**Executive Summary**

Paper-based, audiovisual and photographic materials housed in the Old Fiske Library Museum of the Wrentham Historical Commission (WHC) were assessed for preservation planning purposes by Sean Ferguson, Preservation Specialist for the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Wrentham, MA on March 29, 2018. Simmons College graduate student Lauren Hansen joined the assessment as an educational opportunity and observed and took part in the assessment. The assessment evaluated the buildings and environments as they relate to the preservation needs of the materials; examined current policies, storage, and handling procedures; and assessed the general condition of materials. Observations and recommendations are based on a pre-site visit questionnaire, a full-day site visit, and discussions with Chairman Greg Stahl, Vice Chairman Leo Baldyga, Treasurer and Secretary Susan Harris, Members Marion Cafferky, William Keyes, Alex Leonard, Kim Shipala, and Volunteer Cheri Leonard.

Wrentham Historical Commission was established on March 27, 1967 and is responsible the stewardship and exhibition of Wrentham's history. To these ends, WHC maintains an archives of historical materials and artifacts, manages the circa 1740’s Wampum House, and operates a plaque program to mark locations of historical significance in the Town. In 2010, WHC renovated the Old Fiske Museum, which was formally the town library, to make it suitable for the storage of historical collections. Following the renovation, the Commission relocated nearly all its historical collections into the Museum. In 2010, a significant consultation project for the Commission occurred, resulting in the cataloging and arrangement of many archival collections.

Exhibits in the Old Fiske Museum are accessible to the public on the first Sunday of the month from 1:00pm to 4:00pm for free. Commission members share the responsibility of managing the collections. While research procedures have not been formally established, those interested in researching or viewing specific items in the collections may arrange an appointment with an available Commission member.

Based on observations made during the site visit and an inventory provided by members of the commission, materials stewarded by WHC include a variety of formats and media. Due to the current level of intellectual control over the collections, all numbers specified by members were estimates. According the questionnaire, WHC possesses 1,000 bound volumes, 1,500 issues of newspapers, 10,000 documents and manuscripts, 250 maps, and 65 posters. WHC also has a large photograph collection of 10,000 prints, 1,000 negatives, and 1,500 slides. Additionally, there are 25 AV materials, including film, CD’s, and magnetic tape. There were 25 pieces of art on paper, 25 paintings, 12 textiles, and approximately 2,000 artifacts as well. The WHC’s materials tell the rich history of the Wrentham from various perspectives.
According to the pre-visit questionnaire members of the Commission completed, priority collections and items include the Cowell paintings and the Wrentham Whig Party Banner as well as documents and letters pertaining to the Town of Wrentham and its residents. Many WHC collections have yet to be processed, meaning it is likely that significant materials will continue to be identified as more collections are arranged and described.

In order to best care for these collections, actions in the foreseeable future should focus on activities that provide the broadest benefit to all collections, rather than actions that only affect a small number of items. In this report, observations and suggestions are organized from administrative policy-based practices to specific areas and formats. Recommendations for short-, mid-, and long-term activities are made throughout the report, and are summarized here for reference.

A number of preservation activities are underway already, including:

- The use of archival quality supplies;
- Regular check-ins at the Old Fiske Museum;
- The use of PastPerfect to catalog and develop intellectual control over collections;
- The renovation of the Old Fiske Museum;
- The contracting and training with an archives consultant in 2010; and
- The maintenance of a HVAC system for collections.

The Commission is encouraged to continue and build upon these efforts, which are further detailed in the report. Recommendations for short-, mid-, and long-term activities are listed in the appendices.

The Historical Commission is aware of the preservation challenges presented by the collections and have shown a commitment to improving the storage and handling of the collections. The decision to pursue a general preservation assessment attests to an interest in improving care and handling practices to ensure that collection materials are available into the future.

As the Commission continues efforts to preserve and maintain these unique collections, they face several challenges, including:

- Incomplete policies to guide decision-making for collection management and preservation;
- Insufficient staff and staff time to accomplish the goals of the WHC;
- Insufficient intellectual control over collections;
- Incomplete in-house knowledge of general preservation best-practices, including storage and handling practices, processing, and preservation management; and
- Technological shortcomings hindering the management of collections, including outdated electrical wiring, a lack of internet, and no data system for monitoring the environment.

With these challenges in mind, efforts over the next several years should focus on:

- Drafting fully-realized and long-ranging policies to guide the mission, collection development guidelines, protocols, and practices of WHC;
- Strengthening intellectual control of materials, beginning with a collection-wide inventory that notes preservation and conservation concerns and identifies collections to be deaccessioned;
- Exploring strategies to expand the number of staff and staff time to work with collections, including the expansion of the volunteer program and hiring a part-time archivist;
- Investing in technology such as the internet and temperature and humidity dataloggers to support critical programs including a digitization program and environmental monitoring program; and
- Seeking further training in archival processing, handling of collections, and designing exhibits.
Certainly few, if any, institutions have sufficient resources to address all of the preservation needs of all of their collections. Limited resources require choices to be made among activities, the cumulative result of which will have a greater impact if guided by a long-range preservation plan. Preparation of such a plan should be the next step for the WHC. The plan should be reviewed annually and modified as preservation needs are addressed and new ones identified.

Commission members show a clear enthusiasm for moving forward with preservation planning. Still, putting this enthusiasm into practice collection-wide while balancing other duties can be difficult and requires assistance from all staff. It was exciting to hear the Commission’s interest in developing vital policies and programs – such as a collection management policy and environmental monitoring program - to steward its collections. A completed preservation plan will help to guide staff time and the institutional resources to activities such as these that will have the greatest overall impact on preservation for the entire collection.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to work with the Commission on this project. It was a pleasure to spend time with the staff and to learn about the various collections. If this report has raised any questions, or if I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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I. Introduction

Wrentham Historical Commission

Wrentham Historical Commission was established on March 27, 1967 and is responsible for the stewardship and exhibition of Wrentham’s history. To these ends, WHC maintains an archives of historical materials and artifacts, manages the circa 1740’s Wampum House, and operates a plaque program to mark locations of historical significance in the Town. In 2010, WHC renovated the Old Fiske Museum, which was formally the town library, to make it suitable for the storage of historical collections. Following the renovation, the Commission relocated nearly all its historical collections into the Museum. In 2010, a significant consultation project for the Commission occurred, resulting in the cataloging and arrangement of many archival collections.

Exhibits in the Old Fiske Museum are accessible to the public on the first Sunday of the month 1pm – 4pm for free. Commission members share the responsibility of managing the collections. While research procedures have not been formally established, those interested in researching or viewing specific items in the collections may arrange an appointment with an available Commission member. Based on observations made during the site visit and an inventory provided by members of the commission, materials stewarded
by WHC include a variety of formats and media. Due to the current level of intellectual control over the collections, all numbers specified by members were estimates. According the questionnaire, WHC possesses 1,000 bound volumes, 1,500 issues of newspapers, 10,000 documents and manuscripts, 250 maps, and 65 posters. WHC also has a large photograph collection of 10,000 prints, 1,000 negatives, and 1,500 slides. Additionally, there are 25 AV materials, including film, CD's, and magnetic tape. There were 25 pieces of art on paper, 25 paintings, 12 textiles, and approximately 2,000 artifacts as well. The WHC’s materials tell the rich history of the Wrentham from various perspectives.

According to the pre-visit questionnaire members of the Commission completed, priority collections and items include the Cowell paintings and the Wrentham Whig Party Banner as well as documents and letters pertaining to the Town of Wrentham and its residents. Many WHC collections have yet to be processed, meaning it is likely that significant materials will continue to be identified as more collections are arranged and described.

**The Preservation Needs Assessment**

Paper-based, audiovisual and photographic materials housed in the Old Fiske Library Museum of the Wrentham Historical Commission (WHC) were assessed for preservation planning purposes by Sean Ferguson, Preservation Specialist for the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Wrentham, MA on March 29, 2018. Simmons College graduate student Lauren Hansen joined the assessment as an educational opportunity and observed and took part in the assessment. The assessment evaluated the buildings and environments as they relate to the preservation needs of the materials; examined current policies, storage, and handling procedures; and assessed the general condition of materials. Observations and recommendations are based on a pre-site visit questionnaire, a full-day site visit, and discussions with Chairman Greg Stahl, Vice Chairman Leo Baldyga, Treasurer and Secretary Susan Harris, Members Marion Cafferky, William Keyes, Alex Leonard, Kim Shipala, and Volunteer Cheri Leonard.

Two concepts are necessary for evaluating the adequacy of preservation in any library or archives:

*Responsible custody* describes “a level of environmental control, housing, care and maintenance that will retard further chemical deterioration and protect materials from physical damage.” These preventive measures include climate management, protective enclosures, fire detection and suppression, effective security, disaster planning, and training staff and users to handle and care for the collection appropriately.

Optimal Storage is defined as meeting or exceeding the guidelines proposed by professional organizations and national standards-setting organizations. Such guidelines and standards are authored by committees made up of professionals in the field, and they are informed by recent scientific research into the deterioration of collections. The challenge for standards-setting organizations (and for collections-holding institutions) is to translate scientific findings into practical and affordable recommendations for storage. In many cases, optimal storage may not be achievable, but institutions should be aware of the ideal as they work towards providing the best conditions possible.

Every institution should provide responsible custody for all of its collections. As part of responsible custody, improving storage conditions for collections of long-term value to the institution provides the best overall protection for all collections; however, reaching optimal conditions requires long-term planning and resource investment. Achieving the best possible environment that is sustainable for your institution should be an ongoing effort and a long-term goal.

This report is intended for continuing reference for this institution and its staff. Throughout the report, the word 'staff' is used to indicate anyone responsible for collections care, whether they be professional
staff, interns, volunteers, or some combination thereof. Observations are preceded by best-practice information for each of the topics addressed. Many of the practices described may already be familiar, but they are included here to provide context for the recommendations that follow. Recommendations are bulleted and in bold type. For additional best-practice information, reference will be made to leaflets available in the Preservation Leaflets section of NEDCC’s website (www.nedcc.org), as well as resources that best describe various aspects of each section. Referenced leaflets and resources for more information can be found in the endnotes.

Archival and preservation supplies are recommended throughout the report. Most of these supplies are available from multiple vendors, and staff should select the one that best meets their needs in terms of cost, shipment method, etc. Examples of particular items are intended as illustrations, not recommendations of one supplier over another. A list of the resources, reference material, and supplies included throughout this report is collated and made available in the Appendices at the end of this document, along with an implementation worksheet and an example preservation plan.

