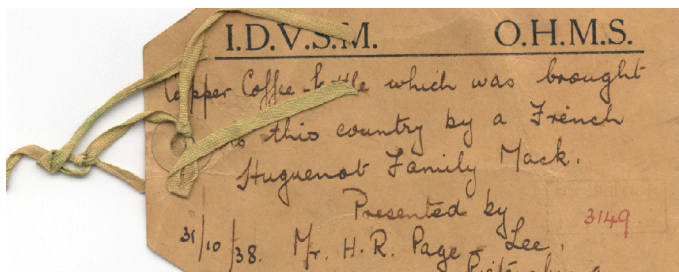
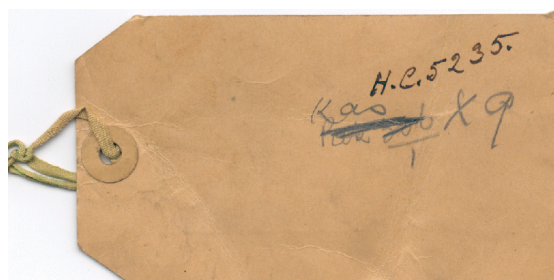


Figure 35d



(Front of label)

Figure 35e



(Back of label)

Figure 35 (a to e)

Examples of accession and acquisition numbers on labels, either gummed to the object or attached by means of string

The permanent marking of an object with the accession number is of the utmost importance in the management of collections as this is the link between the object and the museum documentation system. No written standard procedure for the marking of objects for the Staatsmuseum and the Transvaal Museum could be located. Only one recommendation by Rossouw was found, in which he advised the Museum to catalogue and label, as permanently as possible, the historical and ethnological objects as soon as they were received.<sup>160</sup> This seems to indicate that it was not the accepted practice at the Museum to accession and mark the objects immediately on receipt. This would go some way towards explaining the presence of objects without accession numbers, either by a label or in any permanent manner at all. If objects have not been marked with accession numbers, one would assume that they were never accessioned. As a result one finds that in one catalogue the same object is accessioned more than once.<sup>161</sup> Often the same object was also accessioned in more than one catalogue. On the other hand, there is also evidence that the opposite may have happened. The objects were numbered, but the numbers were not entered into a catalogue, such as references to accessioning by Radcliffe-Brown.

Without a reference (acquisition or accession) number the object and any existing information about that object would become divorced. It is then almost impossible to find the correct information. The following remarks in the Historiography Catalogue make this clear:

- H.C. accession no. 4603(a)  
“Gevind in nov. 1953 in klein pakkamertjie. Dit mag êrens anders in die H.C-boek gekatalogiseer wees”.  
[Found in Nov, 1953 in small storage room. It may have been catalogued elsewhere in the H.C. book.]
- H.C. accession no. 5309  
“Op ‘n meegaande kaartjie staan dat dit geskenk was deur die Z.A.R. regering maar geen ou nommer kan gevind word nie”.  
[On the accompanying label it was recorded that it was donated by the Z.A.R. government, but no original number can be found.]

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<sup>160</sup> NCHMA, TM19/24 copies of letters and recommendation, Rossouw to the director of the Transvaal Museum, dd 30 October 1925.

<sup>161</sup> Historiography Catalogue, vol. 1, H.C. accession nos. 259 and 67 both refer to the newspaper *Camp News*, published during the siege of Pretoria 1880 - 1881, and H.C. accession nos. 22 and 168 to the same Bible.

- H.C. accession no. 4816

“This parcel, when found, was not entered into any catalogue”.

These are issues that seem prevalent throughout the period under review when making an analysis of the documentation.

The manner in which objects were marked also differ considerably. Paper objects from the collection of the Staatsmuseum show that they have been imprinted with the date stamp of the Staatsmuseum, and this practice was also adopted at the Transvaal Museum. The stamps did not provide for an accession number (figure 36), but this was sometimes added in writing on the object or on a label (figure 36 and 37). The ethnology objects at the Staatsmuseum were marked with the letter P as indicated in the catalogue (figure 26). As late as 1960 many unnumbered ethnology objects were still found with no identification, either on the object itself or on a label.<sup>162</sup>

According to Schiel cannon balls were marked with red paint (figure 38), as were various other objects (figure 27).<sup>163</sup> Objects were found in the ceramic collection, also numbered in red and white that refer to numbers in the Art Catalogue, but without any code. This made it difficult for an uninformed staff member to associate the number with the correct catalogue as the same numbers appear in more than one catalogue. Later numbers are marked in black on the object with the prefix A.C.<sup>164</sup> Accession numbers on paintings were added to the caption (figure 41).

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<sup>162</sup> NCHMA, File ET1/60 Etnologiese Afdeling. Konsepverslag: Toestand in Museum, p. 4, n d.

<sup>163</sup> Historiography Catalogue, vol. 2, p. 170; H.C. accession no. 5626.

<sup>164</sup> For example, Art Catalogue, A.C. accession nos. 82, 92 and 126 (red on a light background) and A.C. accession nos. 111 to 114 (white on a dark background), but without a code. Later numbers are marked in black on the object with the prefix A.C., for example, A.C. 551.

