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Introduction

The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was a project of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation that ran from 2011-2016. Its goal was to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections at small archival repositories in the five-county Philadelphia region. These include volunteer-run historical institutions, museums, fraternal and ethnic organizations, community groups, churches, clubs, and other non-profit organizations with important archival collections.

Hundreds of small archival repositories in the five-county Philadelphia region hold thousands of individual collections documenting a wide range of topics and geographic areas. Private, non-profit organizations with a history-based mission or that have historically significant archival collections, that agreed to make their archives available to the public, and that do not employ a full-time, professionally trained archivist were eligible for participation in the project.

Project staff worked to:
- Identify small archival repositories in the Philadelphia area
- Survey and assess their archival collections
- Create summary finding aids to these collections

The finding aids are made publicly accessible in an online database developed by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL), http://findingaids.pacscl.org. Within this single online resource, researchers may search collections held at a wide range of Philadelphia-area archival repositories, from the smallest all-volunteer organizations to the largest professional institutions.

Project staff also served as a resource for local small repositories, offering training programs, advice, and assistance with issues of archival management and collections stewardship.

More information on the project is available at http://hsp.org/hcipsar.

HCI-PSAR was a multi-phase project that began in 2011. During Phase I (July 2011 to September 2012), project staff visited 47 small repositories in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties and surveyed and assessed 541 individual archival collections totaling more than 4,600 linear feet of materials.

During Phase II (October 2012 to October 2014), project staff visited 83 small repositories, focusing on the three remaining Philadelphia-area counties—Bucks, Chester, and Delaware—as well as remaining un-surveyed repositories in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties, and surveyed and assessed about 600 individual archival collections totaling about 7,500 linear feet of materials.

Phases I and II focused on organizations with a history-based missions, such as historical societies, small museums, and historic sites. Phase III (November 2014-June 2016) expanded the scope of the project to include more types of repositories with significant archival holdings, such as churches, fraternal and ethnic organizations, and community groups. During Phase III, project staff visited 42 small repositories and surveyed and assessed 296 individual archival collections totaling about 9,000 linear feet of materials.
The survey procedures used by the HCI-PSAR project staff was based on methodology pioneered by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, circa 2001-2002, and refined by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL), circa 2006-2008. To learn more about these two projects, please visit their respective websites at http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/Mellon/about.html and http://www.pacscsurvey.org/.

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Project Planning

Budget items
- Full-time Project Director
- Part-time Project Coordinator
- Two full-time Project Surveyors, Senior and Junior (senior and junior job descriptions)
- Travel funds
- Laptop for site visits
- 2-3 desktop or laptop computers for office

Office and surveying supplies
- Digital camera
- Small tape measure
- pH-testing pen
- Report-binding supplies (HCI-PSAR used a manual comb binding machine, plastic binding combs, clear front and opaque back report covers, and five tab dividers)

Staffing. HCI-PSAR project staff consisted of a part-time (20 hours per week) Project Director, part-time (20 hours per week) Project Coordinator, and two full-time (40 hours per week) Project Supervisors. For future projects, it is recommended that the Project Director be scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week. Note that a surveying team of two is necessary for the survey methodology: the surveyors can consult about survey strategy for each repository’s context, and the pair bring two points of view to the assessment ratings discussion.

Hiring timeline. The Project Director and Project Coordinator should begin work on the HCI-PSAR project before the Surveyors, so that they can compile a list of eligible repositories and start arranging surveying appointments. Surveying should conclude at least two months before the end of the project so that reports can be finished, delivered, and reviewed by the repositories before the finding aids are posted online. A suggested project timeline is laid out below.

Computers. A laptop for the Project Surveyors to bring on repository site-visits is necessary. Enough computers for each staff member should also be available in the office to maximize efficiency.

Camera. Taking pictures during site visits is important for capturing reference information (e.g. paper inventories, obituaries/news clippings for biographical/historical notes) and for use in social media and presentations about the project. The survey team may wish to use their personal phone cameras for this purpose, but HCI-PSAR staff preferred to use a separate digital camera for high-quality images and faster uploading.

Travel budget. A grant proposal for a project like HCI-PSAR must include a substantial travel budget. $6,000 per year is recommended, about half allocated to the Project Director using a personal vehicle, and about half allocated to the Project Surveyors sharing a rental car.