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I. Introduction

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II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning

The most basic requirement for successful preservation planning is local commitment. An effective preservation program requires effort and involves some expense—for space, environmental control, storage supplies and equipment, and/or other strategies. Everyone in the organization must be willing to find the time and at least some money to undertake preservation activities.

Effective preservation planning also requires that an institution prioritize its various collections for preservation. This process—called “selection for preservation”—takes into account the resources available for preservation activities, as well as the condition, current or anticipated use, and relative value of materials to be preserved. Every institution with records of enduring value should have a preservation plan that weighs the needs of the collections against resources and provides a list of priority preservation actions.

This preservation assessment report may be viewed as the first step in creating a preservation plan, but it is not itself a plan. This report identifies preservation needs and provides an executive summary that offers some guidance in prioritizing these needs; however, it cannot take into consideration many other factors that must be considered when balancing the needs of collections against institutional resources.

There is general consensus regarding the factors to be considered when prioritizing potential preservation actions:

- **Use** - materials that are used frequently, whether by staff or researchers, may be at higher risk than other collections.
- **Storage** - collections that are stored under adverse conditions, whether in an unstable environment or in damaging enclosures, may require prompt preservation action.
- **Condition** - items or collections in fragile condition may be at risk of loss unless they receive attention quickly.
- **Value** - either absolute value (rarity, monetary worth, intrinsic or associational value, etc.) and/or relative value of collections to an institution may influence preservation priorities. Whether collections have long- or short-term value to an institution will influence decision-making.
- **Format** - whether or not materials need to be preserved in their original format will also influence
priorities.

In general, preservation activities may be compared using the following criteria:

- **Impact** - those actions that will result in dramatic improvement or that will affect the greatest number of items will often be the highest priority (for example, improving climate control, rehousing a collection or reformatting fragile materials).
- **Feasibility** - this factor is essential; it includes staffing levels and expertise, financial considerations (outside funding, capital outlay, operating costs, expenses for materials and services), policy and procedural changes required, and political considerations. Even if the impact of a preservation action is high, it may be given a low priority if implementation is not feasible.
- **Urgency** - there will always be some activities that require immediate action; collections may be damaged or lost, or an opportunity to act on a particular project may be lost, if action is not taken.

Some factors change as institutional circumstances change; these include available funding for preservation, staff time and expertise, and user demand for collections. Others require an in-depth understanding of the institution and its collections that only the staff possesses, such as organizational priorities and the relative value of collections.

### A. Mission Statement & Collection Policies

A thorough awareness and articulation of institutional goals and objectives for a collection as a whole – what the organization wishes to document, who it wishes to serve, and what types of material it will collect to accomplish those goals – provides the underpinning for all preservation actions. This broad understanding provides context to support preservation decision-making, and it should be articulated in the institution’s mission statement and the set of policies for collection management.

Collection management practices have a direct impact on preservation; committing them to writing serves to document institutional knowledge and helps ensure consistent practice over time. By stating a collecting focus and providing guidelines for acquisition and deaccession, a collection management policy guides the growth of a collection and ensures that an institution spends its resources on acquiring – and preserving – only materials that serve its mission. Specific, written requirements for access are useful to staff and researchers alike, and they strengthen the security of collection materials.

While a mission statement and a collection development policy are integral to defining an organization’s goals and setting out collecting parameters, once these are in place there are a range of policies that can be prepared to further document practices, guide activities, and establish expectations for staff, researchers, and patrons. These are just a few examples of policies that may be desirable:

- Handling Guidelines
- Guidelines for Accession and Deaccession
- Access and Use Policy
- Security Guidelines
- Loan/Exhibit Policy

### Observations & Recommendations

At present, the Wrentham Historical Commission does not have a formal mission statement or collection policy. However, it is clear that members of the Commission have thought carefully about their purpose as an institution. In the pre-visit question, Commission members stated their purpose was to preserve, protect, display, and educate. Additionally, on the Wrentham Historical Commission page on the town’s website, text is present stating “Each month we feature different artifacts from Wrentham History and
display them for all to enjoy! The Historical Commission is working to preserve Wrentham’s heritage.” This page also mentions the Commission’s role in restoring the Wampum House.

During the site visit, staff discussed their goals for the Commission, which revealed an interest in regular exhibition and proper stewardship of the collections. Creating a digital presence was also important to members present on the day of the visit. But while the Commission had considered exhibition and preservation as primary goals, providing access to collections for researchers was a goal Commission Members had thought less about. During the day of the site visit, Commission members appeared open to the idea. If the Commission chooses to pursue research services as a goal, it should form a part of the mission statement. Fortunately, the work the commission is pursuing to catalog and inventory collections would support research services, making it an attainable goal for the Commission should they choose to pursue it.

Commission members also had a discussion regarding the nature of the materials that should be collected. Commission members observed the practices of other Historical Commissions and came to the conclusion that the Wrentham Historical Commission should limit its scope of collection to only materials relating to Wrentham’s history.

At present, the Commission has few collection policies, and the organization is not guided by a Collection Management policy. However, the Commission does have an acquisition policy that is present on a deed of gift form. Additionally, there is a historical donation record. It was stated that the acquisition policy and the deed of gift are not always used to accept collections, which enter the repository through a variety of means. Mr. Stahl seeks donations from members of the town, and in some cases, donations are offered to the Commission without solicitation as well.

- **Draft and adopt a mission statement for the Wrentham Historical Commission.** A mission statement is an important first step in defining the goals and purpose of the collection. The mission statement addresses collecting scope (both geographically speaking and by type of material) and preservation activities. It often describes the primary audience or user community served by the collection and the services the organization provides as well.
  - When drafting a formal mission statement, it will be helpful to review the mission statements of similar organizations. Consider the mission statements of the Historical Commissions at Marblehead (http://marbleheadhistory.org/about-mhc/mission-and-goals/), East Longmeadow (https://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov/564/Historical-Commission), and Foxborough (http://www.foxboroughma.gov/Pages/FoxboroughMA_HistoricalComm/mission.pdf) as resources to help create your own.
  - As mentioned previously, WHC will need to determine how it wants to serve the public before it formalizes the mission statement. Exhibition is a clear priority for the Commission, but many cultural institutions also provide access to researchers, and this service can make WHC a more attractive candidate to granting organizations. More information on providing access to researchers will be found throughout this report.

- **Develop collection policies governing historical collections of the Commission.** Policies for the historical collections should specify the collecting scope, guidelines for accessioning and deaccessioning, forms for access, and a clear statement indicating how items that do not fit the collecting policy will be addressed.
  - For information on collection policy elements for the Society, the Wisconsin Historical
Records Advisory Board’s “Creating a Collection Development Policy for Local Historical Records in Public Libraries,” is an excellent resource and can be adapted to fit the needs of a Historical Commission with local history records:

- Establish a routine schedule for reviewing and updating the mission and collection policy. These should not be static documents. Regular review and amendments ensure that the policies remain relevant over time.

- Prioritize the development of future policies based on the needs of the WHC and the limited time members have. Additional policies relating to care and handling, access and use, security and exhibiting are all important areas the WHC can develop policies in regards to with its current members and volunteers.

II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning
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- Because exhibition is such a central component of the work already being conducted with the Commission, creating an exhibition policy will be a priority for the Commission. More information can be found in Section V. C. Exhibition

- Explore strategies for ensuring that Commission members routinely use policies to guide decisions for collections. Policies are only useful when they are followed consistently, and it is not uncommon for organizations to struggle with ensuring this. The Commission will need to identify solutions that make sure all Commission members follow established policies and procedures. A few approaches the Commission may want to implement include, but are not limited to:
  - Keep a binder of established policies and forms in the Commission room. This is a simple step that makes sure policies are easily accessible for reference when a decision is being made.
  - Ensure that all donations take place at the Old Fiske Museum. This will streamline the accession process and ensure that the deed of gift is within arm’s reach when a donation is made, making compliance with collection policies easier.
  - Approve all policies during Commission meetings with approval from all members. This will help to ensure buy-in, awareness, and interest in the policies the Commission creates.
  - Assign formal roles to commission members in regards to collections care. Formalizing the roles of commission members, can impart a sense of responsibility and ensure that a single – or select number of – members are responsible for carrying out the guidelines outlined in the policies. More information regarding staffing can be found in Section II. B. Staffing and Budgeting.

B. Staffing and Budget

Adequate staffing is crucial to preserving collections. Some preservation projects, such as shelf cleaning and disaster planning, do not require an investment in equipment or supplies, but do require a commitment of time. To plan and coordinate these activities and other, more collection-specific projects, someone on staff should be assigned responsibility for managing preservation—including maintaining up-to-date knowledge of preservation best practices, as well as a current understanding of the preservation
needs of the collections, and making preservation decisions based on this information. Ongoing professional development alongside participation in local, regional, and national conversations about collections care should be a goal for any staff engaged in managing preservation.

Preservation management requires a dependable budget with active administrative coordination and at least a small amount of money for supplies, training, and equipment. To ensure a lasting commitment to preservation and allow better tracking of expenses, a budget line for preservation should be part of a collecting institution’s annual budget. A budget line item ensures that many day-to-day projects and activities are recognized as part of the larger organizational operations.

If an important project is identified but funding is not available internally, consider the many grants and other funding opportunities available locally and nationally to support preservation activities. Understanding and clearly identifying the goals and outcomes of the project will help in matching with potential funders.

II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning
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Observations & Recommendations

There are 7 Commission members of the WHC, Mr. Stahl, Mr. Baldyga, Ms. Harris, Ms. Cafferky, Ms. Keyes, Ms. Leonard, and Ms. Shipala. Ms. Leonard is also a volunteer to the Historical Commission and works primarily on cataloging. Commission members come from a variety of backgrounds, but all show a clear interest in and commitment to preserving and telling the stories of Wrentham’s History. In regards to library-related skills, Ms. Shipala holds a Masters and Library and Information Science from Simmons College and currently serves as the Assistant Library Director at Franklin Public Library. She has experience in handling archival collections through previous coursework. In general, staff training in handling and cataloging collections is limited, making further training in how to properly care for collections a top priority for WHC.

Overall, role allocation in regards to collections stewardship is fluid in WHC. Members are free to conduct activities in the Commission that interest them. For example, Ms. Harris and volunteer Ms. Leonard are very engaged in cataloging, and Mr. Stahl and Mr. Baldyga have a deep knowledge of the building’s facilities concerns. This is not an exhaustive list of interests and specialties within the Commission, but it is indicative of the variety of responsibilities members have informally undertaken and chosen to spend more of their time on.

