at other museums. When items were brought to the museum by a member of the community, Wagendorf and one of the HCHSM's board members

⁹¹ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, Peggy Gunther, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

⁹² Ibid.

did not have exact guidelines to reference. They had to make a personal decision as to whether the museum would accept the items. The only criterion was whether the item had any historical connection to the community.⁹³ If it did not, they did not accept it. This is a very broad criterion and allows for interpretation by the museum and its individual board members and volunteers. Depending on who is at the museum, they may or may not accept the item based on their own understanding of the community connection. This allows the museum to accept many items that a professionalized staff would not. An excess of items means less room for interpretation of artifacts that are more historically relevant to the community of Regent. The deaccessioning criteria at the HCHSM also lacked professional guidelines. Wagendorf, the curator of the HCHSM, did not have specific guidelines regarding how the museum would dispose of items that were no longer in good condition or relevant to the museum. On several occasions, Wagendorf disposed of several artifacts because they were marred by dirt and mold. He used his own personal criteria to determine if an item should be discarded. There are no professional guidelines to follow regarding disposal of artifacts.⁹⁴ Although this older volunteer provided many life skills to the museum, those skills could not prepare him to develop the professional deaccessioning standards required at a museum.

Next, I asked the interviewees why they volunteer at their respective museum. Two distinct answers arose when they responded to this question. First, they stressed their desire to give back to the community and to help those around them. All seven volunteers expressed their desire to help their community. By volunteering at local museums, the volunteers fulfill their need to contribute to their communities in a meaningful way. They see themselves as helping the

⁹³ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, June 2015.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

community by interpreting its history and providing a space for people to gather and discuss that history. “You work for nothing but you are gaining everything,” Wagendorf noted about the HCHSM.⁹⁵ Volunteering brings with it no obvious returns such as money or power, but it gives volunteers the self-satisfaction of having done something good for their communities.

Interviewees also expressed their desire to stay busy. Volunteering at the museum helped them stay busy as retirees. The volunteers kept busy at their respective museums during the summer season. During the offseason, fundraising and planning for the next season happens. The day the MGHA interviews were conducted, those volunteers had a meeting an hour prior to the interviews to discuss museum business. Even in the offseason, they donate their time to maintaining and building upon the mission of their museum.

Next I asked the interviewees how long they had volunteered at their local museum. Their responses revealed a considerable commitment to their local museum. All seven volunteers worked at their respective museums for a minimum of three consecutive years. Two individuals at the MGHA had volunteered for 13 years while the third MGHA interviewee had worked there for eleven years. Two DBM individuals volunteered for nine years, while one volunteer had been at the museum for a total of 47 years. The HCHSM curator volunteered for three years. This group of volunteers dedicated a significant amount of time to their museums.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Table 1: Personal Volunteer Data

| | <i>Age</i> | <i>Hometown</i> | <i>Years of Volunteerism</i> | <i>Careers</i> | <i>Higher Education</i> |
|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Wagendorf</i> | 78 | Regent, ND | 3 | Farmer, Small Business Owner, Insurance Agent | Yes |
| <i>Hinrichs</i> | 77 | San Francisco | 11 | Finance & Hotel Industry | No |
| <i>Halvorsen</i> | | McKintosh, SD | 13 | Teacher | Yes |
| <i>Messer</i> | 69 | Hettinger County | 13 | Secretary | No |
| <i>Svihovec</i> | 80 | Hettinger, ND | 47 | County Auditor | No |
| <i>Gunther</i> | 61 | Bowman, ND | 9 | Principal | Yes |
| <i>Burck</i> | 79 | Central ND | 9 | Secretary | Yes |

It was obvious that these volunteers were invested in their museums so the researcher asked them how much longer they intended to volunteer. One volunteer said that they wanted to step away from their role in the next two years.⁹⁶ The rest of the volunteers expressed their desire to continue to volunteer at their museums until they were physically unable to or if something happened that was beyond their control and prevented them from volunteering.⁹⁷ MGHA volunteer Halvorsen explained that she would “volunteer until they carry me out.”⁹⁸ Through the responses of the interviewees we can see how committed they were to their work. Each volunteer expressed a strong desire to continue contributing in some way.

