

Completion Report

RM CESU Agreement for FLFO, Summer 2009

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Completed Work:

I was given a certain number of tasks before my work had begun that I was to complete before moving on to other things. I was given the task of scanning as many slides as possible from a collection of about ten thousand slides of fossils (or about five drawers' worth) into a computer in the A-frame. I was also given the task of re-housing the materials in the historical collection. Some of the materials had yet to be cataloged which required a new accession number for the whole group and new catalog numbers for each document. As I was re-housing I was to make an Excel spreadsheet of all of the items existing in the collections and the new items that were yet to be cataloged.

Over a ten week period from May 26th to July 31st I accomplished these tasks:

- Re-housed the historic material located in the file cabinet into acid-free legal sized folders, 4 drawers worth
- Found those materials which did not have either an accession or a catalog number and giving them a catalog number
- Created a new accession number for all of the documents that did not have an accession number
- Organized the historical or archival collections by accession number in the Fire King File Cabinet
- Scanned about 2000 slides of fossils that were photographed at different locations into the computer in the A-Frame
- Described each document in every folder that I re-housed under its catalog number
- Created an Excel spreadsheet of all of the documents, previously or recently cataloged, that existed in the collections, the spreadsheet contains a catalog number, title, description, and location
- Organized and edited the Excel spreadsheet after re-housing all the materials
- Scanned all the paper documents and photographs that were found in the historical collections and saved them into the computer by catalog number
- Helped the museum technician, Christina Whitmore, with the annual museum inventory
- Put all of the newspaper clippings on archival paper if a copy did not already exist
- Received a CD of various historic documents from Estella Leopold which I printed out after checking if they were duplicates
- Re-housed the new materials which were printed from Estella Leopold's CD
- Made a preliminary survey of documents from the monument's general files that were not inventoried and which might have historical reference
- Located guidelines describing what belongs in archival collections and created an Excel spreadsheet which contains a title and a reason for going into the archives or not

- Performed data entry for both catalog and accession files into the NPS Automated National Cataloging System (ANCS+)
- Recorded new accession numbers into the Florissant Fossil Beds Accession Book
- Assisted the Museum Technician, Christina Whitmore, with locating items to be deaccessioned

The numbers:

- Archives Documents Currently Re-housed: 4 drawer
- Archives Documents Currently Organized: 4 drawers
- Slides Currently Scanned: ~2500 slides (40% of the total collection)
- Documents Currently Scanned: 3 drawers
- Documents Currently Inventoried: about 13 linear feet

The Work Accomplished:

The Excel Spreadsheet:

Most of the documents that already existed in the historical collections already had catalog numbers, but there were also many documents which needed new catalog numbers. As I was re-housing the documents in the historical collections I created an Excel spreadsheet of all of the individual documents that were found on which I described and wrote the locations of each document with a catalog number, new or previously cataloged. The Excel spreadsheet that I have created has a description, title, and the item name as well as the location. The purpose of the spreadsheet is to provide a finding aid and pertinent information for the use of the museum technician, Christina Whitmore, and others for reference and entrance into ANCS+.

The item names that are used in the Excel spreadsheet have certain key words for the different types of documents. Letters are labeled “Correspondence” sometimes with different identifying words such as “Hornbek Correspondence.” The other document identifiers are more obvious such as “Newspaper Clippings” and “Magazine Article,” which are what they are labeled as. Some documents could not be identified under a general subject; one such object was a transparency of a geologic map which was a unique document.

The Catalog Numbers:

Generally each document will have a different catalog number if it is a separate document; however, some groups of documents, or documents with multiple pages were previously assigned one catalog number. These documents are distinguished by a hyphenated number for each page or separate document (1262-1, 1262-2, etc...).

The Organization of the Collections:

The collections are organized by accession number. Generally the documents are organized by catalog number as well although that is not the primary form of organization.

The Preliminary Survey of Possible Archival Collections:

I performed a brief survey of the materials that are not included in the accessioned historical collections at the moment. There were documents scattered to various places within the park. Altogether the items that I looked through contained about 15 linear feet

of documents. The items were examined to find certain identifying features of archival documents. About seventy percent of the documents were found to have archival properties according to the criteria in the NPS Museum Handbook, Part 1. The Museum Handbook contains specific guidelines which were followed to decide if the materials were to be placed with the archival collections; the guidelines of the types of archival materials in NPS collections include:

- Personal Papers, organizational archives, and manuscript collections from non-Federal sources
- Copies of records (formerly sub-official records). Some copies of federal records may be kept, such as superintendent correspondence.
- Resource Management Records which include items such as manuscripts, field notes and catalogs, and other documents specifically related to park resources.