Estimate two visits per repository for the Project Surveyors as well – although most repositories are completed in one day, some repositories will take several days or, occasionally, a week or two. In the five-county Philadelphia area, mileage averaged about 50 miles per visit, or
about 350 miles per month per car. Use of a personal vehicle was reimbursed at $0.555 per mile. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania had a negotiated discounted corporate rate (tax-free) for rentals from Enterprise. The cost was a base rate of $37, plus an average of $10 in gas per day. About 60 rentals were booked per year. Project Surveyors travelled by public transit whenever feasible to save travel funds.

**Suggested Project Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before project begins</th>
<th>Hire Project Coordinator, Senior Surveyor; begin hiring process for Junior Surveyor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 1-4</td>
<td>Begin compiling list of small archival repositories, determining eligibility, and scheduling appointments for Project Surveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Surveyors are trained in surveying using home institution’s collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Surveyors begin surveying at small repositories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks before project ends</td>
<td>Surveying ceases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Job Description: Senior Project Surveyor**

**Title:** Senior Project Surveyor, HCI-PSAR  
**Supervisor:** Project Director, HCI-PSAR  
**Date:**  
**Department:** Archives  
**Approved:**  
**Accepted:**

**Summary of Position:** The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) is a grant-funded, three-phase project to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden archival collections held by the numerous small, primarily volunteer-run historical repositories throughout the five-county Philadelphia area. Phases I and II of the project ran from July 2011 - October 2014. Phase III will run from November 2014 through April 2016.

The objectives of the project are to create an online directory of small archival repositories in the Philadelphia area, to make descriptive information on their archival collections available in an online searchable database, and to promote the findings of the project and the use of small repository collections to the Philadelphia area historical community, the broader scholarly community, and the archival profession. Additional objectives are to build a community of practice among Philadelphia area small repositories and to offer them training programs in various aspects of archival work and to promote the project as a national model for uncovering archival collections in small repositories.

Reporting to the Project Director, the Senior Project Surveyor trains and supervises the work of the Project Surveyor and oversees the surveying, assessment, and creating of finding aids for the archival collections of small repositories participating in the project. The Senior Project Surveyor works with the Project Surveyor in determining how repositories’ overall holdings break down into individual collections; in compiling basic descriptive, bibliographic, and administrative data about each collection; and in using qualitative and quantitative measures to assess each collection’s research value, intellectual access, physical access, housing, and physical condition. Collections in small repositories may document a wide range of subjects, including local, national, and international history, as well as the arts, business, community organizations, ethnic studies, genealogy, politics, religion, science, technology, and other topics.

The Senior Project Surveyor oversees the creation of summary collection finding aids in EAD complying with DACS guidelines for single-level minimum description. These finding aids will be posted on the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL)'s finding aid website. The data collected will help researchers locate the collections and help repositories plan and set priorities for future cataloging, processing, and preservation projects. The Senior Project Surveyor contributes to the compilation of reports to repositories and offers advice and assistance to them on archival matters.

Working with the Project Director and other project staff, the Senior Project Surveyor participates in project planning and development of project priorities, tasks, and methodologies. S/he supervises the promotion of the project through social media and other outreach initiatives,
participates in developing and giving presentations on the project, and serves as an HSP ambassador both to Philadelphia area small historical repositories and to the broader archives, history, and museum communities. The Senior Project Surveyor also assists in the development and management of project activities such as an archival internship program, processing of collections, and providing training to small repositories. S/he will attend HSP meetings and events and perform other duties as needed.

This is a full-time, limited term (18-month) position, Monday-Friday, 40 hours/week. Some flexibility in work schedule may be required from time to time. The project requires significant travel in the greater Philadelphia area, with repository site visits averaging about twice per week (although this rate can vary significantly from week to week). A valid driver’s license is required. Having a car is preferred, although most of the travel is done with a rental car. The position also requires travel to conferences and meetings throughout the nation on a fairly regular basis.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Work effectively as a team with the Project Director, other project staff, and representatives of small repositories in realizing project goals and objectives
- Train and supervise the Project Surveyor
- Work as a team with the Project Surveyor in quickly and efficiently evaluating repositories’ archival holdings, determining collection groupings, developing collections descriptions, assessing collections using survey criteria, and entering data into the project database
- Contribute to compilation of repository reports and participate in project planning meetings and assessment and refinement of project priorities, work flows, and methodologies
- Provide archival advice and assistance to small repositories, to the extent possible
- Coordinate project social media to promote the project and the collections of small repositories
- Develop project analytical and statistical data
- Prepare and give presentations on the project at regional and national professional conferences
- Prepare and present archival training programs to Philadelphia area small repositories
- Prepare and present training programs to other organizations planning to undertake small repository initiatives in their geographic areas
- Assist in the development of and coordinate project activities such as an archival internship program, processing of collections, and providing training to small repositories
- Work with other HSP staff as necessary
- Perform other duties as assigned

