

Part 5: Grant Narrative

Piedmont Historic Preservation Society is a non-profit all volunteer society designed for the continued preservation of a collection consisting of documents and artifacts relating to the Piedmont Manufacturing Company, a group of upstate textile mills active from 1876 through the mid-1970s, as well as the surrounding farming areas supplying the mill and village with needed materials. The collection continues to grow. Piedmont Manufacturing Company was the first large textile mill in the upstate near Greenville. It has been called the “pioneer” mill of SC.

The museum is currently housed in one large room in the Piedmont Community Building. Two large locked storage areas in the structure contain mill machinery and furniture from the mill and village. Also, many documents are housed in the climate-controlled building, with sprinklers and a new alarm system. This room is 600 sq. feet for display and for the work of the volunteers. It has become too small for a growing museum and we are only able to open for one day a week.

The society will move the museum into the oldest YWCA in the state built specifically for the women of the village. This 1908 Folk Victorian house of 4,000 sq. ft. plus a full basement will allow the society to provide private work areas for the archivists and for researchers, and locked storage. It will also give us room to have educational activities for locals and students and we plan to open three days per week. The structure will have state-of-the-art systems added during rehab, including HVAC and humidifier, fire and alarm and surveillance, internet, as well as handicap access.

Over the past year we had 569 visitors and volunteers sign in. All our workers are volunteer, so the number in attendance fluctuates from 5 to 12 weekly. Since our historian and archivist, Joe Hursey, joined us just over a year ago, he has motivated us to better catalogue our collections.

We need many items related to storing and protecting these precious documents including metal shelving for the document boxes, large flat boxes, mylar, and other related materials.

Piedmont is an unincorporated village, and therefore, no funding from a municipality is available, but the two counties that the village lies in, Anderson and Greenville, have provided funding to cover our rent and insurance. We anticipate that support will continue. We also have fund raisers, will soon start membership dues, and are garnering business support from the area as we expand our work. Donations have been in the hundreds of thousands relating to the new building for the museum. We also write grants and have received two large ones in the past year covering the cost of purchase of the historic building of over \$140,000.

Project Description/Summary of Plan of Work

Over the last 6 months, the Piedmont Historical Preservation Society has received three significant archival collections specifically focused on Piedmont's rich history. The Payne Family collection, a 10-cu. ft. collection containing original source documents beginning in 1793 and running to about 2000 has numerous Civil War and personal letters, legal documents specifically tied to slavery, Black Code contacts, Reconstruction and New South period material, as well as dozens of early 19th century plat maps of some of the first Piedmont and Upstate settlements. The slavery related material is extremely important in that it specifically names many slaves and the plantations with which they were associated.

The next collection is the Don Roper collection, which is also 10-cu. ft. spanning from Piedmont Village's beginnings dating 1876 to about 1980. This collection is incredibly important in that Don Roper was the historian of Piedmont's history, writing under the pen name, Saluda Sam.

These documents provide a nearly complete history of the development of Piedmont Village from its founding mill in 1876 to the mills closing a hundred years later.

The last collection, the Piedmont Mill Collection, 1876-1980's, is approximately 30-cu. ft.

While there is a Piedmont Village, there would not be a village without the Piedmont Mills. This collection focuses on construction and daily workings of the mills that became the largest producer of textiles in the world by 1900 transforming an antebellum agrarian settlement into a New South industrial community. Much of this documentation includes architectural drawings and village maps.

The three collections literally came in boxes, bags and plastic tubs. All of the material is very clean in condition, but very little of the material is in any organized format, which will require the most time for the project. The first step requires organizing the material by content type, and then organizing in a chronological manner as closely as possible. During the second step, the material will be identified and placed in appropriately titled folders, and then housed in archival boxes. In the last step, an itemized finding aid will be created.

The main goal of this project is to preserve, organize, and provide a finding aid for our collections. Our objectives are: 1) to process and organize materials in a usable format for future research and exhibition, 2) to identify materials with key words and list them for a finding aid, so that these items are easy identified for researchers, specifically the African American/slavery related material, 3) to properly house materials in archival storage containers for proper preservation purposes, 4) and to complete the detailed finding aid and place them on our website for museum and researcher use. To evaluate the project objectives, we will use the successful completion of the finding aid which works for staff, visitors, and researchers as the guide. Lastly

the project completion target date is Spring 2023 to coincide with the projected opening of the Piedmont Historical Museum.

The Society will advertise these collections through our website, Facebook page, local newspapers, monthly speakers' meetings, and our speaker's bureau. The collections will be used as an incentive for other local families to donate their heirlooms. These archives will stand for themselves as key to backcountry and textile history. With the leadership of Joe Hursey, historian and archivist, the museum will be able to provide these primary documents for study for decades to come.

Scope of Project:

This project will be headed by volunteer Joe Hursey, a recently retired archivist with Smithsonian Institution; see attached resume for qualifications. With Hursey will be Dr. Anne Peden, Charlene Spelts, and Charles Garrison, working on the collections, which will require an estimated 300-man hours, over 20 weeks to completely process.

The three collections will be processed with an end result of all archival material properly housed in file folders within proper storage containers. A complete finding aid for each collection will be posted on the Piedmont Historical Preservation Society's website for researcher use. Four volunteers will process the collections. Joe Hursey will serve as project supervisor. Hursey comes to us after recently leaving his position with the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian, where he served for 10 years. Along with Hursey and three volunteers, they will process all three collections, which is estimated to require 300-man hours to completely process.

The Piedmont Historical Preservation Society's Cost Share shall be provided through volunteer hours. Supervisor volunteer will serve 150-man hours at \$34.00 per hour for a total cost share of

\$5,100. The remaining 150 hours will be completed by three other volunteers at \$20 per hour for a total cost of \$3,000.

The collections will be catalogued for the finding aid as follows:

Payne Collection consists of approximately 10 cubic feet of archival material to be organized as:

- Series 1: Personal Papers
- Series 2: Business Records
- Series 3: Family History
- Series 4: Publications
- Series 5: Photos

Don Roper Collection consists of approximately 10 cubic feet of archival material to be organized as:

- Series 1: Personal Papers
- Series 2: Business Records
- Series 3: Family History
- Series 4: Publications
- Series 5: Photos
- Series 6: Saluda Sam Writings
- Series 7: Piedmont Mill Sports
- Series 8: Piedmont Mill Schools
- Series 9: Piedmont Mill Churches
- Series 10: Social Clubs

Piedmont Mill Village Collection consists of approximately 30 cubic feet of archival material to be organized as:

- Series 1: Personal Papers
- Series 2: Business Records
- Series 3: Family History
- Series 4: Publications
- Series 5: Photos
- Series 6: A/V- Photo Slides
- Series 7: Piedmont Mill Sports
- Series 8: Piedmont Mill Schools
- Series 9: Piedmont Mill Churches
- Series 10: Social Clubs