



*Statewide Preservation
Program Plan
for
The Delaware Division of
Libraries*

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Introduction

Because of a number of recent collaborative alliances and strategic efforts, the libraries and cultural heritage institutions of Delaware are poised to achieve what has taken many states and regions years to do: develop a preservation plan, or program, that can assist organizations across the state.

Recent preservation-related activities in Delaware have included a statewide “critical collections” preservation survey, a planned project of institutional preservation site surveys, and disaster planning efforts. This report will review the results of those efforts and suggest further steps to enhance statewide preservation planning and programming in Delaware.

Preservation Survey Initiative

Background and Respondents

As part of a preservation planning project funded in part by the Maine State Library and sponsored by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), the Delaware Division of Libraries distributed a preservation “Critical Collections Questionnaire” to collect baseline information about Delaware libraries’ preservation activities and needs. The information was collected to provide background for an NEDCC workshop, “How to Survey Your Preservation Needs,” to be held September 26, 2007.

The survey was distributed on June 6, 2007, with a deadline for completion of June 22, 2007. By the deadline, a total of fifteen (15) surveys were received. Fourteen of the responding institutions were public libraries; the one other was an academic library.

Survey Results

Many of the findings related specifically to the collections of the responding libraries, and will be useful in the on-site preservation survey activities. However, in an analysis of the surveys, some specific trends and needs appeared which may be helpful in planning future preservation activities within the State of Delaware.

Critical Collections Questionnaire: Collections Issues

The survey instrument asked respondents to select and describe one collection from their holdings that the library considered to be unique and essential for research, the library’s mission, or other purposes. Many respondents answered with one or more collection names, or subject areas, and many of the answers were library-specific. However, six of the libraries specifically named either Delaware-related or DelMarVa-related collections as their key collections. In addition, collections of family histories at two institutions were highlighted as important. As preservation planning moves forward in the state, subject areas including Delawareana and local history should be an important focus of activities at all institutions.

When asked why the collection is considered to be critical, there were two categories which drew a large number of responses. Eleven organizations noted that the collection documented important topics in local history; eight said the materials documented particular areas of research interest. The specific collections were noted as important due to their documentation of a locale or region, or the fact that they covered specific topics of interest.

Libraries were asked to describe these important collections by providing the number or volumes and the condition of the items, by format. A number of the responding institutions did not fully

complete this question. However, those that did had many holdings in the book, pamphlet, manuscript, map and photograph formats. While very few rated their collections in poor condition, many ranked the book and pamphlet in category 3 on a 5-scale, which would equate to a “fair” or “good” rating, and suggest areas to target in the on-site preservation surveys.

These important collections are used for a wide variety of reasons. The most popular uses, cited by eight libraries each, were for Genealogy or Personal research; although scholarly research/publications and school projects and/or papers each garnered five responses.

Less than half of the respondents answered the questions about which local, regional or national collections related specifically to their critical collections. However, four of the institutions said local historical societies held complementary materials, and three specifically named the Delaware Public Archives as holding related collections.

A clear majority (13) of the libraries had access policies which made these critical collections non-circulating; five mentioned that the materials could only be used with permission. When asked what effect preservation activities would have on the access policies, the largest group of respondents (5) noted that there would be no change; three suggested there might be increased access.

Methods of access which were currently being provided to the collections were queried; ten institutions noted that the critical collections could be accessed through the library’s online catalog. Many of the institutions noted that over 90% of their collections were under intellectual control; most said that only a small percentage of their materials did not have formal access points. However, there were two respondents noting that 50% did not have formal access points, and one library noted that 100% of the materials in their critical collection were missing these points. When asked about the portions with no access, eight institutions noted a backlog in processing/cataloging, and in the “other” category, two noted photograph and film materials were not cataloged. Eight institutions noted that there was not a project to complete the bibliographic and/or intellectual access to the collection; five noted formal or informal programs.

The final questions in this section were related to mission statements and collections policies within the libraries. When asked if the statements or policies encompassed their special collections, eight institutions said yes, and six said no.

