

# #8 JONES LIBRARY - PRESERVATION ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION INVENTORY - HP -- \$129,000

## Community Preservation Act Committee- Proposal Request Form for FY 2018

Project Title: *Preservation Assessment and Collection Inventory*

CPA funding category: Check all that apply

<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open Space
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation

Amount of CPA Funds Requested: \$129,000

Submitting Entity: The Jones Library, Inc.

Contact Person: Cynthia Harbeson

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Please complete this form in its entirety and include the following in your proposal.

**Overview of Proposal:** Please describe your project and your feasibility analysis.

We are requesting money to fund a preservation assessment and collection survey of the archival collections in The Jones Library's Special Collections department. This project is an integral part of our work to preserve and make available the historical records of Amherst. The assessment will identify the preservation needs of the manuscript and archival materials in Special Collections. We will properly inventory each collection, assess its condition, identify preservation concerns and prioritize collections in need of further conservation or preservation treatment, and determine best methods for storage. This survey will also act as the first comprehensive inventory of the collections. The funds requested will be used to hire two consultants (a professional archivist and a paraprofessional assistant) who will complete the assessment and survey.

Our collections consist of over 1,500 linear feet of archival materials that are currently being stored within five separate rooms of the Library, only two of which have proper temperature and humidity controls. Unfortunately, no complete inventory of acquisitions was ever maintained. We have some partial inventories of the collections and catalog cards provide additional intellectual access to the collection, but there is no master database to provide proper management over the collections as a whole. The database created as part of this project will include basic descriptions, collection numbers, location, and other data such as collection provenance (donor names and dates of acquisition). Most importantly, each collection entry will include detailed information about the current condition of the collection as well as preservation concerns and will prioritize the needs of the collection against the collections as a whole. The intellectual and physical control over the collection established during this project will be an essential tool for years to come and will improve access to the collections for both staff and the community.

Work on this project began in the fall of 2015 as a pilot project, which was partially financed by previously awarded CPA funds. An archivist, Adrienne Zimmerley, was contracted to create the database and begin the implementation of a preservation survey and collection inventory. Our survey methodology was based on the standards established by the Northeast Document Conservation Center, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Columbia University Libraries.<sup>1</sup> Based on these methodologies, Ms. Zimmerley created an Access database for the survey. With assistance from library staff and volunteers, Ms. Zimmerley then spent 150 hours surveying the collection. We were able to inventory approximately 57 linear feet of the collection during this pilot project. During the survey, we found many collections that were stored improperly, which was causing damage to the materials. Of particular concern are the oversize items, glass plate negatives,

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the New England Document Conservation Center's guide written by Beth Patkus, "Assessing Preservation Needs: A Self-Survey Guide" (<https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/apnssg.pdf>), Columbia University Libraries' Special Collections Materials Survey Instrument ([http://library.columbia.edu/services/preservation/survey\\_tools.html](http://library.columbia.edu/services/preservation/survey_tools.html)), and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's blog about their preservation survey project (<https://hsp.org/blogs/fondly-pennsylvania/assessing-collections-with-the-hsp-survey-method>).

photographs, and audiovisual materials that are being stored in the same enclosures as paper-based materials. By completing this project and undertaking a systematic, comprehensive survey of the collections, we will be able to identify these preservation concerns and take necessary steps towards rehousing the materials in order to ensure their long-term preservation.

During the pilot project, we were able to survey at a rate of about 2.6 hours per linear foot. With approximately 1,443 linear feet of the collection remaining to be surveyed, we estimate that it will take at least 3,000 hours (or about 2 hours per linear foot) to complete the project. In accordance with best practices, two people will work on the survey in order to objectively assess the condition of items within the collections. The Head of Special Collections will serve as the project manager and will provide all necessary training and oversight for the project. We will contract with a professionally trained archivist to perform the assessment as the Archives Consultant and a paraprofessional with experience in archives will be hired as Collections Surveyor to assist with the project. Additionally, we will employ work study students to complete some of the data entry portions of the project. The work study students will be funded separately.

The results of this project will include an inventory with the following information about each collection: collection title, size of collection, current condition, location, format(s), historical significance, preservation concerns, and other administrative data. We will also develop a report of preservation recommendations and priorities that identifies the collections most at risk and offers recommendations for improvement of storage conditions and/or necessary conservation treatment. During the survey, minor preservation issues will be corrected, such as removing of fragile glass plate negatives and oversize materials to proper enclosures.

**Describe how your request meets the CPA criteria:**

**1. Description of funding needed, including:**

**a. Documentation of cost estimates, budget**

We are requesting CPA funds to finance the two consultant positions needed to complete the preservation assessment and collection survey. The Archives Consultant will spend a total of 3,000 hours on the project and will be paid at a rate of \$25 an hour. The Collections Surveyor will spend a total of 3,000 hours on the project and will be paid a rate of \$18 an hour. We estimate the project will be completed over a two year period at a total cost of \$129,000 (or \$64,500 per year).

**Year One**

Archives Consultant: 1,500 hours @ \$25/hour = \$37,500

Collections Surveyor: 1,500 hours @ \$18/hour = \$27,000

Total for Year One= \$64,500

**Year Two**

Archives Consultant: 1,500 hours @ \$25/hour = \$37,500

Collections Surveyor: 1,500 hours @ \$18/hour = \$27,000

Total for Year Two = \$64,500

**Total Project Cost: \$129,000**

**b. Other sources of funding, e.g., grants, self-funding, fund-raising**

The two consultants will be assisted by work study students who will not be paid using CPA funds.

**c. Timeline on how CPA funds would be spent, including over multiple years**

We anticipate the project to be completed within two years. While the two consultants will not have a set schedule, we estimate they will each spend between 21 and 30 hours per week on the project over the course of the next two years. We anticipate beginning the project in early 2018, provided our proposal has been approved.

**2. Urgency of the Project, if any.**

High. Many of these materials are at-risk and are deteriorated or are being damaged because of their current housing. It is also imperative that we establish a complete inventory of the collection as soon as possible, which includes the assessment of the preservation needs of the materials.

3. Estimated timeline from receipt of funds to Project completion.

Because the database is already in place, work can begin immediately after the receipt of funds once we have hired the contractors. We estimate that the contractors will spend approximately 21 to 30 hours per week over the course of two years. We anticipate beginning the survey in early 2018 and hope to complete the project by the end of 2019.

4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources.

Many of the resources in Special Collections are threatened due to improper storage conditions causing damage to the materials. At greatest risk are the fragile glass plate negatives and case photographs that are housed improperly throughout the collection. This project seeks to remedy that situation by identifying the materials at risk and implementing changes to ensure the proper storage and long-term preservation of the collections.

5. Population(s) to be served by the Project.

This project will serve the entire Town of Amherst by making the collections more accessible and preserving them for future generations to use and enjoy. The collections will be better preserved by identifying and correcting issues with the storage of the materials. The inventory will also provide increased and easier access to the collections for the Amherst community and beyond.

6. How will the CPA investment in your property, facility or project be maintained over time?

The Jones Library is committed to the preservation and care of its Special Collections. The majority of the collections will continue to be stored in an environmentally controlled storage area. These collections will also be more accessible because we can make multiple uses of the information gathered in the database, including making more information about the collections available online which will make our materials more discoverable.

7. Which relevant Town committees and/or commissions are you working with?

None

8. Other information regarding the Project deemed necessary for CPAC