

INF392G - MANAGEMENT OF PRESERVATION
PROGRAMS(28560)

The Pioneer Museum – Gillespie County Historical Society



Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

The Pioneer Museum located in Fredericksburg is a result of the efforts of the Gillespie County Historical society to provide an immersive lens into its early settlers' way of life and rich continued legacy. Its mission is to "provide an interpretative history of Gillespie County." The settlement dates back to 1846, when 120 men, women and children made the journey from Germany to Texas hoping for a more prosperous future. The Pioneer Museum is a complex that houses eleven historical buildings on its three acres. Of these buildings, nine are permanent exhibit sites that display a re-creation of the settlers' lives and activities. Additionally, the Pioneer Museum boasts a Visit Welcome Center and a large office building that also houses the Gillespie County Historical Society's archival holdings (See Photograph A1).

Materials have all been acquired through donation; the only prerequisite for accession is that their provenance can be traced to Gillespie County. The Pioneer's Museum collection is sprawling and diverse, including photographs, tools, weapons, costumes, ledgers and bound volumes of newspapers. Unfortunately, a majority of the collection has not been processed or assessed. Out of the 40,000 artifacts housed in the office building, 17,409 photographs, 995 objects, 622 archival materials, and 23 books have been cataloged. Unfortunately, much of the associated metadata necessary for maintaining a reliable inventory has not been cataloged along with the photographs of these objects, and there is little uniformity in how records are created in Past Perfect, the cataloging system that the Gillespie County Historical Society uses.

In addition to the collection concerns, there are several key issues concerning nine of the eleven structures on the Pioneer Museum site. Environmental control systems are only installed in two of the historic structures, making it difficult for museum staff to monitor its artifacts on exhibition, and by extension, to implement more imaginative and more frequently rotating programming. The office building where archival items not currently on display are housed has environmental, security, and structural concerns. Two additional buildings, which are not on the Pioneer Museum complex, and located in different areas of Fredericksburg, contain overflow items. Since these structures are off-site, it is even more difficult to monitor the concerns and needs of these archival objects.

Despite the mounting building and security concerns, this organization needs to start from the ground up and assess its overall collections policies and human resources management. With more robust policies, many of the educational aims through historical immersion will become more achievable. Preservation is the crux of long-term institutional planning, and setting preservation as the museum's focus, will enable the Pioneer Museum to attain many of its valiant goals. Currently, archival policies are from a previous director and archivist. The policies date back to 2008 when the museum had more ambition for funding assistance through the community. Since that time, relations with the community have degraded and financial assistance was never received. By creating a more realistic policy, both in terms of collection management and day-to-day operations, the Pioneer Museum can begin rebuilding its relationship with the

community and generating a plan of action more aligned with its capabilities.

From January 31, 2013 to February 28, 2013, Nicole Feldman and Marisa Mendez-Brady completed three site visits to assess the collection. Visits to the on site Office Building, surrounding Pioneer Museum structures, and off site storage buildings were conducted. The buildings were inspected for structural damage, environmental stability, and compliance with established best preservation practices. The two also had the opportunity to meet with and talk at length with all three members of the full-time staff, as well as the building's half-time facility manager. The full-time staff members are as follows: Dr. James Lindley, President of the Board of Directors, Gail Clifton, Office Manager, and Evelyn Weinheimer, Archives/Programs/Tours Director. The following key issues and recommendations were compiled based on these site visits.

General Recommendations:

1. The security concerns of the buildings must be addressed.
2. Revisit Disaster Plan.
3. The environments of the storage facilities should be monitored more frequently and a large amount of archival materials should be moved into more appropriate conditions.
4. Collections policies must be revisited in order to create an archival program that is manageable and within the means and scope of the collection and the institution's available resources.
5. Concrete preservation priorities must be created and should be clearly articulated in order for the Pioneer Museum to handle its staff and volunteers more effectively.
6. Finish taking an inventory of archival holdings and cataloging the collection in Past Perfect.

Key Issues To Implementing Recommendations:

1. The museum is severely underfunded and understaffed.
2. The age of the buildings requires constant monitoring and maintenance.
3. The museum has no formal de-accession policy and the size of the collection is too large for the institution to address in a consistent manner.
4. The most recent large-scale planning for the museum was conducted under past leadership and has since been derailed by the financial crisis. The staff is therefore hesitant to commit to any future small-scale assessment and planning.

Key Recommendations

Short Term (within 1 year)

1. Install a functioning security alarm system in all of the buildings for display and archival storage.
2. Invest in data-loggers to accurately monitor condition of environment in storage facilities.
3. Dispose of out of date financial and administrative records for the historical society with the help of museum bookkeeper. This would enable the museum to take advantage

of freed up space and to move archival materials currently in less than optimal conditions into an environment more suitable for their long-term use.

4. Remnants of the now-defunct 2008 Master Plan should be removed from the museum's official website.
5. Create a concrete Disaster Preparedness Plan.

