

Trail of Stuff

For this assignment, I looked around at the things that I have that tell me where I was and how they now serve the purpose of ensuring I that I continue to look forward

We eliminated 36 years of accumulated non-essentials at our retirement garage sale. When that day was over, we looked around and found that we didn't miss anything.

So now we were off to our new cottage on stilts on the beach in North Carolina with a chance to start another collection. It took us ten years; we were very selective gatherers. Our next stop was Lady lake, Florida this time in a larger home and a place for more stuff.

We were experienced at both collecting non-essentials and getting rid of them. This time it was the easiest of all. We invited an estate sale expert to value and buy everything we would not need for our final move to our new life care community. Great work, or so we thought.

Our new facility provides secure storage space, so we were off and running again, only this time we were not gathering but saving the remaining non-essentials.

We have been here five years, and we only go to the storage room when the seasons change so we can find the appropriate wreath.

There are essentials still in closets. Two cartons of 25-foot movie reels and 35 Millimeter slides and projectors. Someday I am going to catalog the collection! Thirty-four photograph albums, the predecessor to digital photos now stored on my computer. Two cardboard barrels of Wedgewood China that we will never see again and that our daughters don't want. There is a need for that sense of security for my wife hoping someone in the family will want it. I don't mind; I have a small library of books from college and some relating to the work I did that

no one is interested in today. They are there because they are still as relevant today as they were then, and they provide an anchor to my past, so why not?

Do you want to know about the four jars of pens and pencils we have on our desks and counters? The four staplers, several as old as 70 years, one we bought last year. I have no explanation for that one.

I dare not open the file drawers and make those decisions of what to shred or save.

The pictures on our walls are vivid reminders of where we were when we acquired them. Prints from Maine, Cape Cod, North Carolina Duck Stamps. A print of a dock and skiffs on the Chesapeake signed by the artist for us, several from our stay in Bermuda and the best of all, several original oil paintings by a very talented member of my family. There are other incidentals too numerous to list but generally small decorative things like crystal, English bone china teacups, small carvings of birds, pewter coffee pitcher and mugs. All these are reminders of friends and family.

Most of these items will have little or no value to anyone after we are gone. Until then they are the anchor of who we were and who we are.

However, I am not anchored to where I came from; I look forward to tomorrow.

That is who I am!