A major asset to the Commission is the level of commitment shown from members. During the day of the visit, all the members that were able to come did and spent an extended period of time discussing the collections. Members of the Commission are able to spend varying amounts of time working on the collections. Ms. Harris and Ms. Leonard spend approximately four hours a week in cataloging, and Mr. Baldyga visits at least once a week to inspect the building. Additionally, all members attend the monthly meeting to discuss concerns relating to the collections and many take part in the day of the month when the Commission’s exhibits are open to the public. The rest of the time staff spend in the Commission is unscheduled and occurs when members are available. In order to make strides in future projects relating to the collections, more time with the collections and an increase in training relating to processing will be required. Fortunately, increasing the volunteer program and hiring a part-time archivist appeared to be feasible for the WHC when the possibility was brought up with members of WHC on the day of the visit.

It was encouraging to hear how regularly WHC had consulted with other Historical Commissions such as the Foxborough Historical Commission. Continuing conversations with other commissions will continue to prove useful as WHC seeks recommendations of services and suggestions on how to approach challenges common to Commissions.

There is no line item in the budget for preservation. The Commission has an annual budget of $465.83, which is spent primarily on supplies. However, it is also spent on membership dues to the Massachusetts
Historical Society. In addition to this annual budget, the Commission depends on generous gifts outlined in the Treasurer's Report of FY2018. As of FY 2018 this fund includes the Lilla Pong Gift Fund of $28,964.30, the Sweatt Fund of $730.23 for photography, and the Joint Sweatt Account of $15,698.69 for the building. As described here, there are guidelines for the expenditure of these moneys. However, line items for spending would further increase the careful use of these gifts.

- **Establish budget lines to guide the annual expenditure of funds.** Steady funding will be needed for supplies, new storage furniture, special projects and vendor services, and training. Establishing these needs as line items in the budget will formalize the Commission's interest in funding them and help to ensure the responsible expenditure of the Commission's gifts.

- **Consider establishing formal roles for Commission members as they relate to collections care.** As mentioned previously, members have already shown an interest in specific tasks relating to caring for collections such as cataloging in PastPerfect, outreach efforts, exhibit design, accession, policy creation, and facilities management. Formalizing these roles may increase members' commitment to completing the tasks they already pursue when they are available.

- **Consider allocating funding for a staff member for projects recommended in this report.** Even a part-time archivist would meaningfully increase the capacity to make progress on preservation and access goals.
  - The Simmons School of Library and Information Science Jobline is a useful blog for posting full- or part-time jobs as well as internships and volunteer opportunities with graduate students and alumni of Simmons College's graduate school: [http://blogs.simmons.edu/slis/jobline/](http://blogs.simmons.edu/slis/jobline/)

- **Secure grants and other funding for high priority preservation projects.** Following the drafting of the 5-year preservation plan that this report will help to create, the WHC will be an even stronger candidate for grants that support preservation projects.
  - Grants alone will likely be insufficient to reach all preservation goals; however, NEH Preservation Assistance Grants are an excellent recurring option for funding a wide variety of smaller projects including emergency preparedness and disaster planning activities, environmental monitoring and consultation, improvement of storage furniture and purchase of supplies, training opportunities for staff, and conservation consulting.
  - NEDCC provides a free resource listing federal, regional, and state grants that WHC may be eligible for: [https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/funding-opportunities/overview](https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/funding-opportunities/overview)

- **Schedule basic training in archival practices for all members and volunteers.** Every Commission member should attend basic training on policies and practices before continuing to work with historic materials. It is important to understand proper handling techniques in order to safely mount exhibits and instruct researchers. This point is further explored in **Section IV. D. Handling Policies & Practices.**
  - NEDCC offers a roster of preservation workshops and webinars that may prove helpful. These can be found online at: [https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/training-currentlist](https://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/training-currentlist). Also offered is a free online textbook *Preservation 101*, available at: [https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-101](https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-101).
• Pursue assistance from the Massachusetts Roving Archivist. The Roving Archivist can assist in developing processing projects. For more information, see: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcpdf//Institutional%20Application-for-Roving-Archivist-Services.pdf.

• Continue to build networks and engage with the wider collections care field. Just as working with other Commissions has proven beneficial, regional and national conferences can also provide both a grounding in current practice and a network of peers. Commission members should consider the New England Archivists (NEA) as an organization to join.

• Expand the use of volunteers or graduate student interns to perform basic tasks. This type of nonprofessional staff should be supervised. While an internship or volunteer program requires dedication on the part of Commission members, it can be a vital part of growing the capacity of the institution to meet its long-term goals.

II. Collection Management & Preservation Planning
Northeast Document Conservation Center


o Inventory and rehousing projects are good opportunities to use volunteers who have had a training session on handling.

o Consider regional association-based volunteer projects such as the New England Archivists Day of Service Community Volunteer Project: https://www.newenglandarchivists.org/Day-of-Service

C. Intellectual Control

Intellectual control helps staff and researchers to identify and locate potentially relevant materials. It is inextricably linked to physical control – the recordkeeping, retrieval, and shelving practices that ensure that materials are where they are supposed to be. Intellectual control may be achieved through the creation of catalogs, inventories, finding aids, and other descriptive guides. These descriptive tools not only facilitate access, they can also support preservation in several ways:

• They decrease the risk of theft by providing documentation of ownership of collection materials.
• They prevent damage and disorder caused by rummaging through large numbers of boxes and documents in archival or historic collections.
• They help to maintain intellectual links between materials that may be physically separated for preservation purposes (e.g., papers separated from cased photographs). Preservation needs vary by format, and to meet these needs items from the same collection may be physically separated and placed on different shelves, in different rooms, or even in different buildings. Good intellectual control and well-written descriptive guides allow staff to meet varied preservation needs while maintaining the conceptual idea of a collection and providing the information required to find separated items.
• In the context of disaster recovery, they are invaluable in helping staff to determine which materials, if any, have been damaged or destroyed.

Cataloging practices for published books differ substantially from cataloging practices for archival materials (e.g., documents, photographs, scrapbooks, etc.). Where published books are cataloged individually,
archival materials are usually cataloged ("arranged and described") in groups. Finding aids are the primary means of describing archival collections, but there are many ways of arranging these materials, and the method best suited to one group of records may not work for another. The ultimate approach to organization should promote access, both by expediting availability of the collections for research and by providing a reasonable means of identifying relevant sets of records.5

Many standards, best practices, and guiding documents exist to assist in describing and organizing different types of collections, and even different formats. Regardless of how intellectual control is achieved, at a minimum the organization should know the legal ownership of collections, the formats and quantities represented, and the physical locations of materials.

**Observations & Recommendations**

At present, WHC has a limited, but increasing level of intellectual control over its collections. Ms. Harris and Ms. Leonard’s work to catalog the collections has created a growing catalog of collections on PastPerfect. WHC is also developing an understanding of its collection priorities. When asked to consider collection priorities, members had a clear understanding of how they wish to develop their priorities by assessing monetary and historic value as well as how closely the materials related to the history of Wrentham. Priorities discussed on the day of the site visit included the Wrentham Whig Party Banner, circa 1839, and the Cowell paintings. Of special concern were the Cowell paintings, which – as possible products of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project - may technically be the property of the federal government. This will warrant further exploration on the part of WHC to ensure responsible stewardship of the art work.

In 2010, WHC contracted with an archival consultant to process the collections. According to members of the Commission, they provided catalog records on PastPerfect. The consultant also arranged materials and enclosed items into archival quality boxes. The consultants’ work provided a foundation of intellectual control upon which WHC staff can build. Since then, WHC has continued to build on the work done by this consulting organization by adding more reference pictures and further organizing collections.

The consultant also provided Ms. Harris with valuable training in the use of PastPerfect, which has empowered her and Ms. Leonard to conduct the cataloging themselves. There are instructions available for use of PastPerfect, and Ms. Shipala indicated she would be able to help make a more user friendly guide for PastPerfect. A challenge in regards to PastPerfect at Wrentham is the inability to upgrade the software easily. Without an internet connection, WHC is maintaining an older iteration of PastPerfect. Furthermore, Commission members recognize that more training would be beneficial. There are strategies for cataloging historical collections in aggregate – meaning more than one item at a time. These strategies can make the process of cataloging collections much faster and reduce the backlog of unprocessed collections WHC has.

As Mr. Harris and Ms. Leonard move forward with cataloging the collections, there remains a large portion of the collections still unprocessed since the items were moved from the Wampum House. This was made clear by the presence of items that did not have a clear connection to Wrentham’s history and a box with silverfish inside that had not been inspected since it had left the Wampum House. Given the possible presence of pests, the poor conditions at the Wampum House, and presence of materials that may fall outside the scope of WHC’s collecting focus, a broad survey of collections would help guide future cataloging efforts.

As mentioned previously, while there is a deed of gift and accession record, these forms are not always filled out when a collection is donated to the Commission, making it difficult to keep track of when and where materials come from. Furthermore, it was also noted that accessions are recorded in the minutes of
meetings. While this is good practice, using the forms developed by the Commission will create a more reliable record and the deed of gift will act as a formal guarantee of ownership of collections.

- **Draft a user-friendly procedures manual for organizing collections.** Written guidance on processing, arranging and describing incoming collections, along with guidance on reappraisal and deaccessioning of established collections, will ensure consistency in decision making and provide support for custodial decisions. This manual should be written to accommodate different levels of granularity in cataloging. In archives, collections are not always best described at the item level. Sometimes describing the contents of a folder or box can be sufficient for developing intellectual control.

  - Consider purchasing or borrowing a copy of *Organizing Archival Records: A Practical Method of Arrangement and Description for Small Archives* (2004), by David Carmichael, to guide processing activities.

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  - To ensure that materials are described according to standards and best practices in the archival field, staff should refer to *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)*. A PDF is available through the Society of American Archivists, [http://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-committee-on-describing-archives-a-content-standard-dacs/dacs](http://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-committee-on-describing-archives-a-content-standard-dacs/dacs). DACS covers all of the elements of a finding aid and provides standard formats for description. It also helps in determining the minimum level of description for a finding aid.

- **Determine a plan for the possible WPA artwork.** The Cowell paintings are a clear priority for WHC, but a plan will need to be determined for the pieces of art before further investment in their stewardship is made. Understanding their provenance and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA’s) plans for WPA pieces of art will inform how WHC chooses to proceed with caring for these important objects.