Medium Term (within 3 years)

1. The museum relies heavily on volunteer labor. Volunteer priorities should be more clearly defined in order to more effectively utilize volunteer contributions.
2. Number and label all shelves and create a system for reliably locating archival material, which in turn will allow for more frequent rotation of exhibition items.
3. Collections policy should be redrafted according to present day priorities. This should include their gift agreement and de-accession policy.
4. Create a collections guide to keep the public better informed on the scope of the collection and facilitate continued relationships within the community.
5. Re-prioritize the museum's focus to expand the visibility of the archival holdings within the museum, both on the website and in the printed museum literature.
6. Invest in filtering sleeves for the fluorescent light bulbs the museum is currently equipped with.

Long Term (within 5 years)

1. Comprehensive survey and inventory should be conducted of the museum's holdings
2. At present, the electrical wiring is on three different grids, making temperature regulation virtually impossible. The electrical wiring needs should be completely redone in order to maintain a stable environment in the archival storage facilities.
3. Move materials from off-site archival storage facilities into the central archival storage facilities in the central office so as to be environmentally controlled and monitored efficiently.
4. Create partnerships with surrounding institutions by donating or auctioning off holdings not directly relevant to Gillespie County History. These new funds should be used for collections preservation.
5. Move archival materials into storage rooms in climate-controlled building.

The Pioneer Museum Buildings

The oldest part of the archives/offices building was built in 1855. This portion of building includes chapel space, which is called the sanctuary by the GCHS. The chapel is outfitted with beautifully maintained stained glass windows and is frequently rented out for weddings and other private events. The flooring in the sanctuary is also in exquisite condition, however, the facilities manager noted that the roof covering the chapel has experienced some leaking in recent history (See Photograph A). This same space has also exhibited archival materials in the past. In 1888 the parsonage was expanded to include offices and subsequently an army barrack was attached to the building in 1947. Renovations were conducted between 1912 and 1914, in 1923, between 1948 and 49 and again the 1970s. The electrical system is on three different grids and was installed

between 1900s and 1940s(See Photographs T, U, V, W). Similarly, the plumbing was installed in the 1950s (See Photograph Y). AC and heating units were installed during 70s renovations. The light bulbs throughout the building are fluorescent. There are no regularly scheduled building inspections. The building is not ADA certified.

The building's offices hold four tenants all of which are certified psychological counselors. Six of the offices are used for archival storage. The different electrical grids control the archival storage units, further complicating monitoring. One of these archival storage offices doubles as the museum archivist's office. Additionally, there is an empty office space that could potentially be used to house more archival materials. In the office building there is a large common room that also contains objects on display and doubles as the historical society meeting room. The bathrooms and the kitchen are located off to the side of this space.

Nine buildings on the three-acre premises are recreations of frontier life in early Fredericksburg. These include the Weber Sunday House (See Photograph B1), the White Oak School (See Photograph J1), the Walton-Smith Log Cabin (See Photograph E1), the Kammlah Barn (See Photograph F1), the Kammlah Homestead (See Photograph D1), the Arhelger Bathhouse (See Photograph G1), the Fassel-Roeder House (See Photograph H1), and the Fredericksburg Volunteer Fire Department Museum (See Photograph C1). Eight of these structures are not equipped with heating or cooling systems. They also lack window coverings or proper ventilation. Also on the premises is a newly constructed Visitors and Welcoming Center that houses the offices of the Acting Director, Dr. James Lindley, and the museum bookkeeper.

Off-site, there are two historic structures, the Schandua House (See Photograph L1) and the Vereins Kirche building (See Photograph K1). The Schandua House was built in the 1880s and is located on its own lot. It is part of the Gillespie County Historical society and houses many of the archival holdings of the Pioneer Museum. The house itself does not have a current inhabitant nor does the staff regularly visit the site. The house was never outfitted with electricity or plumbing, nor are there coverings on the windows. There have been no efforts to monitor the environment in this structure. The Schandua House is in a high traffic area, however visitors are restricted from entering the building.

The Vereins Kirche is centrally located in the Marktplatz, which lies in Fredericksburg's historic shopping district, making it a source of considerable foot traffic. The original building dated back to the 1800s, however it was demolished in 1896. The structure was rebuilt in 1935 and serves as an introduction to Fredericksburg visitors to the German heritage of the area. The exhibition materials in this building are extremely outdated and this structure has fallen into an appreciable amount of disrepair.

Ten of the buildings are not ADA certified and none are routinely inspected. Two of the structures have a security system, the Kammlah House and the Vereins Kirche, while the rest have non-working security systems (See Photograph X). There are fire detectors in some of the buildings, but not all, and there are no alarm systems. This is

of concern, as there are multiple tenants in the Office Building, and there is no available staff to routine visit off site facilities.

Building Recommendations

1. Remove archival material not on display from off-site buildings.
2. Schedule routine building inspection
3. Update the plumbing and electrical systems throughout the building
4. Install a working security system, most urgently in the main office/archival building.