Job Requirements:

Master’s degree or equivalent work experience required in history, library science, or related field. Education with a specialization in archival studies preferred. Two years’ experience
working with archival collections required; must be comfortable handling rare and/or delicate materials. Strong organizational and computer skills necessary; experience with HSP-PACsCL archival assessment methodology, experience with Archivists’ Toolkit or other database management systems, and familiarity with DACS and other archival standards strongly preferred. Familiarity with trends in historical research and a broad-based knowledge in a range of subject areas highly desirable. Supervisory experience preferred.

The ability to coordinate and supervise the work of others, to take direction, to work as part of a team, to listen well and communicate effectively in speech and writing, to adapt to different environments and situations in small historical organizations, and to interact effectively with different people is essential.

Must be able to lift 40 pounds

Status: Exempt

Job Description: Junior Project Surveyor

Title: Project Surveyor, HCI-PSAR
Supervisor: Senior Project Surveyor, HCI-PSAR
Department: Archives

Summary of Position: The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) is a grant-funded, three-phase project to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden archival collections held by the numerous small, primarily volunteer-run historical repositories throughout the five-county Philadelphia area. Phases I and II of the project ran from July 2011 - October 2014. Phase III will run from November 2014 through April 2016.

The objectives of the project are to create an online directory of small archival repositories in the Philadelphia area, to make descriptive information on their archival collections available in an online searchable database, and to promote the findings of the project and the use of small repository collections to the Philadelphia area historical community, the broader scholarly community, and the archival profession. Additional objectives are to build a community of practice among Philadelphia area small repositories and to offer them training programs in various aspects of archival work and to promote the project as a national model for uncovering archival collections in small repositories.

Under the direction of the Senior Project Surveyor and working together as a team, the Project Surveyor will survey, assess, and create finding aids for the archival collections of small repositories participating in the project. The Project Surveyor will assist the Senior Project Surveyor in determining how repositories’ overall holdings break down into individual collections; in compiling basic descriptive, bibliographic, and administrative data about each
collection; and in using qualitative and quantitative measures to assess each collection’s research value, intellectual access, physical access, housing, and physical condition. Collections in small repositories may document a wide range of subjects, including local, national, and international history, as well as the arts, business, community organizations, ethnic studies, genealogy, politics, religion, science, technology, and other topics.

The Project Surveyor will assist the Senior Project Surveyor in creating summary collection finding aids in EAD that comply with DACS guidelines for single-level minimum description. These finding aids will be posted on the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSLCCL’s) finding aid website. The data collected will help researchers locate the collections and help repositories plan and set priorities for future cataloging, processing, and conservation projects. The Project Surveyor will contribute to the compilation of reports to repositories and offer advice and assistance to repositories on archival matters.

The Project Surveyor will participate in project planning and development of project priorities, tasks, and methodologies. S/he will help promote the project through social media and other outreach initiatives, may participate in giving presentations on the project, and will serve as an HSP ambassador to the area’s small historical repositories. The Project Surveyor will also assist in the development and management of project activities such as an archival internship program, processing of collections, and providing training to small repositories. S/he will attend HSP meetings and events, and perform other duties as needed.

