# Organization and Accessibility of Delhi Historical Society Collections

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Final Grant Report

The grant gifted to the Delhi Historical Society in 2018 allowed the collections committee to efficiently begin a project that had been planned for several years. The grant funds purchased extensions to PastPerfect and two new computers which allows more than one volunteer to work at our location at once. The grant also made it possible for our consultant and volunteers to take official training in PastPerfect.

These purchases resulted in the creation of a simple inventory process that allows volunteers of all skill levels to participate. The process utilizes the PastPerfect Inventory add-on to create a PDF form that includes every accession with fields to make notes in. We labeled each storage location down to the shelf/drawer and box number. The inventory PDF was printed out and placed in a binder. Our collections volunteers are instructed to start with a storage location and go box by box looking up each accession number on every object and folder and then recording its location, condition, preservation needs and actions needed. They also photographed every piece so that we
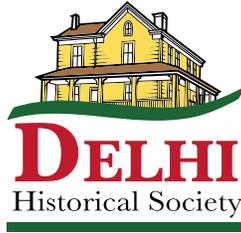
have a visual of every item in PastPerfect. Once information is entered into the binder, a volunteer that is trained in PastPerfect copies the information into the program. This process allows our less computer confident volunteers to participate which keeps the inventory moving.

As any project does, we had unexpected setbacks. When we began going through the boxes we found that the volunteers that initially accessioned items into PastPerfect in 2010 assigned one nine-digit item number to an entire collection of items. For example, we have a metal dairy farm sign and a small decorative art piece both under the same nine-digit item number. The only thing they have in common is that the same person donated the items. This is not the only item listed this way which means we have more items than we originally had documented. In addition, we have items and photos that are not documented in our system or duplicated entries/accessions. This combined with unexpected absences from our volunteers put us behind our original schedule.

Although there is still work to be done, we are already seeing more visibility. The project resulted in more online engagement with our collections. We purchased PastPerfect Online which will make our items more accessible to the public. We are still working to publish our collections once the errors found in our old records are cleaned up in the database. We also used photos and items
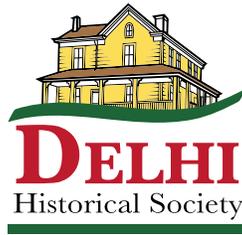
to engage audiences on our social media pages. This includes "Throwback Thursdays" where we post photos with a short caption to provide context. We also do "What is it Wednesdays" where we ask our followers to guess what an item is and then announce the answer with an educational link to learn more. These posts grew our Facebook page by approximately 800 followers, and tripled our website views from the previous years. In addition to Social media, We started writing blog posts to show off our photos and archival items in context to Delhi's history. All of this has resulted in donations of other items by our followers and inquiries about our collections and historical topics.

We even sold prints of some of our historic photos to a local restaurant and created small captions for their patrons to read as they wait for their table. The proceeds from these prints will go directly back into our collections budget. We hope this project will continue to build partnerships such as this, helping our organization gain visibility in our community, sustain our collections budget, and help our collections be more accessible to the community.

Attachment A: Project Budget

Attachment B: Web engagement samples
Attachment C: Newsletter Article announcing grant

Delhi Historical Society
2018 Collections Inventory Budget

Profits	Requested	Actual
OHRAB Grant	2294	2294

Expenses	Budgeted	Actual
Consultant Fees	2888	2500
Technology	750	655.35
Software	1544	1300
Pastperfect Training	140	138
Archival Materials	750	629.4
Total	6072	5222.75