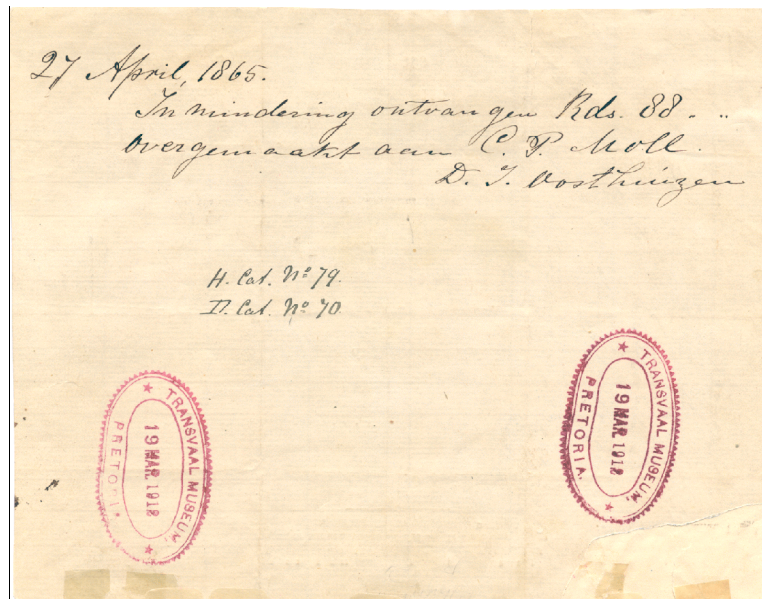


**Figure 36**

Examples of date stamps of the Staatsmuseum and the Transvaal Museum, which did not provide space for an accession or acquisition number.

The accession number was added later by means of a label

(Collection: National Cultural History Museum Nu. 2057)



**Figure 37**

Accession numbers were also written on the objects, for example, H. Cat. No. 79 and D.Cat. No. 70

( Collection: National Cultural History Museum Nu. 2935)



**Figure 38**

Canon balls were marked with red paint

(Collection: National Cultural History Museum H.C. 4181)



**Figure 39**

Objects in the ceramics collection, numbered in red without a code referring to an accession number in the Art Catalogue

(Collection: National Cultural History Museum A.C. 279, 254 and 273)



**Figure 40**

Object in the ceramics collection with several accession numbers: 119 (incorrect) and OHG 1345 on the object; whereas the original number was A.C. 70 and the final number, H.C. 21100

(Collection: National Cultural History Museum H.C. 21100)



**Figure 41**

Accession number added to the caption on a painting

(Collection: National Cultural History Museum H.C. 32739 )

Even if the objects were marked, many accession numbers did not only become indistinct over time, but some disappeared completely. In some cases it seems that the original accession number was deleted and replaced. One of the reasons for this assumption is that, according to Schiel, the old catalogue to which the previous accession number referred, did not exist any longer.<sup>165</sup> The old numbers were thus deleted from, for example, bullets, and the H.C. catalogue numbers marked on them.<sup>166</sup> It is not clear precisely what the process of deletion entailed.

The use of codes prefixed to the accession number seems to be a relatively late development and was almost certainly done in an attempt to distinguish the various collections from one another. It would also have made finding information in the catalogues easier. The old numbers, marked on the objects and still extant, show only the number without a code (figures 39 and 78).

#### 4. POST-ACQUISITION AND ITEM STAGE

Roberts<sup>167</sup> describes the post-acquisition stage as the curation and control of groups after their formal acquisition and prior to the cataloguing<sup>168</sup> of the components, and the curatorial operations involved in item documentation such as cataloguing. At the Transvaal Museum there was no post-acquisition stage, nor any further cataloguing of the objects. Nevertheless the information about objects, particularly the associated details, were regarded as important and were actively solicited.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, H.C. accession no. 5626.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>167</sup> D.A. Roberts, *Planning the documentation of museum collections*, pp. 69 - 74, see also pp. 213 - 216.

<sup>168</sup> See glossary Cataloguing: current use.

<sup>169</sup> NCHMA, System 1 No 4 TM1/34 - TM1/42, letter Swierstra to J.P.J. Roux, dd 19 April 1934. Swierstra writes "Ek sal bly wees indien u ons 'n kort geskiedenis kan gee van elke voorwerp wat u stuur; dit verleen groter historiese waarde aan hulle en is ook van belang vir die publiek"; [I would be pleased if you could let us have a short history of each object that you send; in this way the historical value attached to them increases and the information is also of interest to the public. (Translated from the Afrikaans.)]; letter Beukes to J. Botha, dd 26 Januarie 1934, in which Beukes also asks question with regard to a particular donation: "... was dit deur jong meide of groot vroue gedra? En was vroue daarmee gekoop, of was dit net vir mooiheid gedra?" [... was it traditionally worn by young girls or older women? Were women purchased with it, or was it worn merely as an ornament? (Translated from the Afrikaans.)]

Swierstra often noted that historical details were growing increasingly difficult to obtain,<sup>170</sup> and that the Museum was grateful to have any relevant information. Particulars supplied with an ethnological donation greatly enhanced its value from a scientific point of view.<sup>171</sup> The information was noted in the books,<sup>172</sup> (in the acquisition entry register and/or in the catalogue), recorded in files,<sup>173</sup> which implied that a letter or note with information was filed in the administrative filing system, or put onto labels.