This is a full-time, limited term (12-month) position, Monday-Friday, 40 hours/week. Some flexibility in work schedule may be required from time to time. The project requires significant travel in the greater Philadelphia area, with repository site visits averaging about twice per week (although this rate can vary significantly from week to week). A valid driver’s license is required. Having a car is preferred, although most of the travel is done with a rental car.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- Work effectively as a team with the Senior Project Surveyor, project staff, and representatives of small repositories
- Quickly and efficiently evaluate repositories’ archival holdings, determine collection groupings, develop collections descriptions, assess collections using survey criteria, and enter data into the project database
- Contribute to compilation of repository reports and participate in project planning meetings and assessment and refinement of project priorities, work flows, and methodologies
- Provide archival advice and assistance to small repositories, to the extent possible
- Give presentations and utilize social media to promote the project and the collections of small repositories
- Help to prepare and present archival training programs to Philadelphia area small repositories
- Help to prepare and present training programs to other organizations planning to undertake small repository initiatives in their geographic areas
• Undertake or assist in the development of project activities such as an archival internship program, processing of collections, and providing training to small repositories
• Work with other HSP staff as necessary
• Perform other duties as assigned

**Job Requirements:**

Master’s degree or equivalent work experience required in history, library science, or related field. Education with a specialization in archival studies preferred. Experience working with archival collections required; must be comfortable handling rare and/or delicate materials. Strong organizational and computer skills necessary; experience with Archivists’ Toolkit or other database management systems and familiarity with DACS and other archival standards preferred. Familiarity with trends in historical research and a broad-based knowledge in a range of subject areas highly desirable.

The ability to take direction, to work as part of a team, to listen well and communicate effectively in speech and writing, to adapt to different environments and situations in small historical organizations, and to interact effectively with different people is essential. Must be able to lift 40 pounds.

**Status:** Exempt
Arranging Survey Visits

Repository Visit Workflow

**Project Coordinator**

- Contact repository, await response, schedule appointments (up to 6 months, average: 1-2 weeks)

**Project Supervisor**

- Initial site visit (1-2 hours)
- On-site surveying (¼-7 days, less than one day for 2/3 of sites)
- Create first draft of collections data (slightly more than on-site time)
- Social media: Twitter, Facebook, blog post (about ½ day)

**Project Surveyors**

- Edit collections data and compile report (about ½ day)
- Edit report draft
- Apply corrections to collections data. Export PDF, EAD, HTML, MARC (less than 1 hour)

- Finalize and print report (about ½ day). Schedule final visit (timing contingent on responsiveness)
- Deliver report and solicit corrections (about 1-2 hours)
- Wait for repository edits (up to 3 weeks)
- Apply repository edits to collections data (if any), write repository “blurb” for website, add blurb and finding aids to website (about ½ day)
Repository Eligibility

As the HCI-PSAR project evolved, the criteria for what repositories would be included changed somewhat. The following criteria remained in place throughout:

- **Private, non-profit status:** Organizations not classed as 501(c)(3) were usually excluded. AND

- **Non-professional staff:** Theoretically, institutions that employ a full-time, professionally trained archivist can catalog and make their collections available effectively on their own. The organization may employ other kinds of history professionals full-time, such as curators or historic preservationists. They may also employ a trained archivist on a part-time or contract basis. The organization qualifies as long as there is no one with the title “Archivist” on the payroll full-time. AND

- **Archival collections:** It seems obvious, but the repository must have collections of original, unique, paper materials that are historical in nature and available to the public for research—diaries, letters, photographs, account books, blueprints, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, maps, genealogy research, and similar materials. Surveyors will not visit sites with only non-paper and museum objects. Surveyors will not visit sites that only have published materials (books, pamphlets, magazines, or newspapers) and/or copied materials (reproductions of documents held at other historical societies, microfilms).

During Phases I and II of HCI-PSAR, repositories had to meet one of the following two criteria in addition:

- **History mission:** Organizations meeting the above three criteria that also have a primary mission of collecting historical materials, such as museums, historical societies, and historic sites, qualify for inclusion. OR

- **Non-historical collecting institutions:** Organizations without a history mission, such as schools, churches, public libraries, and community groups, were generally disqualified from Phases I and II of HCI-PSAR. However, if they were actively engaged in collecting archival materials outside of their own institutional records—from for example, one community group that had LGBT advocacy as its primary mission but also maintained a dedicated library and archives of LGBT historical materials—were included on a discretionary basis.