  - The GSA has resources on its website about New Deal Artworks at the following links:
    - [https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/art-in-architecture-fine-arts/fine-arts/new-deal-artwork-gsas-inventory-project](https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/art-in-architecture-fine-arts/fine-arts/new-deal-artwork-gsas-inventory-project)
    - [https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/art-in-architecture-fine-arts/fine-arts/new-deal-artwork-ownership-and-responsibility](https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/art-in-architecture-fine-arts/fine-arts/new-deal-artwork-ownership-and-responsibility)

- **Using the existing catalog records as a starting point, perform a broad collections survey of all the materials in the WHC.** This survey does not need to meet the standards Ms. Harris and Ms. Leonard use to catalog collections. Rather a spreadsheet that highlights the general nature of materials inside boxes will help to guide the development of cataloging, preservation, and retention priorities. After the inventory, Commission members will know which items to remove from the collection and which to process first and which to process last. It will also help in the detection of major issues, such as the presence of pests. After the inventory is completed and retention decisions are made, WHC will also have a much clearer understanding of their space needs.
• **Explore a means of acquiring the internet to update WHC’s collections management software systems and support other collection management activities.** At present, PastPerfect appears to meet the needs of WHC. However, the lack of internet means that the software has not been updated in some time. Updates are important for increasing the functionality of collections management tools. As a greater understanding of the variety of materials in the collections grows, and practices are updated to process groupings of collections all at once, WHC may find the updated features to be valuable.

• **Develop appraisal, reappraisal, and deaccessioning practices.** The Society of American Archivists has produced “Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning” that may help guide reappraisal of collection materials. A PDF can be found at: [https://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-subcommittee-on-guidelines-for-reappraisal-and-deaccessioning-ts-grd/guidelines-for-reappraisal-and-deaccession](https://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-subcommittee-on-guidelines-for-reappraisal-and-deaccessioning-ts-grd/guidelines-for-reappraisal-and-deaccession).

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• **After a collection development policy is created and as more collections are identified through the survey, review materials for retention.** This process is best performed under guidelines documented in a collection development policy. Widely published materials, duplicates, and items that fall outside of WHC’s collecting focus are good candidates for deaccession.

• **Create and retain accession records for all incoming collections.** An example of various types of accession record forms, along with recommended elements for a record, can be found through the Library of Congress, online at: [http://1.usa.gov/TZtbO1](http://1.usa.gov/TZtbO1).

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### III. Building and Environment

A well-maintained building provides the first line of defense for collections. Staff caring for historic collections within a larger organization (for example, staff of an archives housed within a library) will have to work closely with facilities and administration to ensure that the entire building envelope is monitored and maintained. This will protect circulating and non-circulating materials, as well as any other materials and services within the building. Temperature, humidity, and air quality are best controlled when monitored building-wide to determine how shifts in one area are affecting other areas. As any disaster is likely to affect the building as a whole, having a comprehensive disaster plan that also addresses collections, along with cross-training in disaster preparedness, will help ensure that all collections are cared for should the building flood, catch fire, or face other emergencies. Finally, maintaining a secure building requires the concerted efforts of all occupants.

#### A. The Building

The building is a collection’s primary defense against the elements, making regular upkeep a foundational element of preservation. Unless the structure is sound, it cannot prevent the entrance of pests and intruders, support climate control, or protect records from fire, water, and other disasters. To ensure that their building fulfills these functions, institutions should provide regular preventive maintenance on a fixed calendar basis, with inspection of roof, gutters, skylights, flashings, and drains, and maintenance of any climate control, fire protection, and security systems. Keeping a log of building problems will preserve institutional knowledge about the building despite staff changes over time.
Observations & Recommendations

WHC stores its collections in three buildings: the Old Fiske Library Museum, the Wampum House, and in the Town Hall. In 2010, the majority of collections were moved from the Wampum House to the Old Fiske Museum. This was a great decision given the disparate building conditions in both locations; according to discussions on the day of the site visit, it was clear that the Wampum House does not have environmental conditions suitable for collections care. There are still a small portion of collections, including a map drawer, stored in the Wampum House. The Town Hall has approximately a file cabinet of documents that have not been formally accessioned by WHC.

The Old Fiske Library Museum was originally built in 1894 and served as the town library. In 2005, the building received a major renovation that made it accessible to the public. The original roof of the building is made of copper, and the renovated area of the roof is made of rubber.

The building is administered by WHC as well as the Wrentham Arts and Cultural Commission. Based on discussions had during the visit, care of the building is largely the responsibility of members of WHC and Department of Public Works (DPW). WHC does not keep a log of building-related issues onsite, but the DPW does remotely. This can make it difficult for WHC to gather data to identify trends of problems that need to be fixed. It was noted during the site visit that Mr. Baldyga checks in on the building once a week, which is very helpful for identifying problems, but may not catch major threats like leaks or mold growth that can occur only 48 hours after standing water develops.

- Continue and increase the frequency of regular walkthroughs of the building to identify issues. It was encouraging to hear that a member of the Commission visits the building. Ideally, building walkthroughs should be done often enough to catch problems such as mold growth, which can develop between 48 and 72 hours in severe conditions.

B. Temperature, Relative Humidity (RH) & Air Quality

In the storage environment, temperature, relative humidity (RH), and air quality all play significant roles in determining the longevity of collections. Heat and moisture, along with air pollutants, act as catalysts for chemical, mechanical, and biological decay, making the rate at which materials age directly proportional to the conditions in which they are stored.

“An optimal preservation environment,” states the Image Permanence Institute, “is one that achieves the best possible preservation of collections at the least possible consumption of energy, and is sustainable over time.”

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- Begin to maintain an on-site log of building-related problems. Over the long term, documenting the extent of any recurring problems that threaten the collection may help when advocating for improvements.
  - Consider using the “Building Incident Report Form,” found in the list of record keeping forms in dPlan™ (www.dplan.org), an online planning template developed by NEDCC and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

- Work with the DPW to secure bi-annual inspection of the roof and gutters. This form of inspection will help to facilitate preventative maintenance of the building, allowing for opportunity to resolve leak-related issues before they happen.
  - The on-site log of building-related problems can serve as an advocacy tool when working with DPW. By pointing to the data you gather, you can make a more effective case for remediation.
**Temperature and RH**

Optimal storage conditions vary depending on the type of material. As a very general guideline, collections are best stored below 70°F, and at an RH of 30-50%. In recent years, though, conservation research has focused increasingly on the creation and maintenance of sustainable preservation environments. Where past recommendations called for strict regulation of temperature and RH (±2°F/±3%RH), current thinking is less prescriptive and takes into account material characteristics, environmental risks, current institutional capabilities, and available resources.

Temperature and relative humidity are inextricably related: as one changes, so will the other. Seasonal fluctuations resulting in extreme conditions—where materials are subjected to high temperature or RH for longer than a few weeks—hasten decay. Optimal storage requirements for books and paper are different from those for photographs (including still and moving-image film) and audiovisual media and again, depend on the type of material (i.e., nitrate, acetate, polyester, magnetic tape, etc.). The lower the temperature, the more slowly items will decay.

Likewise, the lower the RH (within the range of 30%-50%), the more slowly materials will age, but because RH fluctuations can have broader and more serious effects on collections, control of RH in particular should be a priority for every organization caring for collections. Besides accelerating chemical deterioration of collections, extreme seasonal RH fluctuations cause mechanical stress in paper as it absorbs and releases moisture in response to changing moisture levels in the surrounding environment. High RH causes image decay of film and photographs, discoloration of color film and photographs, and binder degradation in magnetic media. Moreover, humid environments put collections at risk of damage from mold (which can bloom where RH exceeds 60%), and they can be inviting to pests (e.g., silverfish) that feed on cellulose—the primary ingredient in paper. Very low RH levels (below 25%) can cause paper to become dry, brittle, and weak.

Just as different formats have different environmental needs, they also have different vulnerabilities: some are more sensitive to temperature and RH fluctuations than others. Ideal conditions necessarily vary from institution to institution, and will depend on four factors:

- the characteristics of the institution’s highest priority materials;
- the environmental risks associated with those materials;
- the capacity of existing environmental controls; and
- institutional resources dedicated to operating climate control equipment.

**Air Quality**

Pollutants in the storage environment fall into two main categories: particulate and gaseous. Particulate matter such as dirt, dust, and fibers can stain and abrade collection materials. Gases such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and peroxides catalyze chemical reactions that lead to acid formation in paper. Sulphur dioxide, which converts to sulphuric acid in the presence of moisture, causes red rot in leather bindings. Nitrogen dioxide and ozone cause fading and discoloration of photographs.

Exposure of collections to pollutants can be controlled by good building maintenance, routine housekeeping, and mechanical air filtration. Most HVAC systems now offer some level of particulate filtration. Gaseous pollutant filtration is also available; however, it requires a significant investment in equipment and maintenance. Following a regular schedule of cleaning or replacing filters will ensure that the system operates as intended. Other steps that can be taken to prevent exposure to pollutants include keeping exterior windows closed, and housing materials in protective enclosures.

**Observations & Recommendations**
The Old Fiske Museum is serviced by a gas-fired HVAC system that was installed in 2012. The temperature of the building is set to 66 degrees, and the relative humidity of the room is set to between 40-50%. However, the HVAC system has needed repairs in the past and struggles to maintain the aforementioned set points. This was particularly challenging during the months of November and December of 2017 when the system shut down. WHC members worked effectively with the Department of Public Works to locate a contractor resolve the multiple issues that were identified during inspection.

WHC has yet to devise a system for monitoring and recording the temperature and humidity in the Old Fiske Museum. However, it was observed that in the past the temperature in particular has fluctuated greatly, especially when the HVAC system has experienced issues. Additionally, evidence of warping documents and photographs in display cases indicated that fluctuations had likely occurred in the Old Fiske Museum in the past.

It should also be noted that audiovisual and photograph materials are stored in the Old Fiske Museum and are subject to the same conditions as other collections. There are presently no plans to acquire specific storage solutions for audiovisual and photograph collections.

- **Establish an environmental monitoring program for the Old Fiske Museum to record temperature and relative humidity (RH) trends over time.** Maintaining an accurate and ongoing understanding of temperature and RH in storage and exhibit environments is a core aspect of good collection management. For more information about environmental monitoring and the various devices available, see preservation leaflet 2.2, “Monitoring Temperature and Relative Humidity,” at [www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org). Also see National Park Service Conserve-O-Gram 3/3, “Comparing

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- The results will likely prove useful in determining where best to store specific materials/formats.

- For more guidance on format specific storage needs, refer to the *IPI Media Storage Quick Reference* here: [https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/webfm_send/301](https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/webfm_send/301).

