

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

A RESOURCE FROM IHS LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES

Issue 137 | March 2023

Engaging the Community through Collections Stewardship

By Alex Krach, Director, Grover Center

At the [Shelby County Historical Society and Grover Center](#), we're really passionate about the potential for our historic assets and information to bring our community together and foster a greater sense of belonging. We believe that by staying present and engaged, we can build a more creative and civically minded community, which is at the core of our mission statement. We're excited to explore ways to leverage our resources to make a positive impact on our community.



Storage Area Before (Shelby County Historical Society and Museum)

Our collections are split into two general categories: Library and Archives and Collections of Artifacts. Our Library and Archives collections include all kinds of amazing objects like manuscripts, publications, photos, and even video and audio recordings. Our Collections of Artifacts showcase objects that help tell the story of rural and urban life, folk art, military objects, manufactured items, pre-historic objects, decorative arts, government objects, and costume and textile items.

When we began improving the storage areas in 2018, our primary focus was on ensuring that we were meeting museum best practices for preservation. While our goal of preservation remains paramount, we've also learned firsthand how valuable these projects can be in fostering connections with community members and growing pride in our community.



Library After (Shelby County Historical Society and Museum)

In 2020, Josh Martin, executive director of the Shelby County Community Corrections, reached out to us with an exciting proposal to set up a program through the juvenile department's Community Service-Learning Project. We were thrilled to collaborate with Mr. Martin to establish the Service Program. The program's ultimate goal is to provide inroads to highlight how their lives and memories add value and meaning to Shelby County's ongoing story.

Youth and adult participants are provided with a unique and engaging experience at the museum. Participants tour the facility, learn how the staff develops exhibits, and attend a collections care workshop. Upon completion of the tour and workshop, participants work with staff to either digitize collections or clean and fill out condition reports of objects which provides a tangible opportunity to connect with the past and acts as a platform to share their own memories



Advantage Shelby Volunteers (Shelby County Historical Society and Museum)

We value the participation of all of our program participants and strive to create an environment that fosters curiosity and learning. As such, while participants engage in tasks that help us accomplish our goals, we actively encourage them to take their time, ask questions, and examine the items they are working on. We understand that the opportunity to engage with historical artifacts can be a unique and enriching experience, and we want to ensure that participants make the most of it.

By fostering an atmosphere of inquiry and exploration, we hope to provide participants with a meaningful and memorable experience at Grover. The experience has been so impactful that several participants have become recurring volunteers, which speaks to the program's success and impact on the community. Overall, we are proud to have partnered with Mr. Martin and the Shelby County Community Corrections to establish the Service Program and provide meaningful opportunities for participants to engage with the community and connect with the past. The impact these projects have had on individuals has reinforced our commitment to engaging with our community in meaningful ways.



Art Storage After (Shelby County Historical Society and Museum)

We're really proud of the progress we've been able to make at the Grover Center, and we're incredibly grateful for the support we've received from a few key organizations. Our work on the back storage spaces, library, new room, and digitization projects were all made possible thanks to grants from the Blue River Community Foundation, Rush Shelby Energy, and the Heritage Support Grants provided by the Indiana Historical Society and made possible by Lilly Endowment, Inc. Without their support, we wouldn't have been able to make the improvements we have or to reach as many people in our community as we have.

Further Resources

- [Collections Advisors](#) (Indiana Historical Society)
- [Timely Tips](#) (Indiana Historical Society)

Collection Trainings

[Exhibiting Photographs](#)

Mar. 21 – (Connecting to Collections Care)

[Developing a Facility Security Plan](#)

Mar. 21 – (Texas Historical Commission)

[Caring for Scrapbooks](#)

Mar. 28 – (Northeast Document Conservation Center)

[Webinars](#)

Recorded – (Indiana Historical Society)

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