After discovering that most volunteers wanted to stay at their museums until they could no longer feasibly work, I asked them how they had come to volunteer at their museums. Did a

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

⁹⁸ Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016.

board member recruit them? Did they volunteer their time because of a love of history or community? Two DBM volunteers were asked to help with a city centennial project. Once that project was completed they continued to volunteer at the museum.⁹⁹ Wagendorf, was asked by the HCHSM's board to volunteer at the museum during the summer season.¹⁰⁰ MGHA volunteer, Joyce Hinrichs, was asked to act as secretary during the museum's board meetings to take down the minutes for each meeting. That venture led to her further involvement in all museum activities.¹⁰¹ Essentially, the museums asked four of seven volunteers to help their museums in some capacity whether it was short term or long term. In contrast, MGHA volunteer, Mary Messer, said that they had personally saved items relevant to the community's history and wanted to see their community open a museum that would preserve those items for future generations.¹⁰² This volunteer helped develop the local museum. Instead of being asked to volunteer, this individual aided in the startup of the institution and volunteered from that time forward. This was also the case for DBM volunteer Betty Svihovec. She had been a charter member of the local historical society that began in 1969. Since the historical society was directly involved with the construction of the museum, she volunteered on her own accord.¹⁰³ Another DBM volunteer, Peggy Gunther, also decided to volunteer without a request from their museum. She saw a need for someone to guide the institution toward a stronger infrastructure so

⁹⁹ Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016.

¹⁰¹ Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

they decided to help.¹⁰⁴ Three of the seven volunteers took personal initiative to involve themselves as volunteers at their local museums. Although three of seven volunteers volunteered without an institutional prompt, four individuals were explicitly asked to help the museum in some capacity. Small museums that ask older community individuals to volunteer was an important theme.

Discovering that many of the volunteers interviewed had been solicited by museum leaders, my next questions explored their contributions to the museums. These questions challenged the volunteers because they cared about the museums and not themselves. During two interviews with MGHA volunteers, several interviewees did not know how to answer so their cohorts excitedly listed many skills.¹⁰⁵ In fact, neither volunteer in this case answered at all. The skills and personal qualities listed by fellow volunteers included creativity, organizational ability, knows the community, carpenter, a good fundraiser, gutsy, and a spokesperson. The final MGHA volunteer also had a difficult time describing their skillset but finally noted that they were a good art critic.¹⁰⁶ The volunteers were humble throughout all the interviews. They saw themselves as doing work that needed to be done regardless of their skills or knowledge. When something needed to be done at their museums, they met the challenge. Volunteers didn't see the relevancy of describing their skills, strengths, or achievements. Instead, they showed that they believed that hard work is important. The HCHSM's curator, Wagendorf, believed his skills included a demonstrated knowledge of farming and understanding local agricultural artifacts because of his

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, February 9, 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

age.¹⁰⁷ The volunteers at the DBM listed bookkeeping, accessioning, a good memory, and the ability to keep minutes as their valuable skills.¹⁰⁸ Overall, all the volunteers interviewed had a difficult time with this question. Their general response was that they had not thought about themselves in that way. Instead, they did what needed to be done at their museums without overanalyzing their credentials or qualifications.

It was evident from the interviews that all the volunteers dedicated many hours to their museums. Thus, it also seemed important to determine if these individuals had other volunteer experiences and what those experiences were. They were asked if and where they had volunteered before volunteering at their museums. All seven individuals volunteered with another organization or within their communities prior to the museum. MGHA volunteer Mary Messer was a 4-H leader for fifteen years, renovated a community park, and volunteered for the local Chamber of Commerce. MGHA volunteer Hinrichs fostered children in a community outside of North Dakota and the other MGHA volunteer worked with their church and local Lions Club. HCHSM curator Wagendorf worked in his church. DBM volunteers Gunther and Marian Burck worked at a local thrift store while Svihovec had worked to get an indoor community pool built, served on the hospital and library boards. The research showed that all seven volunteers were committed to giving back to their communities in many other capacities.