- A record of the rooms’ fluctuating temperatures and RH will serve as a valuable resource in advocating for an upgraded and well-monitored HVAC system in the future.

- **Acquire high quality temperature and RH dataloggers for the storage room and exhibit room.** Improved data loggers will enhance the accuracy and usefulness of monitoring efforts. The Preservation Assessment Grant (PAG) from NEH is an excellent source of funding that is regularly used for this purpose.

  - The PAG will likely need to include training in the installation and use of the dataloggers. The Image Permanence Institute (IPI) offers onsite environmental management training sessions on these topics. More information can be found here on their website: [https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/environmental/consulting](https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/environmental/consulting)

  - Alternatively, the WHC can purchase two dataloggers without the grant. A good resource for choosing suitable dataloggers is available through the National Park Services Conserve O Gram Series: [https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conserveogram/03-03.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conserveogram/03-03.pdf)
Work with the DPW to secure routine monitoring and maintenance of HVAC systems. Buildings and HVAC systems represent a significant infrastructural investment, and well-maintained buildings and systems provide the broadest benefit to collections. Given the current condition of the HVAC system, routine monitoring and reporting to the DPW is a must for the proper care of WHC collections.

C. Protection from Light

All light accelerates deterioration by providing energy to fuel damaging chemical reactions. This damage is cumulative and irreversible. While the ultraviolet (UV) spectrum of light is the most damaging, it is important to understand that visible light can also cause a great deal of damage. Its extent is determined by the intensity of the light and the length of exposure. Light causes paper to fade, yellow, or darken, and media to fade or change color. While all materials are vulnerable, particular care should be taken with composite objects (those made of a variety of materials such as paper, fabric, leather, inks, colorants, etc.) because each component part may have a different degree of light-sensitivity.

As with studies on optimal storage environments, recent research on lighting for cultural heritage organizations has focused on improving preservation, reducing energy consumption, and increasing sustainability over time. LEDs (light-emitting diodes) have emerged as a preferred lighting option because they emit no ultraviolet, they emit very little infrared, and they reduce overall energy needs.

Institutions that are not in a position to invest the staff time and resources needed to explore retrofitting lighting systems can make a number of improvements to reduce light damage to collections. Exposure to natural lighting can be reduced through the use of blinds or curtains, or by placing UV-blocking films and panels over windows and skylights. UV-blocking sleeves and covers are available for fluorescent tubing.

Display cases and frames can be fitted with UV-blocking glass or Plexiglas, and original collection materials can be substituted with high-quality facsimiles, where appropriate. Storage and exhibit areas can be fitted with timers or motion-activated lighting, and items in storage can be boxed or otherwise housed in a protective enclosure to further reduce exposure.

Observations & Recommendations

Rooms in the Old Fiske Museum are lit by LED fixtures. The WHC made a good choice installing these during the renovation process, because they will support the preservation of historical materials. When the rooms are vacant, lights are kept off. WHC also uses natural light to brighten its storage and exhibition areas. This causes additional light damage to collections, especially those on display. Fortunately, many collections are stored in boxes, reducing light damage to collections. On the day of the site visit, blinds were present in the building, but they were not drawn. Observations and recommendations regarding protection from light in exhibition spaces will be discussed further in Section V. C. Exhibition.

A challenge members of WHC are particularly eager to address is the wiring in the building. The lights in the gallery can only be turned off using the switch box, and there is no way to turn on the lights in the conference room without also turning on the lights in the storage room. This, of course, is a danger to those using the lights, but also exposes collections to an unnecessary amount of light damage while Commission members work in the conference room. The wiring has also slowed down the development of future projects such as the acquisition of gallery lighting.

Work with the DPW to hire a contractor to rewire the building so that each room can be lit separately using discrete light switches. The current lighting arrangement is a hazard to Commission members and is not ideal for collections. As WHC initiates discussions with the DPW, members should keep in mind the following:
Renovation projects, particularly those that involve electricity, create a major fire hazard. WHC members should pursue the recommendations listed in Section III. F. Emergency Preparedness to prepare collections for the renovation project.

As light switches are being selected, it may be helpful to consider switches that detect motion and turn off after a fixed amount of time when the room is empty. This will keep light exposure to an absolute minimum in storage and use spaces.

- **Continue keeping storage spaces dark when not in use.** If items in process need to be left outside of storage for any amount of time, keep them in their folders and boxes.

- **Keep blinds on windows drawn.** While all light is damaging to collections, natural light is especially harmful. The LED lighting in the building is a major asset to WHC, and it should be taken full advantage of by ensuring that it is the only light used in the building.

- **Enclose materials with lasting value to protect them from light exposure, as well as dust, dirt, and water.**

D. Protection from Water

The best insurance against water damage is regular inspection and maintenance of the roof covering and flashings. Gutters and drains should be cleaned at least twice per year (ideally at the end of each spring and fall). Storing collections underneath water or steam pipes, lavatories, mechanical air-conditioning equipment, or other sources of water should be avoided, as should storing collections directly on the floor.

Shelves or pallets should hold materials at least 4” above floor level. Water alarms should be installed in areas at high risk of seepage or flooding. It is also a good idea for staff to familiarize themselves with the location and operation of water mains and shut-off valves in the event that it is necessary to shut off the water supply during an emergency. This information should be included in an institutional disaster plan.

**Observations & Recommendations**

While leaks have occurred in the Old Fiske Museum, WHC is fortunate not to have had any historical materials damaged in these events. Typically, these leaks have occurred during extreme weather circumstances, such as in the winter of 2015 when a severe blizzard created an ice dam. There have also been leaks due to soffit and gutter problems. However, there has not been a major leak in about a year. Tide lines were noticed on ceiling tiles in the bathroom, which was likely caused by one of the leaks mentioned previously.

WHC has done well to reduce the risk of water incursion on collections. A sealant was placed on the copper portion of the roof, and the additional roofing has been made of rubber, a good choice for protecting collections. Additionally, the majority of collections are lifted off the ground.

Still, there is room for improvement. Not all members of the commission are aware of the location of water shut-off valves, which could potentially slow down a response to a water incident. Furthermore, on the day of the visit, some collections were on the ground, and others were close to water sources. Specifically, some materials were kept in the bathroom.

- **Reduce risks to collections by raising all materials at least four inches off of the floor and moving collections away from water sources.** Since even minor leaks can produce pooling water, posing a serious threat to materials on the floor, the items resting on the floor should be raised. Additionally, keeping collections in the bathroom introduces additional water risks should
the toilet overflow or pipes burst.

- In your disaster kit explained further in Section III. F. Emergency Preparedness, have plastic sheeting ready in case of a water event.

- To further bolster protection from water damage, complete a Pocket Response Plan (PReP) for collections and orient staff to water shut-off valve locations and operation. Additional protective measures in the case of an emergency are discussed in Section III. F. Emergency Preparedness.

- As part of emergency preparedness procedures, ensure that all members are familiar with the location of water shut-off valves. This will empower all staff to react quickly to a leak once it is discovered. For more information on emergency preparedness recommendation, see Section III. F. Emergency Preparedness.

- Replace water stained ceiling tiles and ask DPW to identify the source of each leak and resolve them. Old stains hide new stains, so it is best to replace tiles as soon as a leak is repaired.

E. Protection from Fire

All preservation efforts become moot if collections are destroyed by fire. For this reason, it is recommended that buildings housing collection materials be equipped with a building-wide fire detection and suppression system. Fire detection devices—ideally including both smoke and heat detectors—should be wired directly to the local Fire Department or another agency where they can be monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All fire protection systems should be tested and inspected regularly.

The installation of fire sprinklers in close proximity to collections was once a subject of debate because of the risk of leakage. Today, however, building-wide fire suppression is an accepted practice. There are several reasons for this. First, wet materials can often be salvaged; burned materials cannot be. Second, sprinkler heads activate individually, and can extinguish a fire at an early stage and before it spreads to multiple rooms. A study completed in 2011 by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) found that 90% of structure fires are extinguished with three or fewer sprinkler heads. Third, sprinklers discharge far less water than fire hoses: the average sprinkler head discharges 20-25 gallons of water per minute in a relatively gentle spray. By contrast, fire hoses discharge between 100 to 250 gallons per minute. In the event of a fire, limited sprinkler action would cause water damage to a relatively small portion of collections, in contrast to the devastating damage resulting to both the building and collections from the deluge of pressurized water during an uncontrollable fire.

Observations & Recommendations

The building is protected from fire by smoke detectors and the detection system is connected to the Wrentham Fire Department, which is in close proximity to the Old Fiske Museum. In addition to the detection system, the Museum is equipped with fire extinguishers, which were checked by the fire department on the day of the visit. This is a good sign of an attentive fire department.

It was noted that members of the Commission have met with the Fire Chief before, which is recommended to increase the efficiency of a response to a fire. However, the Fire Chief is retiring soon, making it important for the members of the Commission to develop a connection with the incoming head of the Fire Department as well.

There are multiple factors affecting the levels of fire risk to collections in the Old Fiske Museum. A close fire department, brick structure, and fire detection system all help to protect the building and collections.
However, expected changes to the wiring of the building create a risk during renovation, and the lack of a fire suppression system increases the likelihood that a fire would be difficult to manage if one were to occur.

- **Strengthen fire protection by scheduling an annual fire drill and member training in the use of fire extinguishers.** Local fire departments are often able to provide this training. With all emergency response procedures, the more often staff can practice, the more comfortable they will be as the process becomes routine. This helps to promote an orderly and efficient response in the event of a real emergency.

- **Initiate routine building inspections by the Fire Department and discuss locations of priority collections and strategies for reducing risks to collections.** Regularly scheduled inspections are integral to protecting collections from fire damage. Establishing a strong relationship with the Fire Department creates the opportunity to make firefighters aware of (or refresh their memory of) the location of critical materials, increasing the possibility that they will be taken into consideration during firefighting operations.
  

- **Continue to ensure that all extinguishers are regularly inspected and recharged.**

- **Ensure that all fire detection systems are regularly inspected.**

- **Explore the possibility of installing a fire suppression system.** Having a sprinkler system is among the most effective means of preventing fire damage in museums. For more information on selecting a fire suppression system and a rationale for their efficacy in cultural heritage organizations, see “Automatic Sprinkler Systems for Museums” by the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI): [https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/automatic-sprinkler-systems-museums.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/automatic-sprinkler-systems-museums.html)

### F. Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness — efforts to prevent damage from fire, water, and other hazards — is an essential component of preservation. Every institution with collections of enduring value should evaluate its risk of events that could damage holdings. Plausible risks should be addressed, and the institution should prepare a formal, written plan for responding to collection-related disasters.