Mission Statement

Since the Pioneer Museum is an extension of the Gillespie County Historical Society, the primary goal of the Museum is to educate members of the community on their shared history. The Gillespie County Historical Society (GCHS) states on their website that their mission is to “preserve and tell the story of the Texas Hill Country”. The Pioneer Museum furthers these goals by providing visitors with reenactments of life in Fredericksburg during the days of its early settlement by German immigrants. As part of this mission to preserve and tell the story of Gillespie County, the Pioneer Museum wishes to focus efforts on educational programming and community outreach.

Currently, the Pioneer Museum offers educational tours that may be set up prior to a visit by contacting the Archives/Programs/Tours Director. Through the website, educational programs and teachers may schedule a tour at the Museum, or they can request a “trunk showing” in their classroom. These showings consist of bringing a trunk containing artifacts directly to the students. At the museum, there are four tours offered, the “German Meal Tour”, the “School Tour”, “Group Tours”, and a “Custom Tour”. The German Meal Tour offers a full-catered German meal following the tour to all participating members for a fee of \$15. The meal is served either in the office building, or on the grounds. School Tours are free for school districts located in Gillespie County, while there is a small fee for student groups from outside districts. Group tours require museum entrance fees, however you are guided around the Pioneer Museum grounds and exhibits, while Custom tours include the option of touring the town of Fredericksburg.

Moreover, there are various hands on activities that the Pioneer Museum offers, including rope making, quilting, playing traditional German games, butter churning, washing clothes with a scrub board, seed art, making corn husk dolls and spinning. For an additional fee, a group can schedule an activity with their tours. There are several public events held at the Pioneer Museum that advance their mission statement goals through educating the community about the early settlers of Gillespie County. These include a Founder’s Day Celebration, honoring the history of Fredericksburg’s Founding, with several activities and historical demonstrations as well as a summer music series entitled “Roots” that celebrates Texas music while allowing concertgoers to enjoy the Pioneer Museum exhibits simultaneously. One of the largest events that

takes place at the Pioneer Museum is the weeklong “Spring Break” activities. This is an annual event designed for all ages that provides both demonstrations and hands on activities illustrating pioneer life in the early settlement. In order for the Pioneer Museum to provide this event they rely on assistance from their partner organization, Friends of Gillespie County for docents, rope makers, blacksmiths and the like. Additional events are held throughout the year, as an effort to continue community involvement and fulfill the Historical Society’s educational mission.

In addition to the educational and public programming offered by the Pioneer Museum, there are artifacts on exhibit all year round. The collections that are exhibited at the Pioneer Museum are representative of early German-Texas frontier life in the region, and are displayed in nine building sites. While there are artifacts displayed in these rooms, it is unclear, either through their website or their printed material how long the exhibit has remained unchanged. The archivist, who also runs the programs and tours, also maintains the exhibit items. One of the issues that we observed is that the archivist is responsible for so many of the Pioneer Museum’s activities that items are not frequently rotated, as this responsibility also falls on the archivist’s shoulders.

Mission Recommendations:

1. Push continual programming and engagement within the community.
2. More frequently rotate the exhibits so that the mission to educate the community continually advances.
3. Publish materials both on collections on display and valuable archival items on the website

Policies

The Gillespie County Historical Society has over 40,000 artifacts in its holdings at present. Clearly the Pioneer Museum has not struggled in developing a formidable collection, but the challenges for this institution lie in establishing intellectual control over these items and by turn, conveying to their user base the richness of these materials. The museum staff is seeking to make preservation the heart of its underlying mission.

All of the Pioneer Museum’s holdings have been obtained via donation, and the institution has a formal donation policy and retains all donor files. The museum archivist noted frustrations she had with individuals showing some resistance upon being asked to fill out required gift agreement forms. She also spoke of the real difficulty she has had in communicating how essential these forms are to ensuring that the museum’s operates at an efficient level. While the gift agreement form explicitly states that all items should trace their provenance to Gillespie County, the museum archivist expressed concerns that this simple baseline policy is occasionally circumvented, creating additional obstacles for the museum. The Pioneer Museum has generated some research interest in and notoriety for its collection through its well-documented

photo permission policy. Having items more exhaustively inventoried would enable this institution to practice this on an even wider scale, and to garner additional interest from researchers.

As alluded to earlier, the Pioneer Museum has understandably struggled to accurately and comprehensively inventory its vast collection. The museum uses Past Perfect and a considerable share of its materials have at least been photographed and partially entered into this database. Most items in the archival storage rooms were labeled, with at least some nod to a broader cataloging schema. Since these holdings are so diffuse, it is often quite hard for the museum archivist to crosscheck items in the archives with their actual cataloging number, or to even physically locate some materials, and by extension, to rotate exhibition items at a more desirable frequency.