## 5. OUTPUT STAGE

The output stage involves the compilation of records such as catalogues and indexes to facilitate retrieval of information.<sup>174</sup> At the Transvaal Museum there were apparently well-nigh no information retrieval systems in place for details, such as the type or classification of objects, donors, associated individuals and places, events or location.

### Inventories/lists

It was almost impossible to trace an object as there were no inventories: Gunning had packed many of the objects away, but Swierstra soon realized there were no inventories as a guide to the contents of the different chests and boxes into which everything had been packed.<sup>175</sup> From time to time, however, information was sent to the media and in that way details about the donor and the donation were made public.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., System 1 No 3 TM1/31 - TM1/33, letter Swierstra to G.O. Lunnon, dd 3 May 1933.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., letter Swierstra to T. Moore, dd 29 June 1933; System 1 No 4 TM1/34 - TM1/42, letter Beukes to J. Loots, dd 4 January 1934 in which Beukes also notes that the scientific value of the objects is enhanced because the place of origin has been identified.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., System 1 No 4 TM1/34 - TM1/42, letter Swierstra to C.J. Groenewald, dd 18 September 1934. He thanks the donor for the information and says the information will now be registered in the Museum's books.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., System 1 No 3 TM1/31 - TM1/33, letter Swierstra to G.O. Lunnon, dd 3 May 1933.

<sup>174</sup> D.A. Roberts, *Planning the documentation of museum collections*, pp. 79 and 219 - 220.

<sup>175</sup> NCHMA, Box 514 TM 5/9 Art, letter Swierstra to J. Radcliffe-Brown, dd 6 February 1914.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., System 1 No 2 TM1/27 - 1/30 letter Swierstra to the editor of *Die Volkstem*, dd 22 November 1927 and System 1 No 3 TM1/31 - 1/33, cutting, report sent to the *Die Volkstem* for publication. It deals with a donation by B. Boshoff, who gave a photograph and a small collection of old coins to the Transvaal Museum. Also a newspaper cutting about a donation of a cannon that belonged to the Voortrekker leader Andries Hendrik Potgieter.



In exceptional cases an in-house catalogue was produced. Two of these were found. On 8 April 1924 Rossouw produced (and signed as historiographer) a list of the Botha Collection. These were arranged in chronological order, divided into four periods corresponding with the public life of Botha in South Africa and abroad. No fewer than 422 items are listed. The list is accompanied by a typed pamphlet dealing with the four periods and the objects pertaining to each period.<sup>177</sup> The corresponding H.C. numbers were added later to the list. Another list was located in the correspondence files.<sup>178</sup>

A list of the objects received from the Zuid-Afrikaansch Museum was also compiled by Rossouw. It consisted of two sections, namely the objects associated with Cronjé and those linked to Kruger.<sup>179</sup> This list was probably based on three separate detailed lists. One of these, describing the 16 chests, is the original inventory compiled by Leyds. The other two are copies of lists that were also compiled by Leyds.<sup>180</sup> These lists and the correspondence were received together with the consignments at the Transvaal Museum and were retained by the Museum. De Beer, who did in depth research on the Zuid-Afrikaansch Museum, however, contends that no written particulars accompanied the collection.<sup>181</sup>

Lists of photographs and other objects were also produced by Schiel.<sup>182</sup> These lists, says Coetzee, did help to locate objects because the Historiography Catalogue was in a chaotic state and there were no catalogue cards.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., Box 515, list, Botha Collection, dd 8 April 1924 and “Die ‘Generaal Louis Botha versameling’ (unpublished pamphlet).

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., System 1 No 2 TM1/27 - TM1/30, list with 168 Botha objects.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., Box 515, list of objects received from “Het Zuid-Afrikaansch Museum” te Dordrecht, Holland.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., see TM Files 5/11A, for details of the three consignments.

<sup>181</sup> P.J. de Beer, “Die ‘Zuid-Afrikaansch Museum’ te Dordrecht 1902 - 1921” (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1967), p. 144.

<sup>182</sup> NCHMA, file no. 26, list no.1, Documents connected with Z.A.R. Deputation 1883-4 and Miscellaneous photographs.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., System 1 No 17 TM2/61 Jul - Dec., draft report, Ou Museum Historiese Afdeling.

### Card catalogues

In 1913 the Museum Committee resolved that a card as well as a book catalogue should exist in all divisions.<sup>184</sup> According to a note in the Main Catalogue of the Department of Ethnology Africa a card catalogue existed in 1914 for the ethnology objects, from no. 1 to 1415.<sup>185</sup> Blank cards with the heading TRANSVAAL MUSEUM Division of Ethnography, were printed and had to be filled in by hand.<sup>186</sup> The following information was required:

No.	How received
Specimen	Remarks
Nation or Tribe	Entered by
Description	Date

The ethnography card catalogue was maintained by Swierstra (figure 42), but unfortunately he did not date any of the existing cards. Radcliffe-Brown also worked on the card catalogue, probably during April 1921, as some of the cards are dated. He had access to the various ethnography catalogues and made cross references to them on the cards. In the top right hand corner of some of the cards he filled in a code (the meaning of which is not clear) such as E.S., SS, D.16.d and E.C. 18 (figure 43).