Phase III of HCI-PSAR had an expanded scope. Any 501(c)3 organization with “historically significant” archival materials and no full-time, professionally-trained archivist could be eligible. Schools, churches, public libraries, and community groups would be considered, even if they only had their own institutional archives and no archival materials collected from other sources. To narrow the pool of potential participants, HCI-PSAR staff developed a rubric to quantify the suitability of a given institution for inclusion in HCI-PSAR. Major factors taken into account were the historical importance of the institution, the physical and intellectual accessibility of its archives, and the extent and disposition of its records.
Barriers to Participation

Most repositories contacted about participating in the HCI-PSAR project were enthusiastic and eager to participate. However, several likely eligible institutions were excluded for a variety of reasons:

- Several otherwise eligible repositories declined to participate in HCI-PSAR because they did not want increased research traffic.
  - HCI-PSAR staff offered the reassurance that while they might expect a few additional researchers, no participating repositories reported more than a handful that could be attributed to HCI-PSAR’s efforts.

- Several eligible repositories declined to participate because they felt they lacked the staff capacity to supervise HCI-PSAR surveyors at work.
  - HCI-PSAR staff offered the reassurance that project staff were fairly self-sufficient, and would not require any further supervision after a brief orientation (an hour or two).

- Several eligible repositories were not able to participate because their collections were temporarily unavailable, e.g. due to construction, during the term of the project.

- At least a dozen or more repositories in the five-county area that likely would have qualified for the project did not respond to repeated contact attempts via email, phone, and post.
**Scheduling the Survey Appointment**

When making the survey appointment, the Project Coordinator should recommend that the repository representative most knowledgeable about the repository’s archival collections be present for the first day of surveying if possible. Other repository staff are welcome to attend as desired. Instruct the repository staff that after an initial meeting (usually about an hour), Project Surveyors are fairly self-sufficient, although someone should be available to answer questions. Surveying concludes in a day for about 2/3 of repositories.

The Project Coordinator should clearly specify what types of materials will be sought by the Project Surveyors. Surveyors will be looking for original, unique, paper material—diaries, letters, photographs, account books, blueprints, scrapbooks, maps, genealogy research, etc. Surveyors will *not* be looking for non-paper and museum objects. Surveyors will *not* be looking for published materials—books, pamphlets, magazines, or newspapers. Surveyors will *not* be looking for copied materials—reproductions of diaries held at other historical societies, etc. If some of these materials are mixed in with archival materials (for example, family papers containing pamphlets from schools attended, or an artificial collection on a person combining original and copy documents), they may be included in the descriptions of certain collections. However, surveyors will skip over shelves of books and volumes of bound newspapers. Newspaper clippings are a special case: while surveyors will not survey complete copies of newspapers, clippings that have been extracted and compiled in a scrapbook or subject file will be included in the survey, because there is added value in the context and arrangement.

The Project Coordinator should also ask the repository representative to compile any existing collections descriptions, finding aids, lists of collections, control files, inventories, or other intellectual access tools (such as PastPerfect cataloging software) so that they will be available on the day of the survey. A template for an email sent to repositories at the time of scheduling survey appointments is given on the next page. The Project Coordinator should also clearly explain what information will be collected by Project Staff and how that information will be used before the survey begins. The “Project Permissions Grid” should be sent out with the email “Preparing for HCI-PSAR”.

Email template: Preparing for the Survey

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories! The goal of HCI-PSAR is to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden archival collections of the many small, primarily volunteer-run repositories in the Philadelphia area. Project staff will visit your organization to survey your archival collections and develop descriptions of the materials that will be included in an online searchable database of the collections of the region’s small historical organizations (http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/pacscl/ancillary.html?id=collections/pacscl/repositories2).

During your scheduled appointment, Project Director XXX and Project Surveyors XXX and XXX will meet with you to explain the HCI-PSAR project and begin surveying your archival collections. Depending on the extent of your archival holdings, Surveyors may be on-site anywhere from two hours to a week or more. Most repositories are finished in less than one day. The Surveyors are mostly self-sufficient after the initial explanatory meeting, but a person who is knowledgeable about your archival collections should be available to answer any questions.

