Processing for a Large Grant Project: MPLP and Other Things

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2010 Backlog Project Begins: Goals

- Eliminate a backlog of 4700 cubic feet
- Increase collections access
- Sustain work after grant is done

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Numbers

- Staff funding: $500,000
- 40% NHPRC
- 60% MHS matching
- Timeline: 18 months

The 40%:

QUITE A TASK!

4700 Cubic Feet is a LOT!

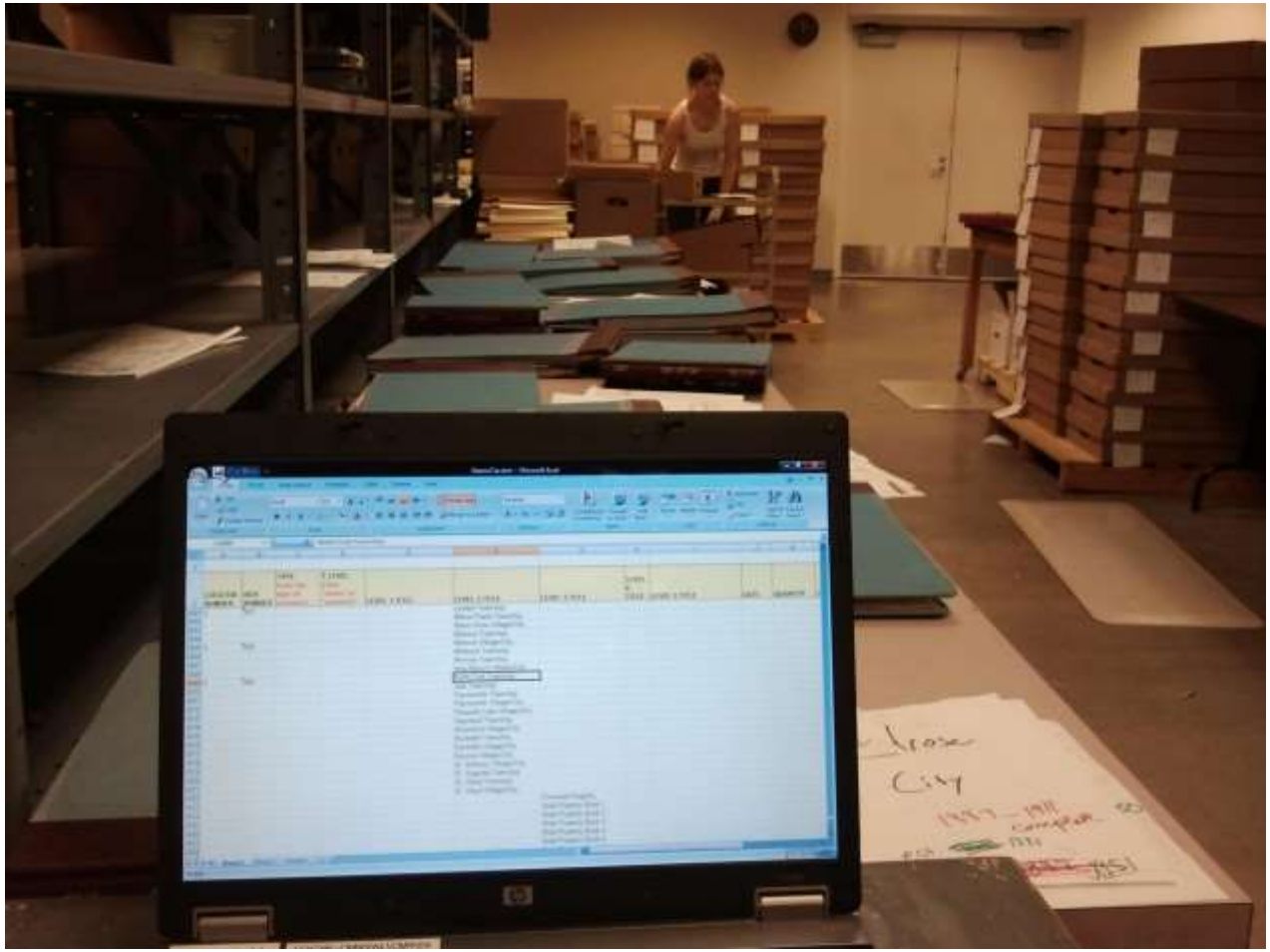
“A Baptism of Fire”

- Hit a lot of the big collections first
- Looking for cubic footage but also getting us adjusted to MPLP processing:
- More Product, Less Process is more difficult that it sounds

Using Work Space Well

Organization and Cooperation

Process



End Product

LOTS of boxes and large volumes.

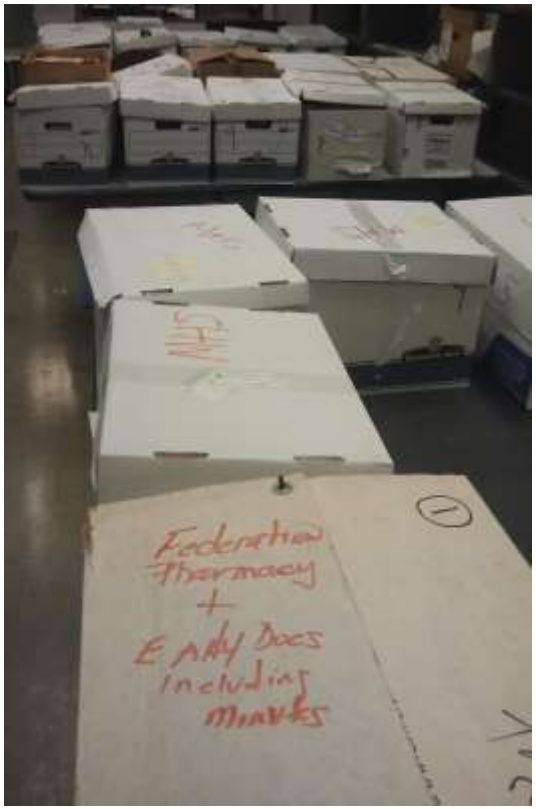
Other Kinds of Collections

Leftovers from the McCarthy Collection that Hadn't Been Dealt With: Sound and Visual Materials