In 1921 an amount of £15 was authorized for the typing of cards for the ethnology collection.<sup>187</sup> The typing of the cards started in Radcliffe-Brown's time because he also coded some of the cards in the same way (figure 43). The hand-written card catalogue was continued by Rossouw (figure 44). On all the extant cards the accession number of the object was recorded without a prefix or code. As the complete card catalogue no longer exists (2005), it is impossible to say whether the typed catalogue was also continued and for how long the cards were compiled in this manner.

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<sup>184</sup> Transvaal Museum Committee minutes, meeting 15 July 1913.

<sup>185</sup> Main catalogue of the Ethnology Department Africa, vol. 1, p. 157, ET. accession no. 1415.

<sup>186</sup> Examples of cards provided by J. A. van Schalkwyk, National Cultural History Museum, 12 November 2004.

<sup>187</sup> Transvaal Museum Committee minutes, meeting, 15 June 1921.

**TRANSVAAL MUSEUM.**  
Division of Ethnography.

No. 922  
 Specimen Axe (Nsembi)  
 Nation or Tribe Luemba country, N. Rhodesia  
 Description Handle (Mupinyi) of Mpasa wood; ordinary iron working axe. Note the ornamentation on the handle (Wekhalaya) made wrapping the handle in strips of wet bark and then charring.  
 How received Purchased from Rev. Robertson, Kwinana, N. Rhodesia  
 Remarks see letter 24<sup>th</sup> May 1911, n<sup>o</sup> 3, 4

Ent. by Corn. J. B.  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

4355-27/6/12-3000.

**TRANSVAAL MUSEUM.**  
Division of Ethnography.

No. 946  
 Specimen Barkcloth  
 Nation or Tribe Chenda umbulu, Bemba country  
 Description small piece, unjointed and unsewn

How received Purchased by Rev. Robertson, at Chenda umbulu just north of the Zambezi in Bemba country.  
 Remarks see letter 31 Oct. 1909 n<sup>o</sup> 5

Ent. by Corn. J. B.  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

4355-27/6/12-3000.

Figure 42

Ethnology index cards, written by C.J. Swierstra

E.C. 18

**TRANSVAAL MUSEUM.**  
Division of Ethnography.

No. 4304

Specimen Model of Native House

Nation or Tribe Borneo

Description

How received Pres. by Dr. G. A. F. Molengraaf

Remarks EE 73.

Ent. by  
Date

8403—6/12/12—3000.

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E.C. 18

**TRANSVAAL MUSEUM.**  
Division of Ethnography.

No. 4304

Specimen Model of native house

Nation or Tribe Borneo

Description

How received Pres. by Dr. G. A. F. Molengraaf

Remarks EE73.

Ent. by  
Date

**Figure 43**

Ethnology cards, written by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, and retyped

**TRANSVAAL MUSEUM.**  
Division of Ethnography.

No. 5050

Specimen Ink pot

Nation or Tribe

Description Made of Soapstone by natives from  
Kamengaland

How received Bt. from Mr. O. Elk an

Remarks Not valuable  
Asian

Ent. by G.H.R.  
Date

3884—8/6/21—5000.

**Figure 44**

Ethnology card, handwritten by G.S.H. Rossouw

A major breakthrough was made in the early 1940s when the Transvaal Museum decided to follow the method of anthropological cataloguing compiled by Shaw of the South African Museum, Cape Town. According to Shaw the procedure of cataloguing by entering ethnographic material in a register, “fails to be of much assistance for the scientific study of the material listed in it ... One can not rearrange it temporarily according to a different scheme”.<sup>188</sup> The Shaw system claimed that the most satisfactory method of cataloguing was a card catalogue in which each object has its own card. The card has several benefits, for example, they can be arranged to particular requirements and additional information can be added from time to time (annexure 7).

After a visit by to the Transvaal Museum by Shaw and H. Oliver of the Africana Museum in Johannesburg to the Museum it was decided to recatalogue the complete ethnology collection, and index cards had to be printed for this purpose.<sup>189</sup> The aim of the system was to involve every museum in the country and to build up a national system of recording ethnological data.<sup>190</sup> The system consisted of index cards on which the information on an object, including a detailed description, a sketch, and a bibliography, was recorded<sup>191</sup> (Figure 45). The printing of the cards was transacted by Shaw, who sent a batch of two thousand cards to the Transvaal Museum, together with an account of £2/9/0. She also sent the cataloguing instructions with a covering letter. She had high hopes that other museums would follow the good example set by the Transvaal Museum and the South African Museum in Cape Town.<sup>192</sup>

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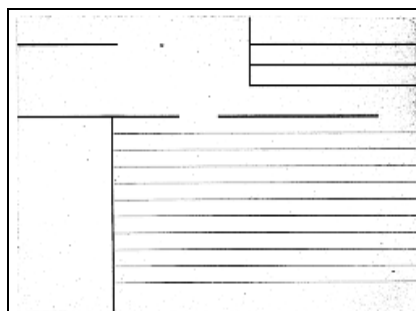
<sup>188</sup> E.M. Shaw, A system of cataloguing ethnographic material, *SAMAB*, 2(5), September 1940, p. 118.