A disaster plan should include the following information:

- Identification of a disaster response team to coordinate first response and salvage activities.
- Contact information for staff members who will assist in case of a disaster, including home phone numbers.
- Phone numbers and contact names for providers of local freezing services, building dry out services and vacuum freeze drying services.
- Identification of proper procedures for drying the range of materials found in your collection, as well as the location of in-house disaster supplies.
- Identification of priority items to be rescued in a disaster.
- Information about insurance coverage.

Collection emergencies can be addressed quickly, and damage avoided or minimized, if staff are prepared
to respond. For this reason, every collecting institution should ensure that staff members are familiar with the plan and trained to carry it out, and that at least one complete disaster response kit is on hand. For materials that become wet, quick freezing (within 24 hours) prevents mold growth and can keep damage to a minimum. Some of the most common incidents that affect collections are burst pipes and roof leaks, so staff should be equipped to recover small quantities – approximately 200 books or fewer, depending upon available space – of water-damaged materials. Large quantities of material, or materials damaged by contaminated water, will require professional assistance.

**Observations & Recommendations**

WHC does not have a disaster plan for collections nor is it clear if there is a disaster plan for the Town of Wrentham. It should be noted that there is an Emergency Management department in Wrentham, which will be a valuable resource when planning for risks to WHC buildings. No WHC members have been trained in emergency preparedness, response, or recovery, which is not uncommon. As mentioned previously, Mr. Baldyga does visit the house on a weekly basis, but this is not frequency enough to prevent small issues such as a leak or a burst pipe from developing into a more serious emergency like mold. At present, there is no cache of resources at the Old Fiske Museum to help mitigate a disaster should one occur.

As the WHC plans to address the wiring concerns in the building, it will be important for WHC to establish basic preparedness procedures and acquire resources to assist in a disaster.

**In the near term, establish a cache of disaster supplies that will be easily accessible in an emergency and prepare a panic sheet.** For a list of recommended items, NEDCC leaflet 3.4 Worksheet for Outlining a Disaster Plan (https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.4-worksheet-for-outlining-a-disaster-plan). A sample panic sheet is in the appendices of this report.

**Begin checking in on the rooms of the Old Fiske Museum at least every three days to detect potential emergencies.** Mr. Baldyga’s visits are an excellent step towards a monitoring program. However, serious problems could develop in as little as two to three days. Members should share the responsibility of the check-ins and ensure that storage spaces are visited at least every few days.

**Explore the emergency preparedness resources made available through the Town’s Emergency Management department and work with the department to increase preparedness at WHC buildings.** Wrentham’s Emergency Management department may maintain a disaster plan for the Town, which can help to supplement the plan the Commission eventually prepares. Additionally, the members of the Department will prove to be valuable sources of advice when discussing disaster preparedness. For more information, consult their website here: http://www.wrentham.ma.us/wrentham-ma-depts/wrentham-ma-emergency-management.

**Prepare a Pocket Response Plan (PReP).** For guidance, see the Council of State Archives (COSA) guide in the appendices of this report. For more information, consult the COSA website here: https://www.statearchivists.org/programs/emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-resources/pocket-response-plantm-prep-tm-english-template/

   - Once the plan is ready, set up a time to familiarize members with the information outlined.

**In the long term, create a disaster plan for WHC.** More robust than the PReP, this plan includes policies and procedures that guide an institution through prevention, response, and
recovery, ensuring that the WHC will be prepared for future emergencies. When WHC is in a position to pursue a disaster plan, see NEDCC’s attached Disaster Plan template in the appendices of this report for guidance.

- Similar steps to those taken after the completion of the PReP should be performed to familiarize library staff with the policies and procedures outlined.

G. Housekeeping & Pest Management

Dust, dirt, and paper detritus can attract pests, and may also serve as a substrate for mold growth, especially in warm or damp environments. Systematic housekeeping including periodic vacuuming of floors and dusting of shelves, boxes, and books serves two important functions: it actively discourages pest infiltration and mold growth and it indicates to staff and patrons that the collections are valued.

Many pests see collections as a source of food or nesting material. Clutter and food remains attract pests, and food odor is one of the cues to pests that a space may be hospitable. Eating and drinking should be restricted as much as possible, and should be prohibited in all spaces where archival materials are stored, processed, or used.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the standard practice for organizations holding cultural records. IPM focuses on addressing and correcting causes of pest infestation rather than symptoms. Strategies include routine monitoring, controlling pest habitats, identifying and sealing points of entry, and eliminating food sources to prevent infestation. The goal is to control pests using methods that are least harmful to humans, least damaging to the general environment, most likely to show concrete results, and that can be most effective with the least difficulty and cost. In most instances, a combination of strategies will offer the best solution.

In cases where problems do not respond to preventive techniques, direct treatment for infestation may be necessary; however, due to the toxic nature of pesticides, chemical extermination for pest problems should be used only as a last resort.

Observations & Recommendations

Food and drink are not allowed in the storage room. This is a good practice and should continue. Food and drink are admitted in the conference room, and this is acceptable if food and drink are away when collections are being consulted and any waste is disposed of immediately.

While there are two custodians who are part-time, they have not visited the Old Fiske Museum. Instead, Ms. Harris has cleaned the building on her own, which is commendable and an important part of good collections management. It was also indicated that if the custodians did visit the Old Fiske Museum, Commission members could arrange for their visit to coincide with times that Ms. Harris and Ms. Leonard catalog collections.

As a legacy of the materials being in poor conditions in the Wampum house, which experienced termite infestations, there is a chance that some materials in the Old Fiske Museum are infected with pests. At the end of the site visit, a box was found with a label indicating the silverfish were present. Inside the box, the item had been quarantined in a black garbage bag. No immediate action was taken except to further enclose the item in another garbage bag. Additional pest management resources were sent to Ms. Shipala the day after the visit. This increases the need for good housekeeping and pest management practices.

- Continue to restrict food and drink in collection storage areas. Ensuring that any food eaten on the premises are disposed of and taken off site immediately will also be an important step.
towards managing pest issues.

- **Work with the DPW to establish a schedule for custodians to clean the building.** This will free up Ms. Harris to commit her time to additional activities.

- **Establish a routine shelf and book cleaning schedule for storage areas to deter pest activity and to prevent buildup of dust and debris.** Commission members should be trained to carefully dust shelves, as well as books, and boxes in the Archives.

  - See NEDCC’s Preservation Leaflet 4.3 *Cleaning Books and Shelves* for guidance on cleaning archival stacks.12

- **Place pest monitoring traps in a few spaces within collections storage.** These traps require review on a consistent basis, but can provide useful data on pest activity and help to identify potential problems before they grow. For information on pest monitoring techniques and trap selection and placement, see www.museumpests.net.

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III. Building and Environment

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### H. Security

Security of both the building and collections should be assessed at several levels. Building security as a whole should be considered, along with storage area protections and reading room practices. The building must be well-secured when it is closed to the public. Perimeter intrusion alarms and internal motion detectors wired directly to the local police department or to another monitoring agency are recommended. For the purpose of controlling access during working hours, as well as controlling loss of materials, it is best to limit open entrances, ideally to one used by researchers and staff alike. All other doors should be alarmed to detect unauthorized use.

Access to collections must also be controlled during working hours. To minimize unnecessary access to the building after-hours, master key systems are not recommended for collecting institutions. Building keys and keys to collections storage areas should be strictly limited. A list of key holders should be kept current, and staff members should be required to return keys when they terminate employment.

Researchers using collections should be continuously supervised to prevent theft and vandalism, and to spot accidental mishandling of materials during use.

### Observations & Recommendations

WHC members have a strong understanding of the security level of their collections. All members of the Commission have access to the Old Fiske Museum. The windows of the building are locked and there is an intrusion alarm on the exterior door. Additionally, the two main storage and use rooms can be locked and are locked whenever a member is not present. There is also a password on the computer, which has PastPerfect on it. WHC has never experienced a major theft of collections. However, a rock was thrown at the storm door, creating a minor incident for WHC. Given the lack of intellectual control over collections, a theft of minor items may be difficult to detect.

Visitors are expected to sign in once they enter the Old Fiske Museum, which is an excellent practice and should be expanded to visits for research purposes if the Commission establishes this program.

WHC shares the Old Fiske Museum with the Cultural Council, which presents security issues for the Historical Commission’s collections. The Cultural Council has access to the building and is able to host events open to the public. While it was noted that this is not a common occurrence, it still presents a risk to collections. Ms. Cafferky suggested that when the Cultural Council hosts activities, a member of the Commission should be present; this is a good suggestion and should be communicated to the Cultural Council.
One of the biggest issues in regards to security is the alarm system’s tendency to malfunction. Not everyone’s password works, leading members to borrow each other’s’ passwords. This makes it difficult to check who has entered the building. Hypothetically, it also makes it difficult to keep a former Commission member from entering the building even when they were no longer allowed.

- **As indicated in Section II. C. Intellectual Control, improve intellectual control of the collections through arrangement and description.** A complete inventory of the holdings should be a priority because it not only improves access it also improves security. Without knowing what you have, you cannot know if something is missing.

- **Coordinate with members of the Cultural Council to ensure that a member of the Commission is made aware of and is present for any events run by the Cultural Council in the Old Fiske Museum.**

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- **In the short-term, read the manual for the current security system.** It will be important for members to have their own keys and ensure that there is a way for their visits to be written down.

- **Invest in key-card access to the building, storage area and conference room.** This strategy should reduce the number of malfunctions and make it easier to track visits to the building.
  
  o Once this new security method is established, a list of cardholders should be created.

- **Ensure that researchers sign in.** The use of a registration form that indicates user responsibilities is a small but significant step in improving security. Providing a registration form is best practice in archives management because it communicates to researchers that the institution is attentive to the care and use of its collections. Registration forms also serve as a record of who has used the collections, and when; this information will be useful if items are ever believed to be missing. More information about best practices for archives security can be found in the ACRL/RBMS “Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections,” available at [www.ala.org/acrl/standards/security_theft](http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/security_theft).

- **Ensure researchers are monitored at all times when using collections.**

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**IV. Collections Storage & Handling**

**A. Storage and Use Spaces**

Collections represent an investment to be maintained in the same way that buildings and equipment are maintained. The most basic element of such maintenance is the provision of safe, appropriate storage and use space. Overcrowding materials on shelves and stacking materials on the floor exposes them to distortion, disfigurement during removal and reshelving, and damage from water.