¹⁰⁷ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

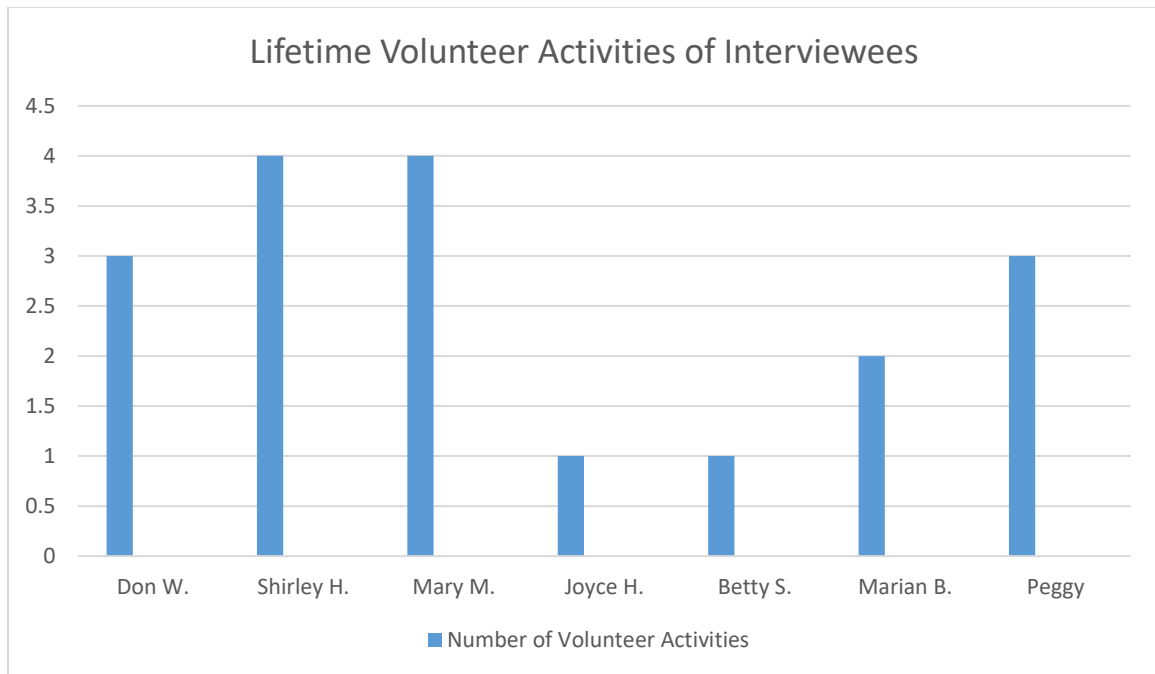


Figure 1: Volunteer Activities

The research revealed that each of the interviewees had a strong commitment to community service throughout their lives, not just in the latter years. With this understanding, I asked each volunteer what they had learned from all their years of service to the community. A popular answer was that service to the community was important. Four of the seven volunteers believed that community service was essential to the health of a small town.¹⁰⁹ “A community would not have all the things it enjoys and activities and events without volunteers ... A community would not be fun to live in without volunteers,” said DBM volunteer Gunther.¹¹⁰ In other words, volunteers sustain community activities in small towns. Without volunteers, small

¹⁰⁹ Don Wagendorf, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

¹¹⁰ Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

towns would not be able to sustain activities and events that bring the community together for dialogue, understanding, and enjoyment. Much of this dialogue and understanding takes place at the local museum. MGHA volunteer Hinrichs pointed to the importance of continually donating your time and skills to your community. “You can either sit down and die or finish what God gave you to do and go out and do more,” she explained.¹¹¹ Community work is never finished and the only way to sustain community and its institutions is to continuously donate your time for the community’s well-being.