<sup>189</sup> Transvaal Museum, Annual Report, 1940 - 1941, departmental report for archaeology, p. 3. For printed index card, see figure 42.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 1944 - 1945. p. 1.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> NCHMA, Box 137, TM18/35(a), letter, Shaw to director, dd 28 July 1942.



Registered Number.	Tribe : Group
	Locality
	District : Province.
Quantity & name of Object.	Native name.
Photograph or Sketch with measurements.	a) Materials, appearance, etc.
	b) Information obtained with it.
	Corresp. How and from whom obtained.
	Where in mus eum. Date.

Figure 45

Catalogue card, blank (top) and with information (below) proposed by E.M. Shaw

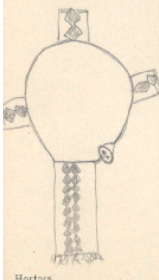
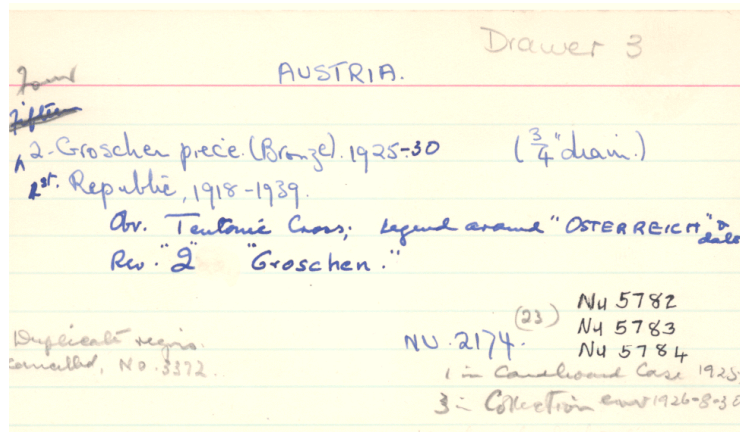
ET. FM. 8392.	TEMBU. (a) I. II. (a)
	BAZIYA MISSION. (a)
	UMTATA. C.P. (a)
NECKLET?	ISIGUNA SIFUBA. (a)
	Oblong beadedwork (4 1/2" x 2") of white, dark-blue and red, with a short bead fringe of white, black, dark-blue and red, attached to a single light-blue string. Attached to this string are 3 small squares of white, light-blue + dark-blue. A button fastens it.
	"The ornament is called UMUTI."
	Collected by Rev. W. Blohm, Baziya.
	Purchased from him ser. vi. 41.

Figure 46

Ethnology card, handwritten and illustrated by E.J. Haugton, according to the Shaw system

At the Transvaal Museum the job was undertaken by Haughton, who had to complete the cards by hand, including a sketch of the object (figure 46) as photographic films was difficult to come by during the war.<sup>193</sup> She was very enthusiastic about her task and set about re-cataloguing the whole anthropological collection.<sup>194</sup> The project started at the beginning of 1944,<sup>195</sup> but by 1947 the card index was still incomplete.<sup>196</sup> Haughton encountered some practical problems with Shaw's glossary, and was in communication with her.<sup>197</sup> There was no move to compile a card index for the archaeological collection.<sup>198</sup> In 1939 a numismatics card index (figure 47) had, however, been compiled by Haughton, and when the De Villiers Roos donation was received, that collection was also card-indexed.<sup>199</sup>



**Figure 47**

Numismatics index card, written by E.J. Haughton and B.J. Versfeld,  
with additions and alterations

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., letter Haughton to director, Albany Museum, dd 25 October 1944.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., letter Haughton to J. Hewitt, dd 22 December 1943.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., letter Haughton to J. Hewitt, dd 19 September 1944.

<sup>196</sup> Transvaal Museum Annual report, 1946 - 1947, p. 1.

<sup>197</sup> NCHMA, Box 137, TM18/35(a), letters Haughton to Shaw, dd 13 February 1945 and 19 January 1946.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., File ET1/60 Etnologiese Afdeling, Konsepverslag: Toestand in Museum, p. 4, n.d.

<sup>199</sup> Transvaal Museum Annual Reports, 1939 - 1940 and 1940 - 1941, departmental report for archaeology, ethnology, numismatics and philately, pp. 2 and 4.

## **Indexes**

The first attempt at indexing the historical collections was made in 1947 by Schiel at the request of the director.<sup>200</sup> Schiel provided a rough estimate for the index, in which he explained his proposed method.<sup>201</sup> Schiel envisaged his task as working out different index “files” in alphabetical order for the various divisions, to be bound after completion of his task. The files had to have enough space for alterations and additions. The rooms, show and other cases where objects, which he called specimens, were placed, had to be numbered. The most difficult part of his task, in view of the former mistakes in labelling, was the classification (called “assorting” by Schiel). The packing and labelling of the objects according to the index, and the comparison of all objects with the catalogues could then be completed. As far as can be ascertained Schiel produced four indexes, using bound numbered books.

### Information book

The index, called an information book by Schiel, was compiled for exhibited works of art, and stored documents, photographs, scrolls, books, Bibles and a few three dimensional objects, as well as the Botha Collection in storage and on display. A separate alphabetical index of the art exhibits was written on nine loose pages. Schiel made an effort to obtain additional information, even writing to the Archives and consulting the old catalogue of the Staatsmuseum.<sup>202</sup> The information book also has numerous notes and remarks made by Schiel and gives his personal opinion on certain objects and their history.