Ideally, the museum archivist would like to appraise items for their preservation needs at intake, and to initiate a formal de-accession policy, but the reality of the institution's human resource capabilities has made this a near impossibility. The museum archivist is looking to introduce the prospect of implementing a de-accession protocol with the Historical Society's Board of Directors at their next meeting.

The annual budget for the Pioneer Museum archives is \$2000. This allows the museum to exercise sufficient custodial care, but does not equip the institution with the funds to grapple with new concerns or to address programming. Majority of the museum's annual operating budget comes from the HOT, or Hotel Occupancy Tax. This paperwork for this funding is due at the beginning of each year, and the museum received more than it had initially filed for in 2013. However, this tax deals with the maintenance and upkeep of museum structures and grounds and not with the archival holdings. It would really benefit the museum to find additional sources of funding, in order to more adequately meet its preservation and collection policy needs.

This funding would give staff more time and resources to devote to programming and long-term planning. The Pioneer Museum hosts several highly successful yearly fundraising events such as its end of the year dinner. An auction is a central component of this event, but the Pioneer Museum has been hesitant to enter items not obviously germane to Gillespie County into the auction, for fear of further straining its relations with the surrounding community. In all, staff is highly attuned to the depth of the Pioneer Museum's holdings and aims to revamp its policies, so that these items can be presented more accurately as well as reach wider audience.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Refine the language in the gift agreement form to emphasize its critical value, in order to create both a more robust collection policy and to develop a more reliable inventory of museum artifacts.
2. Formalize a collections policy that is concerned with the entire lifecycle of archival objects, ensuring proper maintenance and upkeep, and freeing up the possibility for more imaginative and more constantly rotating exhibitions.

3. Explore options for auctioning, perhaps through online channels; in order to generate funds for collections and preservation based initiatives.

Archival Storage Facilities

Enter Pioneer Museum grounds, and one is immediately drawn to the newly constructed Visitor's Center, which contains a gift shop and administrative offices, as well as the aforementioned nine historic on-site structures. That said, the bulk of the institution's collections materials are contained in the archives building. This building is also where the Gillespie County Historical Society holds its meetings, hosts some exhibition materials, and houses several psychological offices the museum leases out to tenants.

The archives' building has undergone seemingly countless renovations and is structurally a true amalgamation. The GCHS meeting room and partial exhibition space is largely a former post-WWII military barracks, and is not aesthetically inviting. The museum archivist's personal office/the majority of the museum's photo archives, and an archival storage room primarily containing bounded newspaper volumes and historic ledgers and tax records from Fredericksburg's earliest days are also within steps of this meeting room.

The stairwell on the edge of the Meeting Room is equipped with several signs indicating that "exhibitions end here," and is roped off. This stairwell leads to several other archival storage rooms of varying degrees of suitability. Entry to these rooms is granted by key access exclusively and individuals are only allowed to browse them under direct supervision of museum staff. The second floor is completely outfitted in wall-to-wall carpeting, which is not ideal for housing archival materials. In addition, the thermostat for the archival storage facility is permanently set at 75 degrees Fahrenheit, which is not optimal, and arguably even harmful for archival objects.

The four psychological offices that the museum rents out are also on the second floor of the building (See Photograph Z). Patients are instructed to enter these offices from a separate doorway on the backside of the building, and these offices are generally structurally isolated from the archival storage rooms that reside on this floor, as well. The psychological counselors that practice in this building mostly work with teens and married clients, and the museum archivist noted that she did not always feel completely safe in the building, touching upon one particularly unsettling incident in which a somewhat disturbed individual made threatening remarks about his spouse while this woman being counseled. The museum used to have an individual on staff that was responsible for signing those who entered the building in and out. Budget cuts have led to the elimination of this position, and a significantly smaller amount of attention is now being paid to building foot traffic. From a purely artifactual point of view, the archival storage facility is the museum's crown jewel, and at present, there are obstacles both preventing museum staff from rightfully showcasing their institution's treasures, as well as disconcerting circumstances putting these very materials and their dutiful stewards at risk.

Archival Storage Facility Recommendations

1. Implement a more strictly enforced sign in/sign out policy.
2. Instruct greeters in the museum's Visitor Center to emphasize the richness of the archival storage facility.
3. Integrate a "history of the archives building" section into museum literature.
4. Purchase and distribute data-loggers in the archival spaces to monitor environment.

The Collections

In addition to the items that are on display throughout the grounds, there are five rooms that house archival material in the Pioneer Museum's office building. The entire office building, including the archival storage areas, is illuminated by fluorescent light bulbs. The first, and most well documented room doubles as the archivist's office. The items in the office were housed and arranged in 2008, under the leadership of the previous archivist. In the office, items are kept on metal shelves and in archival boxes with appropriate descriptive information labeled on each one. Documents are kept in sleeves, file folders and boxes purchased from Gaylord Bros Inc.