When I asked the volunteers about what they had learned from volunteering they had interesting responses. MGHA volunteer, Messer, enthusiastically said that everyone had the potential to become a volunteer. In other words, this volunteer believed that anyone had the ability and skills to volunteer in some capacity in their community.¹¹² To Messer, it did not require a certain educational degree, age, or intellect to act and help the community.

Volunteering is about caring for your community and working to complete the tasks that move the organization and community forward.

Finally, I asked the volunteers about their future hopes for their museum. The term “growth” was an essential characteristic of all their answers. The types of growth described their included financial growth, an increase in volunteer numbers, more visitors, more donations, more storage, and building larger structures for artifacts and exhibits. Some of the volunteers not only hoped their museum would grow, but they believed it was possible. MGHA’s volunteers wished to see the museum add activities, seminars, more donations, and more visitors.¹¹³ One volunteer

¹¹¹ Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

believed the museum would grow because it already had shown its ability to grow. MGHA volunteer, Hinrichs, viewed growth as essential for the continuation of their small museum. “We can’t stop. If you stop the gallery dies,” she explained.¹¹⁴ Without continually striving for growth, this volunteer believed that the museum would cease to exist. DBM volunteer, Gunther, saw growth through many dimensions such as infrastructure and storage but also in terms of digital accessibility. This volunteer hoped to continue their work on digitizing records for easier accessibility of artifacts. This volunteer’s statement shows growth in the small museum isn’t necessarily limited to size, money, or number of volunteers. All the volunteers were aware of the implications of ignoring technology and the benefits of technology.

The HCHSM, DBM, and MGHA interviews I conducted provide valuable insight into the world of the older volunteer in Western North Dakota’s small museum. They answered my questions with excitement and vigor because they were eager to talk to someone about the projects that they put much of their time and energy into. The dedication and love that these older volunteers had for their museum showed in their availability to sit down with someone to discuss their museum. If given the time and venue, each volunteer would have sat and talked to me for hours about their museums.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

5. CONCLUSION

An old shopping cart filled with rags, dusting cloths, bottles of different cleaning solutions, and various tools was inside the Hettinger County Historical Society Museum when I arrived to begin my research. Every day, Don Wagendorf pushed the rattling shopping cart to different areas of the museum, cleaning the dusty and dirty spaces while also giving tours to visitors. As an older volunteer, Wagendorf can perform the necessary museum curation tasks. He does not always abide by professional guidelines, but he takes his job seriously and applies his knowledge of life to his work. His lack of adhering to professional guidelines is a direct result of not having any background in what those professional guidelines are. The HCHSM survives and contributes to the community because older volunteers like Wagendorf give their time, energy, and wisdom to keeping their museums alive. Likewise, the Mott Gallery of History and Art and the Dakota Buttes Museum survive in much the same fashion. Like the HCHSM, they do not have large budgets, professionally trained staff, or knowledge of museum standards. This does not stop the older volunteers; these citizens understand the importance of their contributions. Hinrichs, an MGHA volunteer, explained that “volunteers are required because there aren’t enough helpers in the world.”¹¹⁵ She is motivated to work in her local museum because she believes volunteers are crucial to the museum’s survival and the well-being of the community. Svihovec, a DBM volunteer, is similarly motivated to volunteer at her local museum. “We all owe our community something, she said. “We need to give back for what we have received ...”¹¹⁶ Svihovec views her volunteerism as payback for all the good things the community has given to her. This study has focused on three small rural western North Dakota museums that are

¹¹⁵ Joyce Hinrichs, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016.

¹¹⁶ Betty Svihovec, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

run by older volunteers. It has shown that the experiences and insights of older volunteers contribute significantly to the efficient and sustainable survival of these cultural institutions.

The research results from the three case studies can be broken down into the following seven key findings:

1. These older volunteers are not educated to work at a museum and they lack training.
2. They tend to volunteer for many events and organizations in their communities.
3. They care about the museum and their colleagues more than themselves.
4. These older volunteers are dedicated to their museums.
5. They believe that their museum has the potential to grow.
6. These volunteers believe in serving their communities because they believe they have been given so much in return.
7. It is important to ask older individuals to volunteer because most will help when asked.