### Indexes

Schiel compiled three indexes in addition to the information book, covering the medieval, Huguenot, Voortrekker and later periods<sup>203</sup> and also a historical index for documents, books and Bibles.

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<sup>200</sup> NCHMA, Diary, FitzSimons, 1947, letter Schiel to FitzSimons, dd. 29 August 1947.

<sup>201</sup> See annexure 5, Rough estimate for Index.

<sup>202</sup> Copy of a letter Schiel wrote to the Chief Archivist and his reply. Information Book, p.79, “Inligting uit ou Kataloog van 1897” [Information from old catalogue of 1897].

<sup>203</sup> Pages were cut out from this index in the late 1970's and the book was used for addresses.



### Index Kruger objects

The Kruger index is apparently an old discarded catalogue, as the first 17 pages have been cut out. It is an alphabetical index of the Kruger Collection. The information is divided into two columns, listing the items in alphabetical order and giving the Kr. accession numbers. The parcel numbers are only given for one page. This index was apparently put together after the compilation of the Kruger Catalogue.

### Index (unknown)

Another index provides a list numbered from 1 to 3161 with names, but no indication at all about the collection these numbers and names refer to. Not all the numbers were used, and some entries are annotated with a B or D, a number and a tick.

### **Labels**

At the Transvaal Museum labels were regarded as one of the most important ways of documenting, irrespective of whether the objects were in storage or on display. It was the one way to ensure that information survived, because many objects were not catalogued and marked immediately. In the catalogues there are a few references to the labels attached to the objects, giving information about the donor, entry number or other details.<sup>204</sup> In the current collection (2005) of the National Cultural History Museum there are still examples of objects that have old labels (Figure 35).

Little information exists on the actual process of labelling, but it is known that a collection of uniforms from the Staatsartillerie of the ZAR were sorted and labelled during research. Whether these labels gave the accession numbers and additional information, is unknown.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> For example, *Historiography Catalogue*, vol. 2, H.C. accession no.5375 (3), chair, with following information: “Byskrif op ‘n etiket lui: Derector Museum, Ik zal zelf kom om u verder en formasie te geef zoover ik weet A van der Westhuizen”; H.C. accession no. 5378, chair, with following information: “‘n Etiket daarby meld dat die stoel oorspronklik van die Kaapse Tuine afkom, dd. vanaf die Groot Trek. Het aan skenker se oorgrootmoeder Johanna Oosthuizen behoort, toe weer aan grootmoeder van Zyl. Dit was gedurende die Driejarige Oorlog gesteel deur die kaffers maar is weer gevind”. [Caption on label: Director Museum, I will come myself and give your further information that I have, A van der Westhuizen]; [On the label it says that the chair originally came from the Cape Gardens at the time of the Great Trek. It belonged to the great grandmother of the donor, Johanna Oosthuizen, and then to her grandmother Van Zyl. During the Anglo-Boer War it was stolen by Africans, but subsequently found again.” (Translated from the Afrikaans.)]

<sup>205</sup> Transvaal Museum Annual Report, 1945 - 1946, departmental report for ethnology, numismatics and archaeology, p. 4.

A label was one way to ensure that the donor of the object could be identified, because it would link the object to the donor for posterity, either in storage or on display.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore the public were able to see the details when the object was on display. Donors were promised that objects would be displayed with a proper label giving their name. It was regarded a strong motivation for encouraging donations (figure 48).<sup>207</sup> This premise was endorsed by the Museum Committee when it decided that a display case with a donation of Ovambo and Bushman implements had to give the name of the donor on a brass plate.<sup>208</sup> The label was also used for additional information about the object on display<sup>209</sup> and details were updated and corrected from time to time.<sup>210</sup> In theory this meant that a label was attached to the object with collections management information, such as the name of the donor, date of donation and acquisition or accession number, possibly in lieu of marking the object itself with the accession number – a practice that was destined to lead to loss of information.

## 6. EXIT STAGE

Roberts describes the exit stage as the stage where material leaves the museum on a temporary or permanent basis.<sup>211</sup> It also includes exchanges and the loss or disposal of objects.

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<sup>206</sup> NCHMA, System 1 No 1 TM1/12 - TM1/26, letter Swierstra to F.J. de Lange, dd 14 February 1923. He writes that the objects will be displayed in a glass case “... met een kaartje daaraan waarop uw naam daarop als schenkster. Daardoor word dan ook voor de nageslag uw naam ook behou en staan daar voor altijd”. [... with a card bearing your name as donor on it. In this way your name will be preserved for posterity and will remain there always. (Translated from the Dutch.)].