Critical Collections Questionnaire: Preservation Issues

Continuing to look at the critical collections identified by the libraries, there was a grid of questions asking respondents to indicate which specific format of materials they considered to be in particular need of preservation attention. Those answering noted the causes of damage for fifteen formats of materials. There was a wide variety of responses to these questions. The types of damage cited most for books, pamphlets, and archives was poor storage and handling; for maps and photographs, light was noted as the worst culprit.

The principal causes of deterioration suffered by the critical collections were mostly poor storage conditions, use, brittle (acidic) paper, poor handling, and photocopying. Preservation activities which have been, or are being done toward the preservation of these critical materials include proper care and handling (mentioned by 9 respondents), and rehousing, basic preservation repairs, and staff education, each mentioned by five libraries.

The scope of current preservation activities at the surveyed libraries included utilization of acid-free supplies, theft prevention, and environmental control. While a majority of the organizations did not answer a question on what preservation activities are planned for the future if nothing

had been previously done, those that answered the questions noted better storage, reorganization of the collections, or a new building, as well as staff education.

Only one library said they had any of the critical collection protected by library binding, and that was only to a level of 5%. When asked about the use of non-acidic containers to protect the collections, three respondents noted 10% of their collections utilized this level of protection; one library said 50% of its critical collections were housed in these preservationally-sound containers.

In thirteen libraries, the critical collection was housed in one location (a special room or area); however seven respondents said there was not adequate space for housing the critical collections.

Critical Collections Questionnaire: Building Condition Issues

The responding libraries were asked to describe the condition of parts of the physical facility in which the critical collection materials are housed. Most of the organizations related building components such as walls, roof, windows and skylights, plumbing and HVAC systems received ratings of 3-5, indicating their condition as good to excellent. There were two respondents ranking their ceilings as poor, and one with electrical systems ranked at a 1, or very poor. The worst result of this question, though, was that one library noted that all of the areas of building components at their library ranked 3 or lower.

Investigating the environmental controls that exist in the physical facility in which the critical collection is housed, it was found that air conditioning (14 libraries) was the most-utilized type of system.

A great number (13) of the surveyed libraries had security or fire protection systems of some type in the facility where the critical collection is housed. The most-used systems were fire suppression systems such as sprinklers, Halon or gas suppressants, or water mists (13 institutions); motion detectors (9); and door alarms (7).

Eleven institutions have not made any provisions for upgrading their facilities to address preservation needs; only two noted that they had done this, via construction of new buildings.

Eight institutions noted that they had assigned someone on staff the responsibility to administer and care for the collections that they designated as critical; five did not. About half of the institutions did not list specific financial resources for the support of preservation activities at their libraries; those that did answer this question affirmatively noted annual budgetary allocations or line items as the funding resources.

Critical Collections Questionnaire: Building Condition Issues

Overall, the survey determined that many of the libraries considered their Delaware-related collections among the most important, or critical, in their library. These collections are used for local history and personal research purposes. Among the materials in these collections, conditions of the book and pamphlet portions of the collections were rated lower for their condition than any other types of formats. Leading factors for damage included storage and handling. Potentially these issues could be dealt with in a workshop addressing “archival holdings maintenance,” or care of archival and local history collections through better storage and more careful handling.

Libraries noted that their local historical societies, as well as the Delaware Public Archives, had complementary collections, which is a good reason for bringing these types of institutions into any further statewide preservation program planning. Finally, while the condition of many of the library buildings, as well as their systems, were cited as good, there seemed to be a lack of

policies and budgeting for preservation, which might be improved through further education and awareness-raising.

Current and Future Disaster Planning Resources

Current Activities

The Records Services Division of the Delaware Public Archives has developed a model disaster planning program through the support of the national Council of State Archivists (COSA) organization.

Under the leadership of Joanne Mattern, Manager of Records Services, the Division already had a disaster plan and disaster team. The group also has “a seat in the situation room” of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, representing records- and collections-holding institutions on the statewide emergency response group. Additionally, Records Services works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency Mid-Atlantic Region office, holding meetings with the Regional FEMA office at least quarterly.

