

Grant Narrative

Organization Overview

The Cultural and Heritage Commission of York County (CHC) is an American Alliance of Museums reaccredited 501(c) (3) not for profit organization that operates the Historical Center of York County, McCelvey Center, Historic Brattonsville, Main Street Children's Museum, and the Museum of York County. The mission of the CHC is to communicate and preserve the natural and cultural histories of the Carolina Piedmont, inspiring a lifetime of learning. The Historical Center of York County (HC) serves as an official repository for York County court records in addition to collecting and preserving records related to the history of the Carolina Piedmont and making them available for genealogical and historical research. The CHC has an updated *Collections Management Policy* that was adopted 2014 and used for AAM Reaccreditation in 2016, as well as an *Emergency Response and Disaster Preparedness Plan* for each of its sites that was created in 2015 with its most recent updates occurring in 2022. See attached documents.

The HC holdings provide excellent primary and secondary resources for scholars, students, historians, and genealogists. The Search Room resources include the Hart Collection of genealogical research, family histories, cemetery surveys, church histories, city directories, county maps, newspapers on microfilm, genealogical periodicals, and local history books, as well as online access to Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com. The HC also houses the Southern Revolutionary War Institute comprised of the Bobby Moss Collection of research on soldiers and battles, area maps, reference books, and on microfilm the Draper Manuscripts and the SC Accounts Audited of Revolutionary War Claims. The archival holdings include case files and minute books for Court of Common Pleas, General Sessions, Court of Equity and Circuit Court,

as well as Will Books, Inventories and Appraisals, Voter Registrations, Sheriff Records, and Coroner Inquests ledgers. On microfilm, there is Conveyance indexes and books, Estate records, Wills, Inventory and Appraisals, Confederate Pension Applications, and federal censuses. In addition, the archive houses public donations including garden clubs, literary societies, family papers, store ledgers, church records, business records, school memorabilia, rare books and photographic collections. The archive also collects corporate history of the CHC and its sites. The total cubic footage of the archival collections is 2,487.911 cubic feet.

The HC opened in 1989 inside the McCelvey Center, which was a school until 1987. In 2014, the HC moved into a renovated facility on campus, formerly the annex built in 1956 for the school. There are 1 archival collections storage room, 1 art collections storage room, 1 object collections storage room, 3 processing rooms, a Search Room, the Southern Revolutionary War Institute, and 4 staff offices in this renovated 18,600 square foot building. All 3 collection storage rooms are located in a secured hallway and each room has a separate key that only appropriate staff can sign out. The entire facility is climate controlled with separate HVAC units for each storage room and equipped with a fire suppression system inspected annually by the Fire Marshall and includes water sprinklers, fire extinguishers as well as an alarm system directly connected to the police and fire departments. The Search Room and Southern Revolutionary War Institute are designated areas for research and are open to the public Monday through Friday from 10am to 4pm. There are 3 full time staff members in the Archives Department, which includes Director of Archives, Archives Specialist, and Researcher. Currently there are 8 volunteers who each work 4-8 hours a week with the Archives Department.

Due to Covid-19, all CHC sites closed on March 16, 2020 through June 3, 2021. Archives staff worked remotely assisting 489 patrons in 2020 and 400 in 2021. Prior to the

pandemic, the annual number of users in 2019 was 1,710 and in 2018 was 1,939. The annual budget for the Archives Department in fiscal year 2021/2022 is \$183,167.00 (including salaries and benefits). Sources of funding for CHC are county appropriations, membership dues, admissions, gift shop sales, corporate and private donations, and grants.