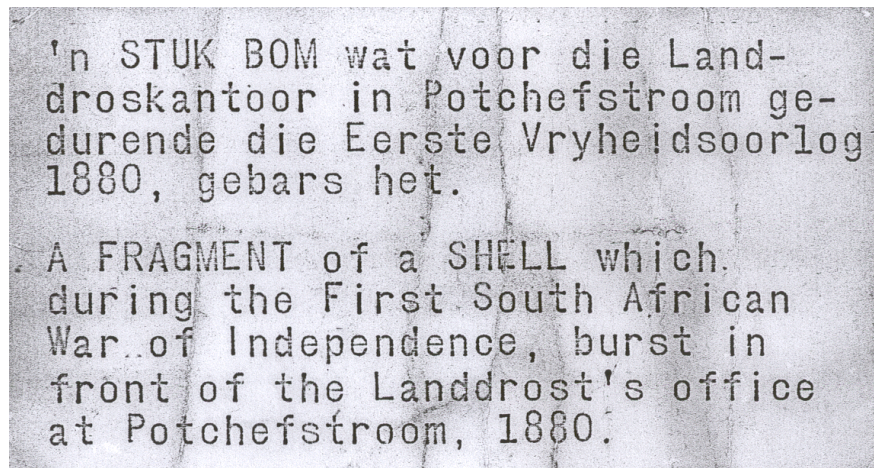
<sup>207</sup> Ibid., letter Swierstra to Sir Harry Ross Skinner, dd 7 December 1922, with the assurance that the keys would be exhibited with a proper label attached.

<sup>208</sup> Transvaal Museum Committee meeting, minutes 14 October 1919.

<sup>209</sup> NCHMA, System 1 No 1 TM1/12 - TM1/26, letter Swierstra to C.E. Dennison, dd 13 October 1922. Swierstra says that “the particulars supplied ... have been of great assistance to me in drafting the exhibition label and also for future records with regard to the History of our country”.

<sup>210</sup> After a visit by Mary Cook, the labels of the old furniture that was on show were corrected. H.H. Curson sorted and labelled the uniforms. Transvaal Museum Annual Report, 1945 - 1946, departmental report archaeology, p. 3:1.

<sup>211</sup> D.A. Roberts, *Planning the documentation of museum collections*, pp. 85, 108 and 167.



**Figure 48**

Display labels, with (top) and without (below) the name of the donor

## Loans-out

Requests for the loan of a variety of objects were received by the Museum. Although each request was handled according to its merits, general guidelines for a loan policy can be gleaned from some decisions.

### Loans-out policy

- Value

Valuable objects could not be loaned out.<sup>212</sup>

- Historical association

Objects linked to significant historical events and important individuals such as the regalia of Kruger, were never sent out on loan.<sup>213</sup>

- Risk of damage

Objects that were in danger of being damaged were not loaned out.<sup>214</sup>

- Unique or irreplaceable objects

A formal decision was adopted that no unique specimen or irreplaceable item would be loaned out by the Transvaal Museum, but duplicates or replaceable items could be loaned at the discretion of the director.<sup>215</sup>

- Money

The Museum asked an adequate deposit to cover damages<sup>216</sup> and later did, in at least one case, receive an amount of money for damages caused to objects.

- Aim or use of objects

The way in which the objects were to be used while on loan was of importance. For example, requests from the government for the loan of objects for official exhibitions were

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<sup>212</sup> Transvaal Museum Committee minutes, meeting 3 October 1916: Valuable guns could not be loaned to the Paardekraal Festival Committee,

<sup>213</sup> NCHMA, System 1 No 2 TM1/27 - TM1/30, letter Swierstra to the magistrate, Lydenburg, dd 11 March 1929; System 1 No 4 TM1/34 - TM1/42, letter Swierstra to M.H. Hough, dd 20 November 1934.

<sup>214</sup> The loan of the Kruger state coach to the Cape Town Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Committee was refused on grounds of damage risk. Transvaal Museum Board of Trustees minutes, meeting 27 September 1951.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Transvaal Museum Committee minutes, meeting 3 October 1916.

usually granted.<sup>217</sup>

### **De-accessioning/exchanges**

No attempts were made by the Transvaal Museum to dispose of objects. For example, an offer by the Johannesburg Art Gallery to buy part of the Chinese porcelain collection was turned down by the Board.<sup>218</sup> Exchanges were not, however, unknown. Beukes, for example, obtained a Le-nyina decoration (accession no. 37/196) in exchange for a marala.

### The Transvaal Museum and the Archives<sup>219</sup>

At the outset all books, documents and manuscripts of historical interest (and even books on crafts) were accepted for the collection,<sup>220</sup> but in 1916 some old newspapers were handed over to the Archives. This was in line with a decision taken in 1913.<sup>221</sup> Documents in the history collection were also handed over to the Archives from the 1940s onwards. One of the first and most important of these were the diary and pocket book of the Voortrekker leader Louis Trichardt (Tregardt)<sup>222</sup> that were handed over to the Archives on “perpetual loan” rather than being presented (donated), but the Chief Archivist did undertake to supply the Museum with two photocopies of the documents within a reasonable period.<sup>223</sup>

A request from the Chief Archivist, asking for the transfer of historical documents at the Old Museum to the Archives, was discussed by the Board. They agreed in principle to the transfer of the documents, in particular the items on the 1884 Boer Deputation to Europe, but a sub-committee was also appointed to draw up a list of the remainder of the items for

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<sup>217</sup> Objects were exhibited at the British Empire Exhibition and the Southern Rhodesia Centenary Exhibition. Transvaal Museum Committee meeting, minutes 20 February 1923 and 9 February 1926; Transvaal Museum Board of Trustees meeting, minutes 6 February 1953.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 6 April 1951.