Records Services has excellent outreach functions in disaster preparedness and recovery as well. The group has long provided information, training, and awareness-raising. They have developed an emergency team which goes out to do recovery at disaster sites (including recent work in Sussex County); often this team is called upon even before institutions contact commercial disaster recovery companies, because they can help with selection issues and setting salvage priorities.

In direct support of libraries, Records Services offered a training session for librarians, bringing in nationally-known disaster planning and recovery consultant Barbara Moore to train librarians on disaster planning, with a focus on the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) automated disaster planning tool, Dplan.

The Records Services group would like to expand this outreach effort further, and has recently applied for a National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Preservation and Access Grant to set up a statewide disaster planning consortium which would serve all types of cultural heritage institutions (archives, libraries, museums, and historical societies), with a centralized storage “cache” of disaster supplies, and the development of a Delaware Disaster Assistance Team (D-DAT). Mattern is looking at the California “disaster assistance network” model, where five or more multi-county networks offer training, assistance in disaster plan development, preservation site surveys specifically designed to document disaster vulnerabilities or risks at institutions, and even mutual aid agreements, where employees from institutions not affected by disasters can work on recovery at disaster-stricken institutions, but continue to receive their regular wages and benefits. For more information about these networks, and the model statewide California Preservation Program, see www.calpres.org. If the NEH grant is received, Mattern hopes to bring Julie Page, former Preservation Officer at University of California-San Diego, and now co-coordinator of the California Preservation Program, to work with Delaware institutions in developing a sustainable statewide disaster network.

Mattern also spoke of working with other nearby states (particularly Maryland and Virginia) on disaster planning efforts. She noted that MARAC, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, is also helping states in the region develop statewide disaster response plans.

Mattern is developing agreements with commercial recovery organizations such as Munters Moisture Control, and hopes to develop relationships with CCAHA (the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, a regional conservation service center located in Philadelphia), and

PALINET. A future goal is also to identify resource people, set up teams, establish telephone trees, and train respondents who are authorized to react to cultural heritage disasters.

Recommended Future Steps in Disaster Planning

The Delaware Public Archives Records Services group is building a disaster preparedness and response program which could rival national model programs such as those in California and Mississippi. The Department of Libraries should join in this effort as a full partner to help enhance and grow the program.

There are some other immediate ideas which the Delaware Division of Libraries could bring to the table. One is to enhance the collaborative and cross-institutional nature of disaster planning among institutions. To further expand and sustain the network, there are some activities which Delaware libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies can do:

- Identify a “point person” for collaborative disaster planning at each institution, who can be a resource for individual institutional or multi-institutional, cooperative disaster planning and recovery.
- Make sure libraries and cultural heritage institution develop disaster plans by offering help to those that do not yet have plans, and then facilitating sharing of paper or electronic copies of the plans between institutions.
- Hold regular, statewide disaster training meetings on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Topics for meetings can start with basic activities such as plan development, and then branch out to topics such as security, environmental controls, insurance, and even pandemic preparations.
- Develop consortial contracts with commercial disaster recovery vendor organizations, and/or insurance carriers, which can help libraries and cultural heritage institutions save money.
- Develop a joint or consortial disaster recovery plan, where institutions with expertise in recovery of specific formats of materials (for example, electronic records or maps) could take the lead as a statewide resource for those particular formats.
- Develop technical response systems. By working on these systems, cultural heritage institutions will be able to answer the technically-related concerns below. Can libraries identify computer hot sites they could use to assure continuity of operations? Can libraries have immediate reciprocal borrowing agreements in the time of disasters, where patrons of disaster-stricken libraries can borrow from other nearby institutions? Can libraries or other state agencies provide emergency archiving of digital data and electronic records and resources? How will Interlibrary Loan fulfillment be handled by disaster-afflicted libraries?