Before HCI-PSAR Staff arrive at your institution for the first time, we ask that you prepare for their visit in the following ways:

- **Identify the person in your staff/volunteer corps who knows the most about your archival holdings.** Make sure that person will be available to work with HCI-PSAR staff.
- **Locate all of your archival holdings and make sure that they are accessible to project staff.** Archival holdings include original manuscript or typed materials, such as diaries, letters, ledgers, business records, and photographs. It does not include published items, such as books, magazines, or full copies of newspapers, and it does not include three-dimensional/museum objects. It does include subject files, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings files, and other useful accumulations of historical research materials.
- **Gather together all existing guides to your collections,** including card catalogs, handwritten or typed inventory lists, finding aids for individual collections, computerized databases (such as PastPerfect, Microsoft Access, or Excel), and accession/donor files so that HCI-PSAR staff can refer to them. If something is in both digital and paper format, the digital format is preferred.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

*HCI-PSAR Project Staff*
## Project Permissions Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information we collect</th>
<th>Why we collect it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Descriptions of your archival collections (finding aids).**  
  - Collection title, creator, dates, etc.  
  - Background note  
  - What types of materials and subjects/topics are included  
  - Provenance (from whom, and approximately what year, you acquired the collection) | ➤ This information will be published online so that researchers can find out about your collections. Finding aids created in the project are contributed to a website with finding aids from other Philadelphia area archival repositories: [http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/pacscl/ancillary.html?id=collections/pacscl/repositories2](http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/pacscl/ancillary.html?id=collections/pacscl/repositories2)  
  You will be given an opportunity to review and edit the finding aids before they are published. |
| **Assessments of your archival collections.** We assess each collection on a scale of one to five in the following areas:  
  - Quality of housing  
  - Condition of material  
  - Intellectual access (existence of inventories, finding aids, card catalogs, or other collections descriptions)  
  - Physical access (degree of organization)  
  - Probable interest of the collection’s topics to current and potential researchers  
  - Documentation quality (how intensively and/or extensively are these topics documented) | ➤ These assessments are intended to aid you in collections management and for planning purposes. For example, a collection that scores high for interest and documentation quality but low for quality of housing may be a good collection to focus on re-housing. **This information will NOT be made public.** |
| **Basic information and contacts for your institution.**  
  - Photograph of your building  
  - Institution’s address, phone number, email address, website, etc.  
  - Short description of the institution’s mission and summary of its archival holdings | ➤ Your institution will be included in two online directories  
  1. The PACSCL website, described above  
  2. The History Affiliates’ directory of small history and heritage organizations, on the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s website: [http://hsp.org/history-affiliates/resources/affiliate-organization-directory-0](http://hsp.org/history-affiliates/resources/affiliate-organization-directory-0) |
| **Photographs of your storage areas and documents within your collection.** While on site, HCI-PSAR surveyors will take photographs of your building, areas where collections are stored, and collections items including documents, photographs, volumes, etc. | ➤ Photographs are used by HCI-PSAR in three different ways:  
  ➤ To document project activities and the conditions in small history organizations  
  ➤ To use as reference for final report preparation  
  ➤ To illustrate social media posts on the project blog ([http://hsp.org/blogs/archival-adventures-in-small-repositories](http://hsp.org/blogs/archival-adventures-in-small-repositories)), Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Fewer than five low-quality/low-resolution images will be used.  
  *Note that staff will not publish anything negative about participating institutions, and that HCI-PSAR will not reproduce, publish, exhibit, or distribute the institution’s materials, or permit others to do so, without explicit authorization. You may choose to opt-out of social media.* |
Surveying at Small Repositories

Typical Schedule for First Survey Visit

9:00    Project Surveyors meet at office, pick up laptop and surveying supplies, walk to car rental agency
9:15    Project Surveyors leave car rental agency
10:00   Project Surveyors meet Project Director at repository, meet Repository Representatives and begin tour
10:30   Project Surveyors begin survey work while Project Director meets with Repository Representatives to talk about project
11:30   Project Director leaves
12:00   Project Surveyors eat lunch
12:30   Project Surveyors resume surveying
4:00    Project Surveyors leave repository
5:00    Project Surveyors return car to rental agency, walk back to office to drop off laptop and surveying supplies

Beginning the Survey

On the first day of surveying, the Project Director and both Project Surveyors should meet on-site with repository representatives. First, the repository representatives should give a tour of the locations where archival collections are stored; this tour usually takes about 30 minutes. Next, Project Surveyors can begin working while the Project Director sits down with repository representatives. The Project Director’s meeting to explain the project and show a sample final report usually takes about an hour.

Project Surveyors should work in teams of two, examining a collection and then discussing it and typing up notes. This way they can share ideas and consult with each other about survey strategy: parsing repository holdings, naming collections, and relying on existing find aids versus surveying from scratch. Collaboration also brings two points of view to the assessment ratings discussions.