<sup>219</sup> The term “archives” refers to the government (state) archives, today known as the National Archives of South Africa (NASA).

<sup>220</sup> For example, a donation included Anglo-Boer War envelopes, post cards, programmes and magazines. NCHMA, System 1 No 3, TM/1/31 - TM1/33, letter Swierstra to C.J. Liebenberg, dd 14 March 1933. A crochet pattern book was also accepted, because Swierstra was of the opinion that, although the craft would not change, over the years the pattern would change considerably. Ibid., letter Swierstra to Olderman, dd 24 August 1931.

<sup>221</sup> Transvaal Museum Committee minutes, meetings 15 July 1913 and 7 November 1916.

<sup>222</sup> Transvaal Museum Board of Trustees meeting, minutes 17 July 1941.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 20 November 1941.

approval by the Board.<sup>224</sup>

As far as historical photographs were concerned, in 1949 the Board was willing to hand over the collection to the Archives on condition that they compiled a detailed catalogue for the Museum and also supplied the Museum with free copies of all photographs for use in exhibitions in the Museum. The Archives agreed to these conditions.<sup>225</sup> In 1952 another 4 219 photographs were handed over to the Archives, on the same condition.<sup>226</sup> In 1951 another request was received from the Archives for the remainder of the documentary material in the Old Museum and again a sub-committee was appointed to discuss the issue. The Museum Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation of the sub-committee

- that the handing over of historical documentary material to the Archives be postponed until after the exhibition to be held from 7 March to 7 April 1952 (the Van Riebeeck Festival exhibition),
- that the sorting out of this material be undertaken by the Museum staff and
- that all documents to be submitted to Prof. Pelzer of the University of Pretoria for scrutiny before being finally handed over.<sup>227</sup>

In 1952 the Board reviewed another recommendation of the sub-committee and decided the following:

- that no “Kruger” documents be handed over to the Archives, but that they will form part of the Kruger Collection
- that the ± 3 000 photographs at the Old Museum be retained and properly cared for
- that the old maps be retained and stored in the strongroom of the New Museum
- that an attempt be made to retrieve the 5 000 photographs already handed over to the Archives and that, wherever possible, the individuals on the

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 18 June 1948.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 3 December 1948 and 4 February 1949.

<sup>226</sup> Transvaal Museum Annual Report 1951 -1952, departmental report for division of history, p. 32.

<sup>227</sup> Transvaal Museum Board of Trustees minutes, meetings 7 Sept 1951 and 9 November 1951.

photographs be identified while some of the old people were still alive.<sup>228</sup>

The sub-committee also recommended that selected books, with a few exceptions, be sent to the Merensky Library, University of Pretoria.<sup>229</sup>

With regard to the photographs, it was reported to the Board that the Archives were now making copies of all photographs that had been handed over to them by the Museum and that they would return these to the Museum. The Archives are anxious to have the remainder of the Museum's photo's for copying.<sup>230</sup> Those historical documents listed by Pelzer would be handed over as soon as Malan was back on duty to supervise the necessary sorting process.<sup>231</sup> These decisions were taken by the highest authority, namely the Museum Board, and on the recommendation of a sub-committee, whose members were eminently suited to deal with the matter. The reasons why documents and photographs should rather be housed in the Archives than in the Museum were that these "should be classed as research material proper and that the archives is the right place to house this type of material ... material that by its very nature belongs at the archives and also have no exhibition value".<sup>232</sup>

The deaccessioning was done by annotating the relevant catalogues (Historiography Catalogues, vols. 1 and 2). This was usually Schiel's responsibility because he dealt with the document collection at the time. He used the words "Na Argiewe" [To the Archives] and the date with red pencil to indicate the transfer. In Schiel's Information Book items were also annotated with the remark "All specimens marked with a red cross have been sent to the Gov. Archives".<sup>233</sup> Lists of the documents and photographs handed over to the Archives

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 13 June 1952.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 8 August 1952, but no list of these books has been found up to date (2005).

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. Whether the photographs were in fact returned to the Museum, cannot at this stage (2005) be ascertained.

<sup>231</sup> Transvaal Museum Board of Trustees minutes, meeting 12 December 1952.

<sup>232</sup> NCHMA, System 1 No 5 TM43/51, letter W.J. de Kock to the director, dd 24 November 1948.

<sup>233</sup> Information Book, p. 86.

were typed by the Museum,<sup>234</sup> but the Archives also compiled inventories of the documents.<sup>235</sup>

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The next period of Museum activity (1953 to 1964) was characterized by a great change in collections management practices, in particular with regard to documentation. Whereas in the past there had been haphazard documenting of the anthropological, archaeological and historical collections, depending on available time and staff, in the next period a pattern was be set for cataloguing and the compilation of card catalogues for the cultural history objects. This improved information retrieval for these objects and facilitated enquiries and research by the staff and the public.

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<sup>234</sup> NCHMA, file 20, various typed lists.

<sup>235</sup> NA, W. 21, Inventaris van Transvaalse Museum-stukke; NCHMA, file 20, letter senior archivist to the professional officer, dd 24 September 1958, and annexure Aanwins Nr. 551.