Project Description/Summary and Plan of Work

The HC is requesting funds through the SC State Historical Records Advisory Board Regrant Project to complete microfilming 32.23 cubic feet of the York County Court of Common Pleas Judgment Rolls dating from 1840 to 1869. In 2012, the Deputy Clerk of Court for Common Pleas contacted staff to retrieve old court documents from the attic of the courthouse before its renovations. Generally, the court records were in good condition, some previously encapsulated in rice paper, and most measuring 14"x 17". Once sorted, organized, rehoused, and labeled, there were 52 additional boxes (32.23 cu.ft.) of Court of Common Pleas (1840-1869) transferred to the archival holdings at the HC. Between 2005 and 2010, we were able to microfilm 56 boxes (34.71 cu. ft.) of Court of Common Pleas (1800-1839) and 27 boxes (16.74 cu. ft.) of Court of Common Pleas (1840-1869) utilizing SC SHRAB matching grants. Our goal is to preserve these additional York County Court of Common Pleas (CCP) Judgment Rolls dating from 1840 to 1869 by microfilming the original documents. To achieve this goal, we will need to hire a microfilming vendor. The selected vendor Palmetto Microfilm Systems, Inc. will microfilm approximately 2,400 large format documents at a rate of \$1.95 each for a total of \$4,680.00. The vendor will spend approximately 40,000 hours imaging documents up to legal size images at a rate of \$0.16 each for a total of \$6,400.00. The vendor will provide approximately 20 silver rolls with duplicates at a cost of \$3,000. The vendor will include pick up

and return of documents at no extra charge. The CHC will match the requested grant amount of \$5,000.00 with a cash match of \$9,230.00 and in-kind match of \$2,544.00 for this project. The total project cost is estimated at \$16,774.00. See attached quote.

The CCP Judgment Rolls, dating from 1800 through 1900, are valuable county government records that provide research opportunities for family history, county history, local government, and the judicial system. These case files document complaints regarding promissory notes, mortgage debts, foreclosures, property damage, personal injuries, estate settlements, as well as other issues brought before the York County Court of Common Pleas. Information includes summons and complaints, special referee reports, testimony, decrees by the judge, and judgments. These records also provide names, dates, familial relationships, and references to local events. According to the Records Retention Schedule for South Carolina Clerks of Court, Judgment Rolls are to be permanently retained. However, these have not been microfilmed for permanent retention, as verified in 2005 by John D. Mackintosh, Local Records Services Supervisor, and the Micrographics Department's list of security film holdings at the SCDAH.

By microfilming these valuable documents, we will be attaining the SC SHRAB's priority of preserving and providing access to SC historical records. The grant money will be used for long-term preservation of these historical records by having them microfilmed. Access and preservation of the CCP Judgment Rolls will be greatly improved through this grant as microfilmed documents are easier to retrieve and copy rather than handling the oversized originals. In addition, copies of the microfilm rolls will be provided to the SCDAH for safekeeping and permanent retention. We will increase public knowledge of these local government records by publicizing the preservation efforts achieved with this grant by issuing press releases to the local media, sending e-blasts to CHC members, and posting to CHC social

media. Nancy Sambets, Director of Archives, will be responsible for scheduling microfilming of Judgment Rolls, tracking project progress, writing press releases, and completing SC SHRAB reports. See attached résumé.

To achieve our goal we have developed a plan of action. In August 2022, the Director of Archives will provide a press release to the Marketing Department about the SC SHRAB grant award and the CCP Judgment Roll microfilming project. In September/October of 2022, the Director of Archives will engage Palmetto Microfilm Systems, Inc. and schedule to transport half of the CCP Judgment Roll boxes for microfilming. The Director of Archives will confirm return of the boxes to HC and delivery of the duplicate microfilm to SCDAH. The Director of Archives will stay in contact with the vendor to microfilm the second set of boxes and deliver duplicate microfilm to SCDAH. At the end of the project, the Director of Archives will provide a press release to the Marketing Department about completion of the SC SHRAB grant microfilm project and send a completed final report to SC SHRAB. As a result of this grant, 32.23 cubic feet of Judgment Rolls (1840-1869) will be microfilmed, duplicate rolls sent to SCDAH, and preservation achievements will be publicized to increase public awareness and availability of the collection.

This microfilming project will work in conjunction with the recently completed 17-year volunteer project of indexing over 200,000 names from all of the Court of Common Pleas, Equity Court, and General Sessions cases housed at the HC. These names include plaintiffs, defendants, judges, sheriffs, jurors, witnesses, attorneys, lawyers, arbitrators, guardians, and any other parties listed in each case. Staff is currently working with the Information Technology Department of York County to create an online database of these names with a link on the HC webpage to increase public awareness and use of these court records.