Another area where all types of cultural heritage institutions can take advantage of public libraries’ close ties with their communities is in reaching beyond collections-holding institutions to work further with the fire, police, emergency management, and volunteer organizations assisting in disasters (VOADs). In nine cities and states across the U.S., this type of activity has been achieved by development of local “Alliance for Response” programs to bring together cultural heritage and emergency management professionals to discuss and plan for key emergency issues. Working from the basis of activity that the Records Services Division has begun, and building on the knowledge of local emergency resources held at each library, the State of Delaware could hold an Alliance for Response “Forum” (the initial meeting of the emergency and heritage managers) and then continue quarterly meetings with key emergency management contacts. In June 2007, an Alliance for Response Forum in Philadelphia drew almost 90 participants. The work of this group will continue with a September meeting. For more information on this groundbreaking program, see (<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/programs/AFRmain.HTM>).

The Wider Scope: A Preservation Program for the State of Delaware

Expanding Activities and Model Programs

To truly meet the preservation needs of the state, preservation planning in Delaware must go beyond disaster planning and look at such issues as environmental control, collections care and repair, caring for non-book materials, and other important issues.

Also, the plan must reach beyond the public library system to include academic and special/corporate libraries, and other types of cultural heritage institutions, including archives, museums, historical societies, and other organizations which hold collections.

Finally, the scope of the state's preservation work should expand beyond "critical collections" in the state's institutions to encompass the care and longevity of all types of materials through a holistic "collections-care" focus that looks to preserve both special and general collections.

One state that has developed a holistic preservation program is Washington. There, a program called the "Washington Preservation Initiative" has been supported for four years by state LSTA funding.

The initial activity in Washington was a statewide preservation needs assessment survey, which looked not only at building and collection condition, but also at the preservation educational, consulting, and commercial service needs of libraries and other types of cultural heritage institutions in the state.

What the WPI leaders found was a large interest in a continuing schedule of preservation workshops held at locations throughout the state and subsidized to some level by LSTA funding; a program of preservation site surveys subsidized by state funding; and, later, the ability to borrow environmental monitoring equipment to determine temperature, humidity, light levels, and the environmental control needs in their organizations. Information on the initial survey and many of the activities of the Washington Preservation Initiative program are available online at (<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/preservation.aspx?>).

Suggested Steps to Build the Delaware Preservation Program

A number of activities, many of which can be done economically, could assist Delaware in developing a successful statewide preservation program.

Statewide Preservation Needs Assessment, Phase 2

Going beyond the information already gathered in the Critical Collections Questionnaire, this survey, which could be web-based and open to all cultural heritage institutions in the state, could look at the specific, individual-institution workshop, consulting, and preservation/conservation service needs which could be addressed by non-profit or commercial providers.

Continuing Workshop Series

In a priority order determined by the preservation needs assessment survey described above, the State could offer to cultural heritage institutions, free or at a minimal charge, a series of workshops on general or specific preservation topics ranging from environmental control to book repair to digital preservation. The State could leverage relationships with preservation education

providers such as PALINET, CCAHA, and NEDCC to bring an educational series with a wide variety of viewpoints.

Subsidized or Coordinated Preservation Surveys

Through LSTA or other funding sources, the Delaware Division of Libraries could offer 4-6 preservation surveys a year either free of charge or at a reduced rate to cultural heritage institutions, delivering specific preservation information and planning assistance to institutions that apply to receive the surveys. If not subsidized, the State Library could be the central conduit between institutions that need the surveys and the organizations that can provide them. The consultant recognizes that the 2007 program with NEDCC to identify, train, and perform surveys on public libraries which apply for such assistance is a large initial step in this direction.

Increased Preservation Information Online

By linking to established preservation efforts in the state such as the Records Services Division, and in the region, such as CCAHA or PALINET, and even developing an online collection of successful preservation case histories within the state, the Delaware Division of Libraries could start to establish itself as a leading preservation institution within the State.

Conclusion

By teaming with existing and regional preservation efforts, and further surveying, then serving the preservation needs of cultural heritage institutions within the state, the Delaware Division of Libraries can develop a successful, sustainable Statewide Preservation Program.