This room is very well organized and all of the materials are appropriately housed. They are kept on metal shelves and there is no evidence of overcrowding (See Photograph O). This room also contains many photographs, negatives and slides of Fredericksburg. These are similarly housed and are well maintained and labeled. The material all appears to be organized in chronological order. This room also contains the donor files and research files in three file cabinets. They are organized into three categories, "Donor Files before 2007", "Donor Files after 2007" and "Research Files". This room was also temperature controlled and in a cooler part of the building. As there are three different electrical grids, temperature varied greatly between archival rooms.

The second archival room is next to the office and contains mainly of newspapers, ledgers and a small, donated book collection. The material is kept on a mix of metal and wood shelving. Two metal shelves contained 47 "Radio Post" newspapers, two metal shelves contained the donated book collection, another metal shelf contained exhibit items that were in unmarked boxes, loose papers, 15 news collections, loose "American Wanderer" papers, and four small files with records of Births and Baptism's in Gillespie County. Another metal shelf contained ten boxes of unlabeled material, and two plastic bins of rolled material (See Photograph E).

In this same room, there were several bins of "Radio Posts" photographs and negatives on the floor, and seven boxes of exhibit items on the floor. There is also a desk for researchers to handle archival material (See Photograph N). This room was not crowded and the majorities of materials are stored on metal shelves off the floor and

were in archival boxes and files (See Photograph M). This room was also in a cooler part of the building. While this room was organized and maintained, there are preservation concerns with the newspaper collection, as they had been donated to the Gillespie County Historical Society after they had been stored in a barn for many years.

There are four rooms containing archival materials in the upstairs portion of the 'Office Building'. Tenant offices are also located on this floor. The first of the archival storage rooms on the second floor was relatively cool, and most of the items were stored in banker's boxes and on metal shelves. There were a total of ten shelves in this room, all of which were metal. The items were not particularly crowded on the shelves, however there were some obstructions in the room that prevent ease of movement and several bins on the floor (See Photograph B). In the middle of the room there was a large wax figure of John O. Meusebach, the founder of Fredericksburg, positioned at a school-desk. There was also a wedding dress on a mannequin next to the Meusebach wax figure. Both of these two items were in the way of aisle space between metal shelves. The items on the shelves in these rooms varied in subject matter and format. There were a collection of VHS's (23 items total), "Radio Post" negatives, maps, cassettes, scrapbooks and photographs.

While most of these items were in acid-free banker's boxes, a large portion of the items were unprocessed and unlabeled. Many of the boxes that were unprocessed were labeled as such (See Photograph C). In addition to the archival material in this room, there are financial records about the Historical Society, payroll information, and historical society memberships ranging from the 1980s to the early 2000s. There are boxes that contain loose checks, records, bank records and pictures of previous exhibits also, and these boxes are not arranged or organized (See Photograph D). Lastly, there are wood shelves that contain supplies such as binders, clips, and archival folders. There was also a data-logger on this shelf, however it was not being used and the archivist said it was not currently working. While there are quite a few windows in this room, there were blinds on all of them.

The second room on this floor was also a reasonably cool temperature, and despite the many windows, there were also blinds on them. This room, the fourth archival room, contained approximately 1,000 tools (See Photograph G). There are 15 shelves and three tables containing these items. Most of these objects were labeled, however their provenance is not documented. The labels generally have an identification number, however they need to be matched to the donor from the donor files that contain gift agreements from accession. This room also contains obstructions, as the room is overcrowded with items and shelves, making it difficult to access many of the tools (See Photograph H). There is not enough room between shelves to create a useable aisle space, and when there was aisle space, it was occupied with other various items (See Photograph I). These items included three saddles, two old computers and several pieces of small furniture (See Photograph F). There was also a noticeable amount of dust in this room, and a seemingly out of place bookshelf with a book collection that had not been processed.

Next to this room there is an empty room that is not being used by the Gillespie County Historical Society, nor is it being rented out to a tenant. The archivist plans to use this space to rehouse archival material once she acquires blinds for the windows and shelves for storage. Down the hall to the west part of the building there is another room that houses the historical clothing. All of the clothing is housed in five large metal wardrobes that were donated to the historical society. They are solid and do not let any light into them. The room itself has also been darkened with the use of blinds. Other than the warmth of the room, items in this room were properly stored and maintained (See Photograph J). However, both the items and the wardrobes were not labeled. This area of the building was exceedingly warm. Since it is on a different electrical grid than the east side of the building, the former barracks, the offices above the chapel area are difficult to control for temperature.

The fifth archival room on the second floor is next to one of the psychiatrists' offices. This room is very hot compared to its surroundings and it is palpably uncomfortable for people to access the materials in this room. Instead of blinds, window coverings had been fashioned out of black plastic sheeting and cut-up cardboard boxes (See Photograph K). There is broken glass on the floor and the room itself was dusty and very crowded. There are fourteen shelving units that store items varied in nature and format. Amongst these is a collection of books once belonging to Lyndon B. Johnson and several volumes of books in German. The shelves in this room were labeled using a numerical system (A, B, C, D, etc.) and many of the boxes were labeled. However, it is virtually impossible to access the materials on these shelves because they are so overcrowded (See Photograph L). Also the uncomfortable temperature of the room makes it nearly impossible to work in this space.