This study shows that the older volunteer's age is not a negative factor in institutional growth and success at small museums. If anything, age empowers such volunteers to perform their tasks because they have knowledge of the community and they generally have more free time to offer the museum than younger people who have job and family constraints can give.

This research also illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of older volunteers. A clear weakness is the lack of museum training for them. However, this does not affect their resolve of to perform the necessary tasks. Five of the seven volunteers had a college degree, but none studied museum curation or had previously worked in a museum. Their involvement in the museum is not related to their previous work experience. Instead, they are driven to work at their

respective museums because they enjoy completing meaningful work and are committed to community service.¹¹⁷

Specialized training is essential to museums, but it is not always possible to obtain the proper museum education for every museum volunteer because small museums like the HCHSM, MGHA, and DBM do not have the funds and insight to obtain the necessary training. Instead, they set standards and create a mission statement that is unique to their institution's needs and the needs of their community. These standards might not always be as professionalized as those at larger, museums, but the standards set by small museums serve their community. As these volunteers demonstrate, a strong belief in their abilities and a dedication to community can compensate for a lack of experience and training. But it is also important to note that these volunteers are open to learning skills from museum professionals.

The mission and standards of small museums vary. For example, the MGHA not only exhibits community history, but also hosts a new artist each month during the summer season. The MGHA's volunteers believe that an artistic venue appeals to the Mott community. So, each month new art pieces are displayed in the museum's art room. A reception is held for the selected artist and the artist holds a community workshop. Providing the Mott community with a place to see and interact with art and artists is part of the museum's mission. The arrangements needed to procure an artist each month and to choose art that is relevant to the community is done by volunteers. These volunteers have no artistic training or background yet they bring a valuable art program to their community every summer. The MGHA's volunteers understand

¹¹⁷ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

their community's needs and orchestrate an art program that serves the community of Mott and the surrounding area. The MGHA's art program demonstrates the importance of standards and a mission unique to each museum.

A part of each volunteers' desire to craft museum programs for their communities comes from their strong desire to volunteer in their small towns. The second research finding concerned the older volunteers' extensive history of volunteering in various capacities in their communities. All seven volunteers had a history of volunteering prior to their work at the museum. They had volunteered for their local Lion's Club, churches, hospital boards, library boards, and the Chamber of Commerce.

The propensity for older volunteers to continually volunteer in their communities is significant. Older individuals have the tendency to find other volunteer work in another organization after they have fulfilled their current position. This attribute is significant to the museum studies field because it gives museums in small towns strategies for finding new volunteers. Small town museums have limited options when it comes to finding volunteers. Understanding that older individuals that volunteer or have volunteered are more likely to volunteer again is important. It means that small museums can target older individuals that volunteer in the community.

Finding volunteers is not easy in small towns like Regent, Mott, and Hettinger. It is important to recruit volunteers that will commit to their museum for a considerable amount of time. In the case of the HCHSM, DBM, and MGHA, these museums are open for three months per year. Volunteers complete most tasks during the open season, but they also work in the off-season planning for the upcoming year. In the case of small museums like these, a volunteer that

can commit to the institution for more than one season is optimal. This cuts down on time spent searching for and training new volunteers.

Directly related to the notion that long-term volunteers are highly valuable to the small museum is the third finding, which is that older volunteers are dedicated to their museums. They exhibit this through years of commitment to their museums. All the interviewees have worked at their museums for a minimum of three years, while one DBM volunteer has been with their museum for several decades. All except one volunteer intends to volunteer at their museum until they are physically unable. These volunteers have dedicated an important portion of their lives to each museum and have no intention of stopping if they are healthy. These museums have not wasted resources searching for more volunteers every year because older volunteers provide small museums with more years of service than younger volunteers. Older volunteers are in town and retired while younger people tend to be more mobile, have children, and have constricted schedules.