Addresses:

- Management of cultural and natural resources over time
- Scientific Research

As I was surveying the materials that were located for possible future relocation to the historical collections, I created another Excel spreadsheet which gave a title for the document and whether that document should be moved to the A-frame or not and the reason. These reasons followed the guidelines found in the Museum Handbook and can be used as a guide in the future when trying to decide whether or not to move particular items.

Suggestions for Future Work:

The Existing Historical Collections:

What exists now in archival documents is well organized and recently re-housed. However, there are some documents that have not been scanned into the computer including some uncataloged photographs that would be useful for future presentations and historical seminars of Florissant. These photographs are located in the fourth drawer of the Fire King File Cabinet and are contained in a yellow box.

Other than scanning old materials the documents in the historical collection at the A-frame do not need to be further organized; however, the documents already there do not have a guide which could be useful for future reference and research. The guide would need specific locations of each of the documents and a short title. A guide could easily be created from the Excel spreadsheet that has been created this summer but could be formatted and placed at the front of the collection to use for reference and as a finding aid.

Slide Scanning:

Over the summer of 2009 I have scanned around 2500 slides, which was only two drawers worth of slides. There are three more drawers, approximately 7500 slides, that still need to be scanned into the computer and then onto the terabyte drive that we acquired this summer. Each slide takes about 3-5 minutes to scan into the computer and thirty slides takes about three hours to scan into the computer; since the slides take such great amounts of time to scan into the computer it is possible to do multiple tasks at one time, however to finish scanning all of the slides that have yet to be scanned will almost certainly take all summer and maybe more.

Surveyed Documents:

The fifteen linear feet of materials that was briefly surveyed this summer contain materials which could be stored with the documents that already exist in the archives. Of the fifteen linear feet that was surveyed and inventoried, about 70 percent of the documents should be, according the NPS Museum Handbook, be stored with the other archival materials. Many of these materials are poorly organized and need to be more thoroughly examined and checked for archival documents; however a general sense has been determined for whether or not each particular document or set of documents should be archived.

In the future it needs to be determined specifically what needs to be moved and what should be done with the materials that do not need to be archived. There are several bins worth of budget and other managerial material in the A-frame bathroom and research and other resource document's that are currently in the paleontologist's office which should be re-examined for archival materials to make sure no documents were missed in this summer's preliminary survey. The documents that do not need to be archived either need to be stored elsewhere or be inventoried so that these items, even if not archival, may be found for future reference.

The documents that need to be archived need not only to be re-located but re-housed and organized. If I were to accomplish this task in the future I would do the following tasks in this order:

- First a place should be found in which they can reside. The A-frame is the logical choice as it is where the rest of the historical collections are housed, however, there is very little space in the A-frame basement in which to place several linear feet worth of documentation. Since there is a lack of space in the A-frame I would suggest either re-organizing the documents already existing in the collections so that room might be found or finding some sort of storage in a different building.
- Once a location is found for the materials that are to be re-located, the documents need to be re-housed into proper archival-quality storage.
- Once all documents are re-located and re-housed the documents need to be organized so that there is some sense to the collections. The documents can be organized by accession number, and as they will probably all be the same accession number there is little that needs to be done with that, but to make more sense of the documents they could be placed with like documents such as personal papers with other personal papers and field notes with other field notes. The documents already existing in the archives now could also be organized in a similar way within each accession number.

The newly organized documents could be added to a compiled guide for all of the archival documents that would be useful as a finding aid and for research reference.

Estimated Time Needed for New Project:

The new materials that have not been included with the other archival materials contain about 37 linear feet worth of information. Next summer several weeks would be needed to examine, re-house, and organize the materials located on the Monument. The estimated time needed would be:

- 2 weeks for examination and consideration of a place for long-term storage
- 4 weeks to re-house all of the documents that should be archived with the other historic collections and to make an excel spreadsheet in which the pertinent information for data entry into ANCS+ will be provided
- 2 weeks for the organization of the documents both which are needed to be archived and those which should not be archived.
- 1-2 weeks for the creation of a guide for all archival materials so a hard copy may be present with the collections for a reference and as a finding aid

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