The last archival storage area is located in a house that is owned by the Gillespie County Historical Society but is currently for sale. It is situated fairly far away from the main complex, and none of the staff members frequently visit or monitor the materials housed on this property. Neither the main structure nor the adjoining garage had ever been equipped with air conditioning or heating systems. There are also no blinds on the windows. The items located on this property are primarily stored in the garage, however there are various objects, such as a dentist's chair, throughout the house itself (See Photograph P). The objects in the garage are also very varied in form. Amongst them are a wagon wheel, a loom, and several large-scale objects (See Photograph Q). Items in the garage are particularly dusty and crowded. It is difficult to access many of the objects in this area, as items are so crowded that there are barely recognizable aisles between them (See Photograph S). Although many of the objects located on this property were tagged with an identification number, the provenance is not documented and the items must be matched with their donors. During the site visits, there were deceased pests, primarily insects, on the floors of the main house on this property (See Photograph R).

Overall, the collections in most of the archival storage areas in the main office building, as well as the off-site structure, are not well cataloged or arranged. There is an extreme

amount of clutter and obstructions in many of the spaces and the environment is neither controlled nor monitored. There are also most certainly mold growths and water damage in some of the collections, specifically in the room that is extremely overheated, however lack of mobility and organization in these rooms make the mold hard to identify. Part of the reasons that there is no environmental control is that the electrical grids are all distinct and outdated, and it is simply impossible to keep the temperature constant. Only one of the seven areas that archival objects and documents are stored has a distinct shelving system.

While the documents are primarily kept in archival boxes purchased from Gaylord Bros Co., they are largely unprocessed. Most of these unprocessed documents were not in proper archival folders nor were they housed in sleeves. One of the largest obstacles facing the Gillespie County Historical Society and inhibiting the Pioneer Museum from fully promoting their mission is the lack of arrangement and description within the archives. Hardly any of the items are cataloged using Past Perfect, which is the preferred cataloging method for the institution. Accordingly, since many of the archival materials are unprocessed and the archivist does not know exactly what she has in the collection, there is a noticeable lack of printed materials and online resources outlining the collections.

Due to the Pioneer Museum's severely underfunded staff, there is no coherent metadata tracking system. Some objects have tags identifying them, however they are not matched with their donors, nor does the archivist keep the appropriate descriptive, structural and administrative metadata. The only items that have associating metadata are those that are cataloged on Past Perfect. Out of the approximately 40,000 items the archives hold, 17,409 photographs have been cataloged on Past Perfect, while only 995 objects, 622 archival documents and 23 books have been cataloged. The items that have tags identifying them only contain the identifying donor number. The inherent issue in this system is that if the Gift Agreement is not fully completed, then there is no record of who acquired the item, when it was accessioned, what the historical significance of the item is, and any preservation issues that need to be addressed.

There is also no formal document containing care and handling procedures for researchers. Although the archivist is primarily responsible for maintaining the archives, and is the only person to frequently handle the material, a care and handling guide would make volunteer labor more diverse and efficient. Lastly, there is no disaster preparedness plan for the archival materials. While there are some general resources located in binders in the archivist's office, there are no resources tailored to the grounds. Given the state of the security system, the plumbing and electrical systems, a disaster preparedness plan would increase the likelihood that archival materials survive an emergency in the storage areas.

Collections Recommendations:

1. Purchase additional metal shelving, archival boxes, folders and sleeves
2. Replace plastic/cardboard window coverings with blinds

- archival material, on the second floor into the currently unused room.
3. Use volunteers to perform a collections survey to determine what the archives hold.
 4. Discard unnecessary administrative records and outdated checks and bank statements in the second archival storage room to free up space in order to de-clutter the fourth and fifth archival storage rooms.
 5. Number and label all the shelves containing archival material.
 6. Match objects and documents with their donor to create a full provenance.
 7. Arrange and describe all unprocessed material.
 8. Place the unprocessed documents and photographs in sleeves.
 9. Catalog archival items in Past Perfect.
 10. Create a care and handling guide for researchers and volunteers.
 11. Utilize volunteer labor for labeling shelves and processing archival material.
 12. Once the shelves are labeled and materials are processed, create a system for reliably locating archival materials.
 13. Create a collections guide, in print or online, to keep the public better informed on the scope and content of the collections.
 14. Create a disaster preparedness plan that is specific for the Pioneer Museum and the Gillespie County Historical Society's holdings.
 15. Replace fluorescent light bulbs with low-level incandescent light bulbs.
 16. Update the electrical system so that the building remains a constant temperature. Preferable switch the electrical system to be all on the same grid.