Fellowes
Bankers Box
703

“MESSES”

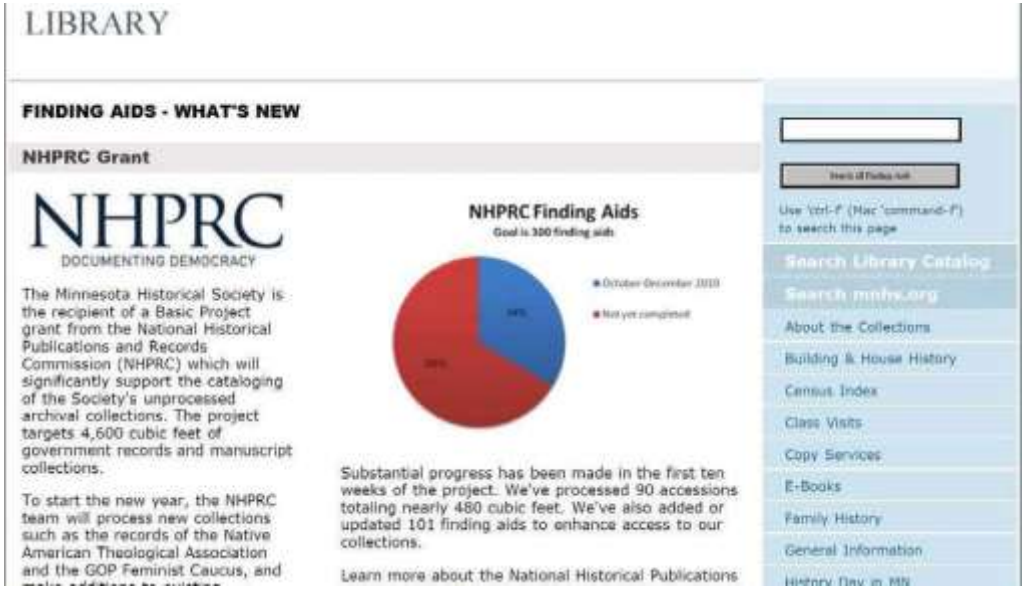
Minnesota Senior Federation was a collections that had not been appraised at all.

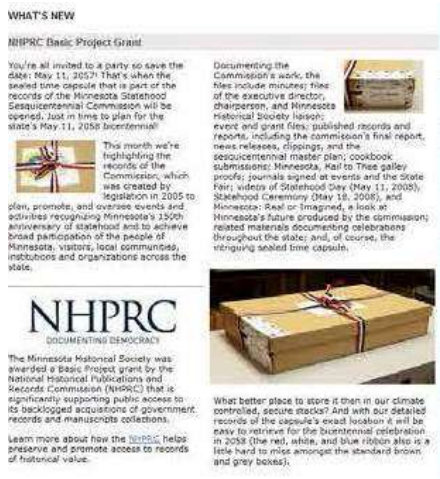


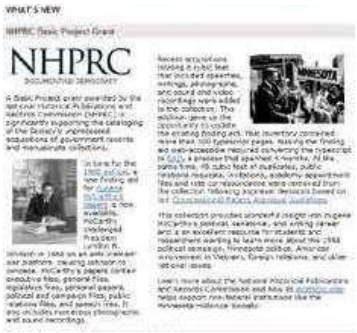
Multiple Accessions by Same Donor

Treadway and Kampelman
Were both examples of
“dribblers”

Monthly Posts







Off-Site Work: Staying Strong!

Raining on our Parade

Leaks: Disaster Preparation

…and also Construction.

The Good

We Finished! 4,792 cubic feet !

…well, they did anyway. I wasn't part of the grant anymore. But Good Enough ☺

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The Bad

- Lost staff to other grants/positions
- Lost staff at the end of the grant
- The gains made by MPLP have slowly been lost to more traditional/comfortable practices

Also Bad

- Our institutional memory is retiring in droves!
- We are running out of space!
- We are still only at the beginning of digital acquisition and preservation

The Ugly: Manager's Lessons Learned

- Keep it Simple (Access Trumps Perfection)
- Listen and Communicate
- Change affects different people in different ways
- Be flexible! (plan for the best, deal with the worst)
- Keep the talent
- Take time to rejuvenate and refresh
- Celebrate your accomplishments

The Ugly: My Lessons Learned

- Grant projects are a good way to get experience but not at all a guaranteed job afterwards
- Post-grant complacency can lead to another backlog really easily!
- Be flexible!
- Be patient …with your managers.
- Use the experience to help promote institutional change
- Archivists are not always good at change ☺

Thank You!

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For More Information See Our Collections Management Toolkit:
http://www.mnhs.org/library/findaids/CMToolkit/CMToolkit.htm