There is currently Federal funding available to build preservation programs within states. These “Connecting to Collections” grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) are to help determine preservation needs and build plans to answer those needs within all states in the next two years. The Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, and in particular, its Director, Debra Hess-Norris, are interested in developing one of these grants within Delaware. Information about the program appears below.

The agency invites proposals for statewide, collaborative planning grants to address the recommendations of the Heritage Health Index (HHI), which found the collections held in the public trust by libraries, museums, and archives to be at great risk. The report offered four recommendations for collecting institutions:

- that they provide safe conditions for their collections;
- that they develop an emergency plan;
- that they assign responsibility for collections care; and
- that they marshal public and private support for and raise public awareness about collections care.

These planning grants are intended to engage institutions with responsibility for collections stewardship within a state, commonwealth, or territory in consultation and planning for ways to address the HHI recommendations most relevant for their state. It is not necessary for all four recommendations to be addressed, but all four may, indeed, be pertinent. These grants are aimed at fostering effective partnerships among organizations that have a strong commitment to shared collections stewardship goals. This program will fund ongoing or new collaborations. Projects may build on previous or nascent statewide planning efforts. Projects should demonstrate how the participating organizations (representing libraries, museums, archives, and other relevant statewide organizations) will work together in a planning process that moves the state closer to achieving the recommendations of the HHI through an appropriate and achievable plan for

action. These planning grants are a central component of the Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action initiative and will result in a series of models and best practices for institutions nationwide. There will be two grant competitions, in FY 2008 and FY 2009, with the goal of making one award per state. IMLS also plans to offer a limited number of implementation grants of up to \$500,000 each in order to help implement model statewide plans. IMLS will post excellent statewide plans and best practices on the agency's website as part of this initiative.

However, because of existing survey results and disaster planning activities, the Delaware Division of Libraries is poised to move forward as part of the IMLS program or through relatively inexpensive program development with existing resource providers such as PALINET, CCAHA, NEDCC, and others.

As the size of natural and man-made disasters, and the scope of damage they cause continues to escalate, the Delaware Division of Libraries can take steps to develop a preservation program which will aid all types of cultural heritage institutions within the state, and could become a model project within the nation.

Action Steps for the Delaware Preservation Program

- A. Preservation Needs Assessment Survey: Going beyond the Critical Collections Survey analyzed in this document, the statewide needs assessment survey would go to all cultural heritage institutions in the state to determine trends in institutional needs for preservation workshops, preservation consulting, and commercial services. Analysis of the survey will provide planning information for all subsequent action steps in the program.
- B. Preservation Workshop Series: Dependent on the results of the statewide needs assessment survey, the order of topics for a continuing series of workshops would be developed. These could include basic preservation practices; archival holdings maintenance; disaster planning; environmental control; non-book preservation; and a variety of other topics. To continue momentum, these workshops should be held once quarterly, and open to all types of cultural heritage institutions.
- C. Alliance for Response: Developing and holding a statewide "Alliance for Response" Forum, similar to the session held in Ohio in 2004 which resulted in a series of regional meetings, is an excellent way to continue the momentum of the work currently being done by Records Services, extend the impact of the workshop series and preservation site surveys, and bring the information and authority of the state's police, fire, and emergency management officials to the cultural heritage institutions of Delaware.
- D. Preservation Site Surveys: In addition to the surveys being sponsored in Fall 2007 by NEDCC, the Division of Libraries could offer four or more surveys a year to cultural heritage institutions in the state. Promoting the survey program by providing details on what a survey can do to assist an institution in protecting its cultural materials will be extremely important, so that interested institutions can understand that this type of project can bring them future Federal and foundation grants for preservation activities.
- E. Development of an Online Preservation Presence: Following an review of other states' preservation-related websites and literature, a series of articles and features would be developed for the Delaware Division of Libraries to design and place on their website, or a project-specific website. More than just links to sample documents, this website would feature success stories in preservation from cultural heritage institutions across

the state, as well as specific preservation information from leading providers across the region and the country.