Human Resources

The Pioneer Museum only has three full-staff members who are all quite over-extended and highly encumbered by the myriad responsibilities that come from overseeing day-to-day operations at a small institution with a variety of partnerships and programming endeavors. The museum relies heavily on volunteer labor; in 2012 the institution logged an impressive 37,500 volunteer hours. The museum also has an established internship program with nearby Schreiner University in Kerrville, and currently has two undergraduate students working with them. One student has been chiefly responsible for writing short blurbs that have been installed as audio kiosks in the Kammlah Homestead and which speak to this structure's former function as a general store.

While the staff has had no difficulty in recruiting volunteer labor, getting volunteers to commit a meaningful amount of time to the museum and to see projects to their fruition remains a challenge. Several volunteers called to cancel their scheduled shifts during our visits, and the archivist lamented that some projects have been ongoing for nearly ten years. The official museum website lists their current volunteer priorities as the following:

- 1. Identifying cataloging and digitizing photographs.*
- 2. Managing a database that holds artifacts and donor records as received by the museum.*

- 3. Managing an inventory to include cleaning, labeling, photographing, and wrapping/boxing artifacts.*
- 4. Performing general housekeeping of historic structures and exhibited artifacts.*
- 5. Conducting research to include researching artifacts and genealogy exhibits.*
- 6. Conducting and transcribing oral histories.*

From what was observed, not all volunteer projects seem targeted to meet these stated priorities. A considerable amount of current volunteer contributions are centered on a highly interesting newspaper transcription project, but the museum's newspapers are quite remarkably cared for, and this project did not seem immediately pertinent to the institution's stated vision, which is to provide an immersive experience of Gillespie County.

Up until quite recently, the Pioneer Museum had a professionally trained archivist on staff that served as the Acting Director. This individual truly put the museum on the right path, but she unfortunately left due to strained finances and family obligations right around the time the "Master Plan" was put to rest. The staff archivist has learned a great deal from her and works in accordance with many of the guidelines laid out by her, yet her contributions were not well-documented or adopted by the entirety of the museum, and this has prevented the museum from operating at the level by which they possess the knowledge to achieve. Formalizing and documenting these teachings would enable the Pioneer Museum to evolve into the more robust institution that it can be.

Human Resources Recommendations:

1. Assign volunteers' projects with clearly demarcated responsibilities and deadlines; to more effectively utilize this invaluable and relatively bountiful resource.
2. Consider a more formal volunteer recognition program that honors individual achievements and contributions to preservation priorities, rather than simply an annual festivity for the entire volunteer group.
3. Ensure that assigned volunteer projects correspond to the museum's stated priorities.
4. Create new official institutional resources that draw from extant and former staff's depth of knowledge to allow museum to operate at a level at which they are capable.

Prioritizing

The Pioneer Museum is run by a devoted, passionate staff with many noble goals in mind that are apace with current best preservation practices. Before pursuing these ambitious projects, the museum staff needs to de-clutter its archival storage facilities and reliably inventory and comprehensively assess its collections. Upon seriously undertaking these mandatory steps, the museum can begin to address its multitude of facilities concerns from a more precise angle, commit more resources to reinvigorating programming, fully carry out its mission statement, and strengthen ties with its

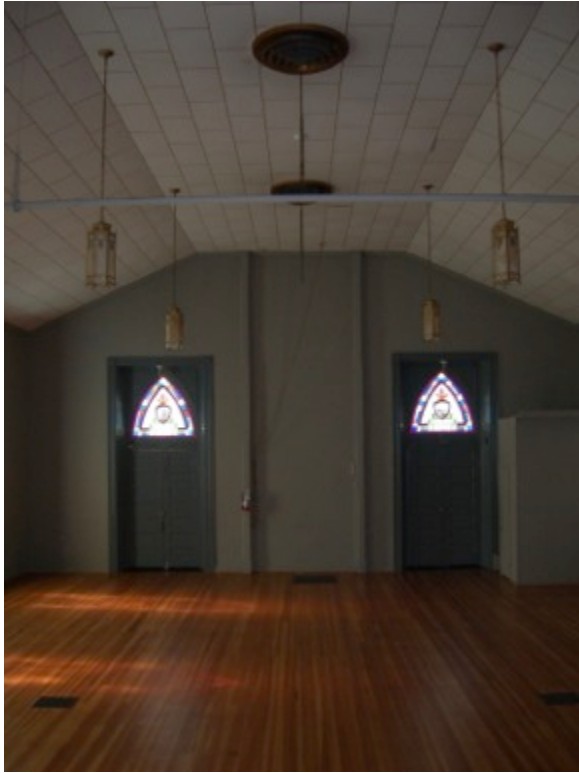
surrounding community. In refining its policies towards its sizable volunteer staff, the museum staff can assign several necessary projects to this group of individuals, and move forward in overcoming the community's negativity towards the derailed Master Plan.