Sufficient workspace promotes safe handling. Both the processing space and the patron-use spaces should provide enough table space for safe handling of the range of collections held within the institution—for example, tables that can fully accommodate most oversized materials. Ideally, the
processing space is within or in close proximity to the collections storage area, while the patron-use space is outside of the collections storage room. Pathways should be free of obstruction and wide enough for carts to move freely between storage, processing, and patron-use areas.

**Observations & Recommendations**

Collections are stored in two rooms of the Old Fiske Museum: the conference room and the storage room. The conference room is a mixed storage and use space, which contains both collections that are processed and collections that have yet to be processed. It has ample space for maneuvering collections and has a spacious pair of tables for items to be placed and viewed. As a storage space, the conference room is filled nearly to capacity with materials lining the walls on shelves and in cabinets.

The storage room is a dedicated storage space and contains collection materials that were processed and moved from the Wampum House; it too is filled nearly to capacity. The space between the shelves is enough to safely remove collections and move them to the conference room for use. However, materials have been placed in a few of the isles, making access to certain collections difficult.

At present, the conference room is used to process and access collection, and it is generally quite easy to transport materials from the storage room to the conference room. The two spaces are directly across the hall from one another. However, WHC does not possess a cart to transport large or heavy collections safely from room to room.

There are two other storage areas: a space in the town clerk’s office, and an area in the Wampum House. Keeping collections in multiple storage areas offsite presents challenges for collections management; it can be difficult to monitor and manage the environments of multiple spaces, and it can be challenging to transport collections safely over long distances.

- **As indicated previously, the WHC should prepare a collections development policy, should continue to work on intellectual control, and should use these activities to begin to make retention decisions.** These activities will assist in determining actual space needs.

- **Acquire a rolling cart to facilitate safe transport of oversized or damaged materials.** A flat board can be added to the top of the cart to provide a wider surface area for especially large collections to lay flat.

- **Consolidate storage into the storage room and the conference room in the first floor of the Old Fiske Museum.** These are the two most suitable spaces for collections given their temperature and relative humidity. Furthermore, the collections will be easier to manage once they are located in only two rooms in the same building.

**B. Storage Furniture**

Shelving and other storage furniture should be appropriate in size for the collections to be stored and provide good support for the materials. For example, oversized shelving may be required for some materials so that they do not project into the aisles where they can be bumped and damaged. Specialized furniture may be required to store maps, architectural drawings, and other oversized materials.

The choice of shelving materials is also important. In the presence of moisture and oxygen, storage furniture made of wood can produce by-products that react to form acids and other damaging chemicals. This may be a serious problem in closed furniture like map cases, file drawers, locked bookcases, or exhibit cases, where pollutants can build up. Storage furniture should be chemically inert; shelves and drawer units made from powder-coated steel or anodized aluminum are the best choice.
Observations & Recommendations

The WHC uses a variety of furniture options for storage of collections materials. In the storage room, the majority of materials rest on bays of wood shelving, which are back-to-back and allow for the safe storage of oversize materials. Short shelving also lines the left-hand side of the wall in the storage room, and at the bottom of one shelf is bin storage for framed items. Unfortunately, the shelves are not quite deep enough to fully support large frames.

Short shelves also line the walls of the conference room, and these fully support most of the materials that rest on them. There are also six file cabinets, upon which other collections rest. These file cabinets are not filled with archival quality folders, but they could be modified to serve as archival storage for documents. Additionally, many of the shelves in the conference room are adjustable, and there is room to increase the number of shelves. There are cases in which manuscript boxes extend beyond the shelf in the conference room, and this has presented a hazard to those working at the desk; in one instance, the shelves fell over.

In both rooms, there are opportunities to improve the use of the existing furniture to make it safer and increase the storage capacity for collections. As mentioned previously, there is room to add levels to the shelving in the conference room and turn the file cabinets into archival quality storage for documents. In some cases, small materials are arranged in such a way that they occupy unnecessarily large spaces on back-to-back and regular shelves, taking up space that could be used for oversize and standard size objects respectively. There is also extraneous furniture, objects, and collections that have yet to be processed that take up space that could be moved or deaccessioned to make space for the safe storage of collections desired for retention.

On the day of the site visit, it was indicated that a flat file drawer is present in the Wampum House. This storage option is a major asset to WHC, and the Commission would benefit from relocating the drawer into the Old Fiske Museum.

- **Perform a space needs assessment.** This will help the WHC make informed decisions regarding the optimization of current furniture and the acquisition of new furniture. A basic inventory with information on the amounts of materials will assist in this. Thomas P. Wilsted’s *Planning New and Remodeled Archival Facilities* offers guidance in estimating shelf and floor space requirements.

- **Begin to remove inappropriate storage furniture and miscellaneous items in the conference room and storage room to clear up space for acceptable storage furniture.** In particular, the WHC will wish to consider making room for the flat file drawer in the Wampum House so that it can be moved into the Old Fiske Museum. For more information on recommendation regarding the flat file drawer, see Section IV. C. 2. Storage of Unbound Materials.

- **Evaluate oversize materials overhanging their shelves for relocation to back-to-back-shelving.** Identifying non-oversize materials that take up unnecessary space on back-to-back shelving and relocating them to shelving on the wall will free up space for oversize materials. It will also reduce the risk of archival boxes falling off the shelves.

- **Where possible, install additional shelves on the existing shelving in the conference room and storage room.** On the day of the site visit, there were multiple shelving units that did not have all their shelving installed. Adding to this shelving using the shelves stored in the basement could expand WHC’s storage capacity.
  
  o It will be important to inspect and clean any shelving found in the basement before using it to store materials on.
C. Preparing Collections

Protective Enclosures

Protective enclosures serve several purposes. They facilitate intellectual control of collections by providing a means of keeping like materials together, slow chemical deterioration caused by light exposure, limit water damage in the event of a disaster, and protect against dust and pests.

Two principles should be kept in mind when selecting protective enclosures. First, they should be chemically stable. Paper enclosures should be acid-free and lignin-free, and in most cases, buffered with an alkaline reserve. The purpose of the buffer is to neutralize acids as they form in storage materials through contact with acidic items and atmospheric pollution. Plastic enclosures should be composed of polyethylene, polypropylene, or archival-grade polyester (often sold under the trade name “Melinex”). Enclosures should not contribute to the deterioration of the materials they house. For this reason, buffered enclosures are generally not recommended for blueprints, cyanotypes, diazotypes, color photographs, or works of art on paper with alkaline-sensitive pigments. These items can be damaged through reaction with the alkaline buffering agent.13

The second principle to keep in mind is that enclosures should keep their contents reasonably stationary, and provide them with good structural support. Boxes that are significantly larger than their contents will allow items to shift, making damage more likely to occur as the box is moved on and off the shelf. Boxes that are too small will compress items, causing creases and tears. For flat file drawers, folders selected should match the size of the drawer (with about 1/2” to spare on each edge), rather than the size of the item, to prevent contents from sliding out of folders as drawers are opened and closed.

Inserts and Fasteners

When processing, any acidic inserts (e.g., bookmarks, scraps of paper, etc.) should be removed so that the acid they contain does not migrate and cause staining. For books that will be retained permanently in a collection, identifying information is best placed on acid-free, lignin-free, buffered paper flags inserted between the volume’s first page and front flyleaf. These are available from conservation suppliers. Adhesive labels, such as sticky notes, can stain or otherwise disfigure collections, and should be avoided. While the tacky portion of the note seems quite weak, it bonds well enough to tear brittle paper when removed. Even when items are not torn by sticky note removal, residual adhesive can cause staining and will attract dust and dirt. On a practical level, sticky notes often come loose, effectively rendering any descriptive information on them useless. A better option if the item is thin enough would be foldering and labeling the folder or, if the item is thicker or bound, inserting a book flag.

Most fasteners crimp pages and lead to permanent structure changes. Although often made of chemically stable materials, plastic clips exert too much pressure on the papers they hold. This is especially problematic for brittle or weakened papers, which can be easily torn.

Observations & Recommendations

A portion of the collections was arranged and stored by an archival consulting firm, and an additional set of collections have been cataloged and arranged by Ms. Harris and Ms. Leonard since then, including the Grantees Cards. There are also many materials that have yet to be processed. Nearly all the collections processed by the consulting firm and Commission members have been stored in archival quality enclosures. There are rare exceptions such as is the case with materials stored in bankers boxes.

In general, photographic, paper, and book materials are stored in a variety of manners using a wide array of archival quality enclosures. In the storage room, Hollinger Metal Edge record carton boxes stored paper,
photographic, and three dimensional objects. These Hollinger Metal Edge boxes present a number of issues for WHC members and the collections they house. Record carton boxes are not space efficient compared to flip-top manuscript boxes, and it is more difficult to keep documents and photographs resting vertically given their long depth. The holes left for hands to hold the boxes also create an opportunity for dust to migrate into the box, and the punched out pieces of board forming the holes can rub up against collections, causing mechanical damage. Additionally, some of the boxes hold diverse materials that would be better stored separately. For instance, one box had a daguerreotype, an ink well, and a feather, along with other types of materials. WHC uses manuscript flip-top boxes and other archival boxes as well. These boxes hold historical documents and also house spreadsheets and guides to collections. Many of these boxes are slightly overfilled with folders. Recommendations for proper housing of specific kinds of materials are explored further in Section IV C.

A variety of materials were found with post-its and paper clips. These materials are not appropriate for historic documents; they can cut, pinch and stain old materials. It will be important for WHC to discontinue the use of these items and remove them from historical materials when they are being processed.

When new collections that have yet to be processed come in, they often rest in the original boxes they came in. This is acceptable practice if those materials can be processed quickly, because the original enclosures causing damage to the materials they house.

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These flaps make the removal of folders difficult without causing mechanical damage. Additionally, the slumping of the folders is leading to warping of the documents inside.

It is excellent to see that Commission members have reduced slouching using inserts to prop folders up. Using an archival quality spacer board will reduce the folders’ exposure to acid migration and allow for a more even distribution of pressure across the folder. An example of a spacer board can be found here: [http://www.gaylord.com/Preservation/Document-Preservation/Document-Cases/Gaylord-Archival%26%23174%3B-E-flute-Spacers-%285-Pack%29/p/EFCB821](http://www.gaylord.com/Preservation/Document-Preservation/Document-Cases/Gaylord-Archival%26%23174%3B-E-flute-Spacers-%285-Pack%29/p/EFCB821)

- **Use acid-free, lignin-free, buffered folders or book flags to record descriptive and accession information.**
  - During processing, take care to avoid under filling and overfilling boxes, drawers, and folders. This will optimize WHC’s use of folders.