The HCHSM, DBM, and MGHA's older volunteers' dedication was not only evident during our discussion about their years of service but also when they discussed their skills and abilities. It was evident that they were more interested in discussing activities at the museum than themselves. When asked about the skills they contribute to the museum, two MGHA volunteers did not respond. Instead, their colleagues answered for them. They were excited to discuss the contributions of others but did not want to talk about their own skills and abilities. Our fourth key finding is that the volunteers care more about their museum's programs and issues than themselves. The volunteers' passion for their museums made it difficult at times to obtain responses to the interview questions. MGHA volunteers often deflected the question to discuss the "Artist of the Month" program. They excitedly discussed past MGHA artists and upcoming

art events. The same situation occurred at the DBM interviews. In this case, volunteers were passionate about discussing their struggles and how they have tried to remedy them.¹¹⁸

Volunteers at each museum were clear that the work was not about themselves, but about the museums and the communities they serve because they value community service. They wanted to discuss their museum, its struggles, successes, programs, past, and future. The team was more important than the individual. Essentially, older volunteers are an asset to small museums because these individuals are focused on the museum's mission and standards. They are at a point in their lives where building careers and resumes is no longer important to them. Instead, they are intrinsically motivated to do work for no extrinsic reward.

Another essential finding is each volunteer's desire to provide a service to the community. When asked why they volunteer, a popular response was that they wanted to give back to their communities. All seven volunteers expressed a desire to give back to their community. Four of the seven volunteers stressed the importance of community service as a cornerstone of a healthy small town. Gunther, a DBM volunteer, believes that many of the events that bring communities together would not be possible without the help of volunteers.¹¹⁹ Quality of life in a small town is directly related to the willingness of people to volunteer their time to the community's well-being. These older volunteers believe in volunteering for the sake of their communities. In this case, these individuals believe that sustaining the museum will increase the community's quality of life.

¹¹⁸ Betty Svihovec, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

¹¹⁹ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

These individuals are dedicated to serving their communities because they believe that their service will lead to growth. When asked about their future hopes for their museums, all said that they wanted to see their institutions continue to grow in various capacities.¹²⁰ Growth ranged from finances to increased visitor numbers to expanding their facilities. The sixth key finding was that the volunteers believed that their museums were growing and that they would continue to grow with care from volunteers. “We can’t stop. If you stop the gallery dies,” explained MGHA volunteer, Joyce Hinrichs¹²¹ She was referring to their older volunteers continued efforts to grow and expand museum curation, exhibition, and art programming. These individuals believe that striving to expand in all areas is key to the museum’s survival. If the museums do not wish to grow and provide more for their communities, they will be forgotten. New ideas, curation, and programs are vital to keep the public coming back. Serving the community means continually looking for ways to improve and connect with the public audience. Older volunteers understand that service to the community is the foundation of the small museum and that without service there is no museum.

Perhaps the most important finding from the study of older volunteers was the power of asking them to volunteer. Four of seven volunteers were asked by museum representatives to volunteer in some capacity. Either they were asked to volunteer directly for the museum or they were asked to aid the museum with a project and that job turned into something larger and more permanent. Museums, especially those that are small, need all the volunteers they can get. The

¹²⁰ Don Wagendorf, interview by author, Regent, ND, February 9, 2016; Mary Messer, Joyce Hinrichs, and Shirley Halvorsen, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016; Betty Svihovec, Marian Burck, and Peggy Gunther, interview by author, Hettinger, ND, February 10, 2016.

¹²¹ Joyce Hinrichs, interview by author, Mott, ND, February 9, 2016.

smaller museums ask the community for help, the more interest they will garner. In the case of these three small museums, asking for help provided the institutions with dedicated, long-term volunteers. Asking older individuals to contribute their skills and time will provide dividends in terms of manpower, dedication, and service.