There are numerous preservation issues facing the archives in the Pioneer Museum, however it is virtually impossible to assess many of them until the archival storage facilities have been de-cluttered and the archival holdings have been identified. Space should be freed up as soon as possible through moving items into the unused room on the second floor of the office building, discarding materials not essential to the archives and de-accessioning materials that do not contribute to the GCHS mission statement. The items must be appraised in order for preservation funding to be most effectively allocated. At the moment, so many items remain unidentified and uncataloged that it is difficult to create or implement an appraisal processing plan. Ideally, a complete collections survey would be performed and data-loggers placed in all of the archival storage facilities in order to gauge what the most pressing preservation issues are and what the environmental conditions are in each room.

More realistically, the Pioneer Museum must establish some sort of organization system so that preservation issues can at least be noted. Moving materials from off site into the central facility and creating a labeling system for shelving and boxes is the first step towards this goal. While obstacles persist, namely a lack of funding and staffing, preservation issues should be at the forefront of budgeting and collections management. Some of the more long-term issues are the electrical systems in all of the archival storage facilities. There is no way to get the environmental issues that are central to long term preservation stable until these electrical concerns are addressed. The instability of the structure requires that a disaster preparedness plan be implemented as soon as possible. Outdated plumbing and wiring are huge preservation risks and there is currently no plan in the place in the event of an emergency.

Following our site visits, we recommend starting simply, by organizing and labeling all of the collection materials. In the immediate future, relocating materials that are currently housed in inappropriate structures or environments into areas better suited for preservation. Through this effort, items will both be preserved and more accessible, as clutter would be reduced. Another immediate action that should take place to get the collections in a manageable condition is to dispose of unnecessary items in archival storage spaces as soon as possible to free up space for proper housing of archival material. Utilizing volunteer labor to do this, as well as creating a labeling system is something that should be heavily prioritized. While there are multiple preservation issues to consider, proceeding from a small scale, tangible entry point is the first step to arranging and preserving the collection. We have crafted our key recommendations from this viewpoint.

Appendix:



Photograph A: Chapel Space



Photograph B: Upstairs Room 1



Photograph C: Upstairs Room 1



Photograph D: Upstairs Room 1



Photograph E: Upstairs Room 2



Photograph F: Upstairs Room 2



Photograph G: Upstairs Room 2



Photograph H: Upstairs Room 2



Photograph I: Upstairs Room 2



Photograph J: Upstairs Room 3



Photograph K: Upstairs Room 4



Photograph L: Upstairs Room 4



Photograph M: Downstairs Newspaper Room



Photograph N: Newspaper Room



Photograph O: Photographs in Office Room



Photograph P: Offsite Storage Facility



Photograph Q: Offsite Archival Facility



Photograph R: Offsite Archival Facility



Photograph S: Offsite Storage Facility



Photograph T: Fuse Box, Grid 1



Photograph U: Electrical Grid 2



Photograph V: Electrical Grid 1



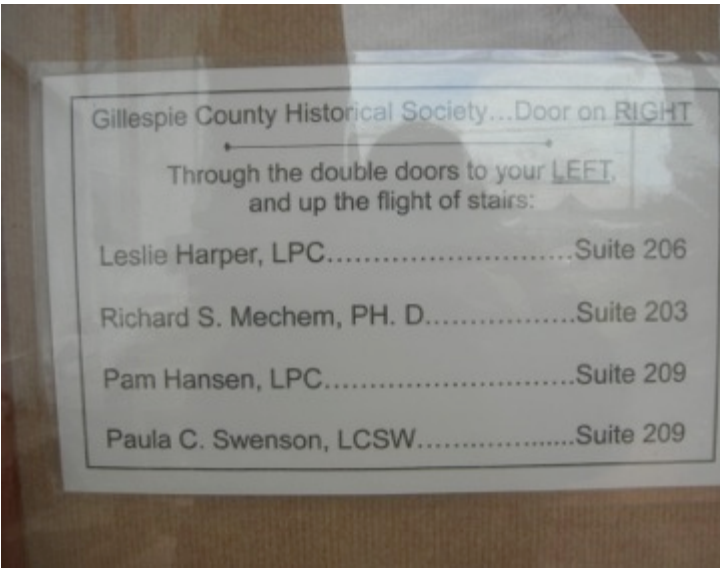
Photograph W: Electrical Grid 3



Photograph X: Security System



Photograph Y: Plumbing System



Photograph Z: Tenant Offices



Photograph A1: Exterior Office/Archive Building



Photograph B1: Weber Sunday House



Photograph C1: Fire House Museum



Photograph D1: The Fassel-Roder House



Photograph E1: Walton-Smith Log Cabin



Photograph F1: The Kammlah Barn



Photograph G1: The Arhelger Bathhouse



Photograph H1: Kammlah Homestead



Photograph I1: Wagon Shed Display



Photograph J1: The White Oak School



Photograph K1: The Vereins Kirche



Photograph L1: The Schandua House