Vesterheim collection started in 1877 at Luther College
Artifacts number 24,000
Known especially for folk art, such as painted trunks, textiles and woodcarvings
Small Object Storage, visible to general visitors

Need more space!
Need more space!

Basement storage in “The Vault”
Many storage areas are overcrowded to the point that artifacts are inaccessible, which can lead to unnecessary damage when having to move several collection items in order to reach desired objects.”

Basement storage, known as “The Trunk Room”
Planning Timeline

2003
Evaluate space needs

2004
MACC general preservation assessment
Develop plan, seek funding
Submit NEH application
Building acquisition funds donated

2005
NEH funding granted
Vision Iowa funding granted
Renovate building
Hire project staff
Vesterheim downtown campus

Site Plan as of 2006
Developing the plan
Developing the plan

- How many shelves?
- What will they cost?
- What other materials and supplies?
- How much time will it take?
- Who will do the work?
- What other help do we need?
Estimated 10,000 objects to move.
Two people can retrieve, pack, and move 40 small objects in one day.

40 objects x 20 working days/month = 800
800 objects x 12 months = about 10,000
BUT:
Allow for set-up, photography, large objects (like trunks), condition reports, data entry, bad weather.
Add the help of interns, volunteers, student workers.

And therefore allow for training, supervision, paperwork, administrative duties.
THEREFORE:
It takes two years to retrieve, pack, process, photograph, and re-house 10,000 objects. Need two full-time staff, with assorted part-time assistance, for two years.

Need to average almost 500 objects/month.
Extra help
How do you make a compelling case for funding a lot of pricy shelves?

- Objects will be MORE accessible, not less
- More space in Museum’s main building will be dedicated to changing exhibitions
- Digital photographs can be used in many web-based applications
Public Relations are important:

- Invite people in – open house (with food before artifacts move in!), tours for local groups, tours for general visitors
- Website – regular updates on progress
- Signs in the museum itself
- Newsletters
- Other print media
Outcomes

- Collection move completed in Spring 2008
- Final total of 9,000 artifacts moved
- New gallery in former storage space
- Well-trained core of students and volunteers for future collections projects
- Staff more aware of collections needs, scope of collections, and proper procedures