It is in the interest of the small museum to target older individuals within their communities to volunteer at their institution. Asking older individuals to serve their communities is something every small museum can do to bolster their ranks. Older volunteers act as a renewable resource for museums in small communities. As the older population outgrows the younger population, older individuals are more readily available and willing to staff these museums. The older volunteers' life experiences, understanding of the community, and career skills aid them in their work at a museum. Most importantly, older volunteers care deeply about their communities and other members of the community view them with great respect. The community understands that their elders have knowledge and life experiences that are valuable to all. Nothing is more powerful and sustainable than unwavering service and dedication to community. The small museum can harness that power.

Principi et al. add to the discussion of the importance of recruiting older volunteers. Today, organizations are not concerned with the recruitment or retention of older volunteers. This is in part due to the abundance of volunteers. "Many, after all, are not actually short of volunteers, currently, and many are not anticipating recruitment crises in the future," note Principi et al.¹²² Organizations have yet to take full advantage of older volunteers. As the volunteer pool shrinks, special care must be taken to understand, recruit, and retain older

¹²² Andrea Principi, "Volunteering in Older Age," 697.

volunteers especially in small museums. Museums like the HCHSM, DBM, and MGHA already understand the importance of older volunteers and their value to the museum.

The value of older volunteers also comes from their connection with the past. As Rosenzweig and Thelen explained in *The Presence of the Past*, history and the past is important to everyone as most people regularly engage in activities related to the past. The museum is one place that people regularly engage with the past along with trusting the institution to inform them about the past. Older volunteers engage with the past in a more concrete way than most. Many of the volunteers at the HCHSM, MGHA, and the DBM have an intimate understanding of the artifacts because they grew up using the items or were told stories about the artifacts. Older volunteers take their connection with the past and use it to interpret the community's and region's history. They tell stories about the items and the history of the community because they have intimate knowledge of the community's past. The role of the older volunteer in the small, community museum is that of caretaker, interpreter, custodian, elder, and community history authority. They fulfill a multitude of tasks and roles. Their impact is deep in their museum and in the community. Essentially, they keep the doors open to their institutions but they also contribute their knowledge.

Older volunteers are the storytellers who give life to the artifacts and exhibits. They give tours, arrange artifacts to tell a story, and care for the museum so that it continues to be a gathering place. They know the stories of their communities and can give voice to those stories through their work as museum volunteers. In some museums, they are the only cultivators of community histories and memories. These individuals either lived the story or heard it from their parents or grandparents. It is important to understand the place of the older volunteer in the museum because they allow small museums to be a place of collective memory for the

community. To the casual observer they might seem like greeters and institutional babysitters, but they make real contributions. They have life skills, wisdom, career skills, time, an inclination to serve, they strive for growth, and a have a “team” mentality. All these attributes combine to make older volunteers not only valuable to small museums, but essential to the small museum’s survival in areas like North Dakota.

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where are you originally from?
2. Where did you go to elementary and high school?
3. Where did life lead you after high school?
4. What goals have you set for yourself throughout your life concerning your career and family?
5. Why do you volunteer?
6. How long have you been a volunteer at your museum?
7. How did you become a volunteer at the museum?
8. Why volunteer at your museum?
9. Do you volunteer anywhere else? If so, where and why?
10. What skills do you bring to the table as a volunteer?
11. Do you see yourself volunteering your time and skills elsewhere?
12. What else have you volunteered for in the past?
13. What have you learned from volunteering?
14. What do you enjoy about volunteering at the gallery?
15. What, if anything, do you dislike about volunteering at the gallery?
16. What are your future hopes for your museum?
17. How, if at all, do you think the museum could change how they find and train volunteers to make the museum better?
18. How much longer do you think you will volunteer here?
19. Did your parents volunteer their time locally?
20. In terms of your life, what do you want to be remembered for?
21. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences at the museum?
22. For teachers: How does being a teacher intersect with your experience as a volunteer at the museum?
23. What is your age?

APPENDIX B. IRB NON-COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION

April 13, 2017

IRB non-compliance determination

Please note:

The human subject research in this thesis was completed without IRB approval or determination of exempt status. Any thesis, dissertation, publication, poster, or presentation that reports results from this data must include a statement that the data reported here was collected without IRB approval or exemption.