

ARTS and FEATURES

North Carolina Collection Gallery houses 400 years of state history

By GLENN O'NEAL

Assistant State and National Editor

Equipped only with a porcupine skin and an ostrich egg, UNC professor Charles Harris set out to establish a University museum in the late 1790s.

That ambitious goal resulted in the North Carolina Collection Gallery located in Wilson Library today, a collection that has captured 400 years of North Carolina history in an area about the size of an average classroom.

The gallery houses artifacts relevant to N.C. history, ranging from the first attempts of colonization on the Outer Banks to a collection of Audubon prints.

The museum, a part of the N.C. Collection, opened last November to the general public, according to Neil Fulghum, keeper of the gallery. The gallery is the brainchild of the curator of the N.C. Collection, H.G. Jones.

"The gallery is simply an out-product of what started in 1844 (the beginning of the N.C. Collection)," Jones said. "Over the years, we accumulated quite a number of artifacts, pictures of artwork, materials that are not normally considered library materials."

The collection, which first displayed some of the artifacts in its reading room, did not have enough room to adequately exhibit the artifacts. But Wilson Library's 1983 renovations gave more space to display the artifacts, he said.

Fulghum said the collection's mission was different than the mission of traditional museums. Here, literature is stressed first, then the artifacts, he said.

The exhibits in the gallery are assembled as if a time traveler went through North Carolina's past, collected representative samples and placed them in the present time in their exact form.

"This looks like somebody just got up from the desk," said Mary Orr, a sophomore art history major from Greensboro. A pencil, a piece of scribbled-on paper and an open law

book are placed on a table in one of the Early Carolina Rooms, ready for the scholar of mid-1700 North Carolina to sit back down and read.

A visitor can step back 300 years in time by entering the Sir Walter Raleigh Rooms near the front of the gallery. A gold plate on the threshold announces the transition. The walls are elaborately paneled in the style of the Elizabethan period of England. The room smells old, not musty, but much like the smell of an old church. A dam draft completes the image of being in England in the 1500s.

Furniture of the period is placed around the room, but a lifelike wood statue of Raleigh grabs the visitor's eye. Period maps illustrating the countryside of England and the New World adorn the walls.

More detailed maps of the period are located directly outside the Raleigh rooms, along with a display of navigational and mapping techniques of the time.

"I think when people look at some of these early maps," Fulghum said, "they are struck first by 'Well, isn't it crude?' or 'You know that isn't shaped right?' or whatever, but when you look at what they had to work with ... it is amazing they could find their way from England to here."

"That in itself was a major accomplishment," he said.

The most popular attraction of the gallery, according to Fulghum, is the exhibit on Eng and Chang—the original Siamese twins. The glass display case shows small objects owned by the twins, as well as a journal of their worldwide visits.

The twins, born in Siam in 1811, traveled worldwide and became celebrities, Fulghum said. The world-famous brothers decided to retire in Surry County in the 1830s.

"North Carolina was so far off the

beaten path; that appealed to them," Fulghum said. "(It was) an area where they could establish life as normal as possible and get away literally from center stage."

The brothers settled down and married two sisters, Sarah and Adelaide, and the two families had 22 children between them.

The time traveler who assembled this impressive collection also paid attention to the history of the University. Displayed is a friendship and peace pipe, smoked by the seniors during their last class meeting at UNC in the school's early days. In addition, there are pictures of early University leaders and other small objects.