- **Avoid the use of fasteners, sticky notes, and adhesive labels on original materials.** For more information on use and removal of fasteners, please see the National Archives ‘Fastened Documents’ page, at [http://www.archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/fastened-docs.html](http://www.archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/fastened-docs.html).
• **Continue to house/rehouse materials in archival quality enclosures.** This includes replacing unidentified plastics and other non-archival enclosures (boxes, folders, etc.) with their archival equivalents.

  o **During processing, take care to avoid overfilling boxes/drawers and folders.**

  o **Use a pH pen to test any paper enclosures of dubious quality.** All enclosures will deteriorate over time. Any enclosure showing signs of discoloration or embrittlement, or older folders of unknown origin, can be tested for acidity. Many conservation and preservation supply vendors sell pH Pens, including Gaylord Archival (https://shar.es/1BiDA0).

• **Transfer paper, photographic, and bound volume collections out of the record carton boxes and into appropriate, space efficient enclosures.** As mentioned previously, the record carton boxes can take up additional space and present several problems to the collections inside. Manuscript flip-top boxes are more suitable for paper and photographic materials, and bound volumes are generally served better on shelves either without a box or in an adjustable or custom case.

• **Prioritize the use of archival quality boxes and folders for historical materials, using binders or other enclosures for spreadsheets and other materials created by staff.** Archival
supplies can be expensive and are specifically made to store historical materials. WHC would benefit from using these supplies exclusively for historical items rather than the records they create themselves.

- **Four flap enclosures can be used to protect weak or damaged volumes.** Replace enclosures that do not fully cover or support the items they are meant to protect.
  - As an alternative, **volumes with minor structural damage can be tied with undyed twill tape.** This is an inexpensive way to give structural support to books with loose or detached covers, although it does not offer protection from light, dust or pollutants. To be effective, the book should be tied both horizontally and vertically, and the knot should be fastened either at the book’s head or fore edge to prevent indentation on the cover.


1. Storage of Bound Materials

**Books**

The width, height, and binding of a book affect its preservation outlook. As much as possible, volumes should be shelved by size. Small volumes will not support larger ones, and can be crushed by the weight of surrounding books.

Volumes under 12” are generally considered non-oversized and need to be shelved upright and supported by bookends to prevent leaning. Leaning can cause distortion over time from the stress placed on bindings. Broad-edged ("non-knifing") bookends are safer than the flat ("knifing") variety, whose sharp edges may damage books. Staff can modify knifing bookends by slipping a piece of acid-free foam-core covered with bookcloth over the sharp metal edge. A brick covered with bookcloth fastened with PVA adhesive also makes a good book support.

Volumes over 12” tall are generally considered oversized. These are best shelved flat for overall support; placing them in stacks no more than two or three volumes high will facilitate safe handling. Alternatively, where flat shelving is not possible, oversized books can be shelved on their spines—but never on their front edges (or “fore edges”), since the weight of a book’s pages will pull the text block away from its cover.

For damaged items, protective enclosure in custom-fitted boxes or four-flap enclosures is often the best option. Protective enclosure provides structural support, protects volumes as they are moved on and off the shelf, and protects against light, dust, and water.

**Observations & Recommendations**

Bound volumes are found throughout the WHC rooms. Many bound volumes are less than 12” and are safely stored on shelves. A number of oversize bound volumes were found inside boxes in both rooms.
Copies of the Town of Wrentham Reports make up a portion of the bound volume collections, and there are duplicates of these in WHC.

There are opportunities for WHC to improve the storage of bound volumes. There are bound volumes stored on tables and in boxes in stacks of more than 2 to 3 items, which can crush the bound volumes on the bottom. There are also bound volumes stored in stacks on top of books sitting upright on shelves. Other books lean on each other and are at risk of warping. Additionally, bookends are not used on shelves. The WHC does not have book cradles which would be able to be used when researchers access fragile books. At present there may be enough shelving for the books WHC would like to keep, but a survey to determine retention decisions will need to be conducted to verify this. Adding shelves will also help to create more space for books.

- **As mentioned previously, remove bound volumes from record carton boxes and other boxes mixed with documents.** Moving books from these boxes and storing them upright on shelves or in custom boxes in stacks of no more than 2 to 3 will improve the storage conditions for the books, make them easier to access, and will likely improve space needs.

- **Improve shelving practices where needed.** In general, where shelving is used for books, shelving practices are quite good. Identifying problem areas such as shelves with slumping books, bound volumes in document cases, and bound volumes resting on their fore-edges will bolster the stewardship of bound volumes.
  - If possible, reorganizing volumes so that similarly sized books are stored together would also go a long way in improving the support of bound volumes.

- **Begin using custom boxes for damaged or fragile books that have a high priority for preservation.** Examples might include handwritten volumes. CMI Micro-Climate™ boxes come highly recommended by NEDCC's book conservators. They are available for around $8.00 to $10.00 each through Custom Manufacturing, Inc. (www.archivalboxes.com). This will also protect against dust, pollutants and light damage.
  - Four-flap enclosures are another option for damaged or deteriorating items that are not oversize, exceedingly heavy, or requiring of significant structural support. These can be purchased from any of the major archival suppliers. One example from Gaylord can be found here: http://bit.ly/17HZQ3l.

  - **Tie books with minor structural damage with undyed twill tape.** This is a good, inexpensive way to give structural support to books with loose or detached covers. To be effective, the book should be tied both horizontally and vertically, making a cross on both the back and front covers, and the knot should be fastened either at the book’s head or fore edge to prevent indentation on the cover.

  - **Books covered in wrapping paper and/or red or undyed twill tape should be evaluated for enclosure using the aforementioned methods.** In some cases, it may be found that wrapped or tied books do not need any supporting enclosure or supplies. In this case, the volumes should be untied or unwrapped and shelved.

- **Support non-oversized bound volumes with non-knifing bookends.** These provide support
to bound volumes while reducing the potential for the damage that can come from knifing bookends. An example of a non-knifing bookend can be found through the library supply vendor, Demco, (http://www.demco.com/goto?BLK00248159).

- **Acquire a book cradle for fragile volumes.** This will provide much needed support for volumes that are difficult to open or have damaged pages or bindings.

**Booklets & Pamphlets**

In general, it is most practical to store pamphlets and booklets in folders and boxes, or in hanging file folders in file cabinets. For additional guidance on choosing enclosures, see Section IV. C. Preparing Collections. Booklets more than about ¼” thick should be stored spine down in individual folders.

Pamphlets of very different size should not be stored in the same folder. For additional guidance on folding and boxing practices, see Section IV. C. 2. Unbound Materials. Pamphlets and small booklets can also be stored in specially-made enclosures, and those of similar size can be stored in drop-spine or phase boxes.

Any pamphlets shelved between books should be individually enclosed. Groups of pamphlets shelved between books can be boxed together as long as they are similar in size and in good condition. Pamphlet binders where pamphlets are sewn are a good storage option. Stitching should be done through the fold or in the item’s original fastener holes where possible. Adhesive pamphlet binders should never be used for pamphlets with special value. Covers can break along the stiff edge of the adhesive-lined cloth, and the adhesive’s chemical properties can irreversibly damage the items attached to them.

**Observations & Recommendations**

Booklets and pamphlets can be found throughout the collections and are generally inside boxes in folders, which is an excellent practice. Some pamphlets are stored on top of each other in stacks of more than three. These volumes show moderate to severe signs of damage. While the storage of pamphlets inside folders is generally quite good, some of the pamphlets overlap at awkward angles and slouch in the box.

- **All booklets and pamphlets should be transferred to chemically stable enclosures and arranged so that pamphlets of similar sizes rest upright in folders completely flush with one another to guarantee an even distribution of pressure.** Options include document preservation binders; acid-free, lignin-free, buffered folders and document boxes; and flip-top shelf files.
  

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**Scrapbooks, Photo Albums, & Binders**

Scrapbooks and photo albums pose challenging preservation problems. Their components often encompass multiple formats with different weights and thicknesses. In scrapbooks, it is common to find newspaper clippings pasted alongside items such as photographs, programs, and postcards. The collective bulk of pages can strain and weaken bindings. Most scrapbooks and many photo albums have support pages made from poor-quality paper prone to embrittlement, with acids that migrate to the items attached. Adhesives may degrade, causing items to become detached from pages and lost.

The value of scrapbooks varies widely from item to item, and from institution to institution. Those composed of newspaper clippings may be valuable only for their information. Others may have significant associational, artefactual, or aesthetic value. Valuable scrapbooks may have a high priority for evaluation
by a conservator, and for digitization. Scrapbooks that have enduring value in their original form, along with valued photo albums, should be individually boxed in custom-fitted boxes.

Binders are common in recently acquired collections, and pose many of the same preservation concerns found in scrapbooks and photo albums. The binder itself is often made from unstable materials. Contents may include multiple formats with differing needs. The weight and quantity of pages is often greater than can be safely accommodated by the binder and the binder rings, leading to strain on the pages and to unsafe handling. As pages become damaged around the hole punches, there is a risk of loss of loose sheets. Where the binder itself does not have artefactual value, pages should be removed and stored according to guidelines given in Section IV.C.2 Documents and Manuscripts.

**Observations & Recommendations**

Scrapbooks, photo albums, and binders make up a significant portion of WHC collections. The scrapbooks are largely made up of photographs and news clippings. These show moderate signs of damage and are intermixed with other collections in boxes.

Photographic albums were observed on the day of the visit and some such as the photo albums such as those donated by Ms. Cafferky represent significant and cherished parts of the collections. The photographic albums contain images from a variety of time periods and include a number of formats. The photographic albums observed are not made of archival materials and are contributing to the deterioration of the images held within.

Binders related to the history of Wrentham compose a sizeable portion of the collection and are generally stored on a single book shelf in the storage room. Binders do not provide adequate support for their pages. The plastics used in the binders are generally not of preservation quality and may be contributing to deterioration of papers over the long term.

- **As recommended in Section IV. C. 1, acquire a book cradle with fragile volumes.** Damaged items, items that do not open easily, and oversized volumes require additional support during use.

- **Place scrapbooks and photo albums in custom-fitted boxes.** The boxes will help slow deterioration by preventing exposure to light and dust, and they will prevent any loose items from becoming lost. Ultimately, boxes should be stored flat on shelves that fully support them, in stacks up to three boxes high.

- **Once the collection development policy is established, review binders for rehousing.** Materials with high priority for retention should be transferred to folders and document cases, as described in Section IV.C.2.