Research and Study of Fashion and Costume History Spanning from Ancient Egypt to Modern Day

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Through the generous donation by the family of Mrs. Gretel Geist Rutledge, former Costume Design Professor at Michigan State University, faculty mentor Denise Vulhop-Watkins has acquired costume history slides spanning the length of recorded history. Egyptian hieroglyphs, diagrams of Rococo wigs, and flapper dresses are just a few of the many slides. These slides were previously used by Mrs. Geist Rutledge when she taught Costume History, a class attended by Mrs. Denise Vulhop-Watkins.

Multi-use Collection

The main focus of this collection is costume - and fashion-based; however, there is a wide variety of other areas that can benefit from this research, including but not limited to:
- Music
- Art
- Art History
- History
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Anthropology
- Philosophy

Cleaning and Cataloguing Methods

Examination of the slides is a careful and thorough process. The slide projector and slide shelf are especially helpful when dealing with highly detailed pieces. Slide cleaner gently removes fingerprints without damaging the slides. Once I complete a box of slides, I will then catalogue each slide in a sturdy binder of acid-free sheets. Microsoft Word is used to keep track of the data sheets I collect for each category of slides. These sheets contain image names, research of the image, and any additional notes written by Mrs. Geist Rutledge.

Planning for the Future

The long term goal of this project is to catalogue, scan, and digitally archive each image of the ten-box set of slides. On average, it takes an hour and fifteen minutes of research to piece together the history of each image. Hence, the projected completion date is 2022. With the use of a digital HD scanner available through the Camden–Carroll Library, we will hopefully be able to make these images available for research purposes to all students across campus via an online database.