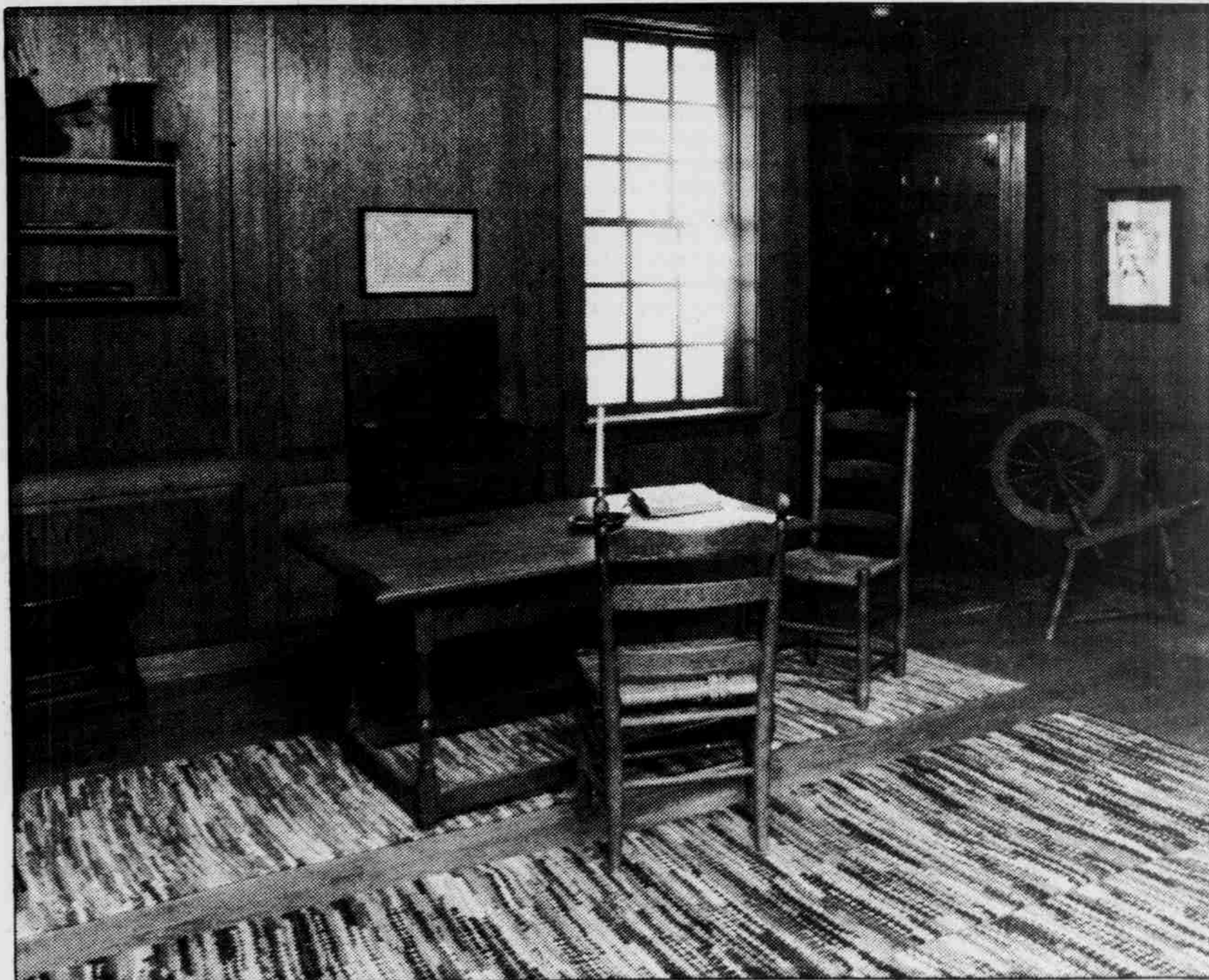
The original corner plate of Old East dormitory is also displayed, though it was stolen in the 1870s, Fulghum said. The plate was discovered 46 years later by a UNC alumnus at a foundry in Tennessee, where the plate was close to being melted down.

Fulghum added that the majority of the artifacts collected by the gallery were not actively obtained by the University, but rather donated by friends and alumni of the school. Such was the case in a bust of Gov. Zebulon Vance located near the entrance of the gallery.

The bust, a gift to the University from the class of 1899, disappeared in the 1940s and '50s only to be found in March 1988, he said. An alumnus in Greensboro found the somewhat damaged bust on his front doorstep.

The bust has since been renovated, and according to Fulghum, "Now he is as good as old."

Fulghum explained that the purpose of the gallery is to educate people on N.C. and UNC history and on what the N.C. Collection has to offer. The gallery also preserves the artifacts associated with the collection.



One of the Early Carolina Rooms at the N.C. Collection Gallery in Wilson Library

Courtesy of North Carolina Collection

"I look at it as a means to advertise and promote the holdings of UNC," Fulghum said.

The gallery is open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday through Friday and by appointment. The gallery does not have

the resources to be open on weekends, but the addition of volunteer workers may help to establish weekend hours in the near future.

Fulghum welcomes both the general public and students to visit the gallery,

stressing that Wilson is not just a "graduate library."

"Many students don't get past the lobby and realize the many riches of North Carolina," he said. "It's something the student body ought to be aware of."

'Trial of God' explores atrocities of genocide

The Lab Theatre's latest production, "The Trial of God," is a horrifying and disturbing glimpse into the atrocities of genocide and religious persecution.

Through his experiences as a Holocaust survivor, writer Elie Wiesel vividly describes Shamgorod, a village which only a year earlier was pillaged and destroyed on Purim Eve.

Greg Miller plays Berish, an innkeeper who witnessed the murder of his entire Jewish community, including his wife and two sons. Through his brilliant portrayal of a full range of emotion, including compassion as well as anger and resentment, Miller gives dimension to this tormented man.

