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Institution name: South Carolina Historical Society

Project title: What's in your attic?

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Summary of Project Activities & Accomplishments:

In September 2022, the South Carolina Historical Society (SCHS) was awarded \$5,000.00 to offer free presentations throughout South Carolina discussing the benefits of donating materials to institution, the questions potential donors should ask of an institution, and describe the donation process.

Presentations also included basic preservation methods recommended by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) and from Margot Note's *Creating Family Archives*.

Presentations completed include:

Clemson Area African American Museum	October 11, 2022
Charleston Chapter of the SC Genealogical Society	October 16, 2022
Marlboro County Museum	December 6, 2022
Horry County Museum	January 28, 2023
McCormick County Library	February 16, 2023
Revolutionary War Visitor Center, Camden	February 28, 2023
Allendale County Library	March 18, 2023 (10:30am)
Hampton County Library	March 18, 2023 (1:00pm)
Hardeeville Community Library	April 1, 2023
Florence, FMU campus	April 15, 2023
Beaufort County Library, Beaufort District Collection	April 17, 2023
Pickens County Museum	May 20, 2023
Lowcountry Senior Center	May 25, 2023

Presentations were promoted via SCHS website, e-blasts, social media marketing by the society and the host as well as some newsprint and live media. The Confederation of SC Local Historical Societies also included information on the presentation in their February newsletter which piqued the interest of the Pickens County Museum who reached out to schedule a program.

Press samples include:

Post & Courier, September 10, 2022: [Have old family papers?](#)

Fox 24 – Charleston, January 24, 2023: [The SC Historical Society asks; What in your attic?](#)

Feedback was positive, and the most common comment is, “that was more interesting than I thought it was going to be.” Only one attendee thought it would be like PBS’s popular show *Antiques Roadshow*. Attendance varied from one to thirty-five people. The lowest attendance of five was at the Pickens County Museum, but it was a beautiful spring Saturday with many outdoor activities scheduled in the area. The highest attendance was at the Horry County Museum. Although great questions were asked at each event, the presentation at the Beaufort County Library concluded with an informative discussion between the speaker and attendees that included a local appraiser and a representative from an auction house in attendance as well as several potential donors. A brief follow-up survey was created via SurveyMonkey for host sites and seven of the hosts responded. Six of those rated the presentation as “extremely helpful” or “very helpful” and one rated it as “somewhat helpful”.

Following these presentations Ms. Ellison has verbally recommended these repositories to attendees who had materials in question: SC State Museum, WWI Museum in Kansas City, Pennsylvania Historical Society, WWII Museum in New Orleans, and Horry County Museum. She has also corresponded with guests via email and telephone recommending institutions such as the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, National Museum of Toys and Miniatures, and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

The goal was to get the public thinking about things they have in their possession that may have historic value and I believe that goal was accomplished. Looking back on the past nine months of traveling for these presentations, I have made wonderful contacts and began relationships with libraries, archives, and museums across South Carolina. I have a better understanding of what each institution is looking for regarding donations and the support they need from their community and other cultural heritage

organizations. While these presentations were not high in attendance, the people that did attend were interested, engaged, and seemed to be the people who needed to attend.

One mother-daughter duo drove from Beaufort to attend the talk in Conway and attended the Beaufort program as well – saying that the presentation had improved over time. After meeting them in Conway, I visited their home in Beaufort to review their collection and they came to visit the archives to see where materials would be stored should they choose to donate. They also met with two other archives as potential homes and will decide where their family papers will be donated sometime soon.

Cost sharing:

The bulk of the funds were used for staff salary and mileage reimbursement. Originally, the society should have included more funding for staff time and less for travel expenses since lodging was only necessary for one night. Staff spent time customizing the presentation to each location in addition to travel time. So far, the society has been reimbursed \$1,126.15 by the SC SHRAB Regrant program. \$628.99 was spent on brochures for attendees from the Society of American Archivists and the rest was mileage reimbursement.