Wendi Black is Hanna, Berish's surviving daughter, who also has been scarred by the pogrom. Black convincingly depicts a girl of childlike naivete, pushed to the brink of insanity by the brutality she has suffered.

Also notable is Katie Sherman, as Maria, a barmaid at the inn. Initially, Maria appears to be a simple peasant woman who has become hardened

Kitt Bockley
Theater

and cynical due to the injustices she has encountered. As her character unfolds, however, Sherman is able to effectively reveal Maria's complex sensitivity and her sympathy for Hanna and Berish.

In the play, three minstrels played by Jeff Trussell, Tim Cole and Joe Farmer, enter the inn, hoping to celebrate Purim. Instead of their usual holiday play, Berish insists they improvise a mock trial that indicts God.

Allen Simpson, as Sam, appears at the inn and offers to act the part of God's defense attorney. He seems to have all the answers and articulates his arguments with an extraordinary amount of confidence. Simpson skillfully plays this suave and mysterious character who exhibits absolute faith in God.

Christopher Qualls plays a Catholic priest who informs them of the threat of yet another pogrom in Shamgorod that

night. Qualls comically portrays this licentious, lewd priest who has a sincere interest in protecting his friends.

In "The Trial of God," Wiesel provocatively explores man's relationship with God, asserting that questioning is not only compatible with faith, but necessary in order to conquer evil. He suggests that if people who had understood the moral ramifications of genocide would have fought against it, instead of counting on God's divine intervention, the horrors of Shamgorod and Hitler's Germany never would have been possible.

In selecting the complex "The Trial of God" as his first major production, director David Massachi undertakes a great challenge. His cast is talented enough to play their roles effectively, and his efforts do not prove without reward.

"The Trial of God" will be performed at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. today and at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The Lab Theatre is located in the bottom of Graham Memorial, and admission is free.

Despite crisis, NROTC keeps academic focus

By SCOTT MAXWELL

Staff Writer

While tension mounts halfway around the world in the Persian Gulf crisis, those involved with the UNC Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) have growing concerns of their own.

Colonel George Walls, commanding officer of the NROTC, was quick to point out that although the situation in the Middle East deserves their attention, "the ROTC students are students first, just as we are here to be educators."

Walls explained that the ROTC program was originally created to educate young men and women with military inclination at many different liberal arts universities.

NROTC students are in a program that combines their naval fields of interest with the university education, he said. They take the standard UNC curriculum with at least one naval science course and lab each semester.

Although the ROTC is primarily academically concerned, often the military actions of the United States are a hot topic around the building.

Walls said that often people seemed to think that the ROTC knew more

about what's happening in the Gulf than everyone else. But Walls, who currently has a 19-year-old son in the Middle East, said, "We get the same thing that you get from 'Time.'"

There are many different opinions going around the ROTC building about the crisis, as well as many suggested tactics. Guy Connell, executive officer of the NROTC, said, "However, the tactics you hear about are only good for a short while."

Walls agreed. "There are as many ways to attack Iraq as there are to skin a cat," he said.

Lieutenant John Steckel went to the lower level of the ROTC building to find some first class midshipmen. Downstairs, there were a variety of physically fit young men and women preparing to exercise and joking with each other.

Steckel requested that some of them give comments on the Gulf Crisis, and almost all adjourned to the midshipmen's lounge in the rear.

"We should definitely go over there," said senior Brock Harrill. "Hussein will get nuclear weapons, and if we don't stop him now, there'll be no limit to what he can do."

Most of the group seemed to agree with him.

Senior Bill Olmstead said, "We've got to set precedents. We have to go in deep enough to remove Hussein either

with a bullet in the head or however."

The group laughed, but most nodded their heads in agreement.

When asked if they thought they would be over there fighting the war, Olmstead said, "It'll be over before any of us get into it."

However, many of last year's NROTC are already in the Gulf, and all of the members of the NROTC class from two years ago, except one (that they could recall), have been deployed.

Senior Rob Bracknell said he was tired of people asking when he was heading over to Saudi Arabia. He explained that until the NROTC class graduated, they were not on active duty and had no greater chance of going than anyone else.

"When people ask me this," Bracknell continued, "I usually just tell them, 'You'll be over there before I will.'"

The group all laughed.

Back in the administrative offices, Colonel Walls explained that they were just going to keep on track with their ROTC duties.

Although there are 13 people in the NROTC department at UNC who are now on active duty, Walls said, "The situation is 9,000 miles away, and there are people there planning the situation. We're on campus educating midshipmen."

"Right now," Walls said, "it's business as usual."

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