The most difficult task the Surveyors will confront is "parsing" the repository’s holdings into discrete collections. Please see "Parsing Repository Holdings" below for more detail. Start with the collections that are separate and straightforward.

Parsing Holdings into Collections

One of the fundamental challenges that arises when surveying the archival collections of small repositories is determining precisely what collections there are to be surveyed. More often than not, small repositories do not think of their holdings as a compilation of individual, separate collections, but rather as one amorphous “collection.” Parsing the archival materials held at a repository into discrete collections to be surveyed is crucial to the process. Here are a few factors to consider:
• **Existing description:** In cases where a collection has already been delineated and described, even if it is not delineated the way surveyors would recommend, it most cases it is best to follow this organization. This saves time (if a collection description already exists), shows respect for the efforts made by the repository, and helps ensure that repository representatives will understand the HCI-PSAR report and be able to reconcile it with their preexisting conceptions of their holdings.

• **Size of collection:** For the HCI-PSAR project, Surveyors set a minimum linear footage cut-off of 1 linear foot. This was partially for the sake of expediency: Surveyors’ time on-site was limited, and finding enough biographical/historical information for a small collection on an obscure topic is difficult. Another consideration was research value rating: collections under one linear foot will almost by definition have a low documentation quality score. Collections under one linear foot may be combined with others into a "Random Historical Society local history collection" or even a "Random Historical Society manuscript volumes collection." Still, under some circumstances, it may be advisable to leave small collections under one linear foot separate:
  
  o If the collection has already been described/cataloged by the repository as a unit, surveyors should utilize existing description.
  
  o If the subject of the collection is particularly important, it may deserve to be singled out rather than buried in a larger collection.
  
  o If the repository's holdings are minimal and there are only a few potential collections, it may be easy enough to survey each separately. HCI-PSAR Surveyors spent at least 3 hours on-site at each repository.

• **Physical cues/storage locations:** A body of materials stored together in one place, with a consistent "look" to it—e.g. a file cabinet with similar folders, or a labeled set of boxes—is likely one collection. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Limited storage space may lead to multiple collections being stuffed into one filing cabinet, or half of the boxes from a collection being temporarily stored in the basement.

• **Consistency of material:** The implications of physical/storage consistency should be weighed against the implications of material/contents consistency. Similar genre/forms, subjects, and/or organizational schemas may indicate the continuity of a collection.

• **Provenance:** The concept of provenance is not as important in the small repository context as it is for large archives. Small historical societies often receive donations of single or several items (e.g. one photograph of Grandpa's store in 1930 and a WWII poster), so there is not much information to be gained from the provenancial context. Organization by provenance is not necessarily useful or practical. Still, where it was possible to maintain or reconstruct a collection based on provenance, and where that collection was a linear foot or more in extent, HCI-PSAR Surveyors respected provenance insofar as possible.

The PACSCL Survey Tool and the Small Repository Context

Surveyors for the Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories relied heavily on the ratings methodology and criteria created for the Philadelphia
Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL) Survey Initiative.\(^1\) Their methodology was, in turn, based on the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's survey method.\(^2\) Surveyors worked in teams of two, assessing collections based on the “PACSCL Consortial Survey Initiative Ratings,” which is quoted on the next several pages. Surveyors used a “smart” Excel worksheet to record assessment and descriptive information—the “\textit{Nuts and Bolts}” of using that technology is described at the end of this manual—but a “dumb” worksheet showing the general layout of the survey worksheet is quoted on the next several pages.

Surveyors assigned ratings on a scale of 1-5 in the following five areas: Quality of Housing, Physical Condition, Intellectual Access, Physical Access, Interest, and Documentation Quality. The last two ratings, Interest and Documentation Quality, are summed to form a Research Value Rating on a scale from 2 to 10. This is probably the most significant rating given, as it reflects the importance of collections to the larger research community. A collection rated 7 or above is considered to be a significant resource.

While assigning research value ratings to collections in the HCI-PSAR project, surveyors faced challenges unique to small repositories. HCI-PSAR have interpreted and adapted several key aspects of the research value rating criteria from PACSCL’s document: (1) audience interest and resources, (2) interest in collection content v. creator, and (3) general guidelines for interest scores. An explanation of each of these interpretations/adaptations is provided in sections below. Overlaying these consideration, Surveyors were careful to maintain the integrity of the 7 rating. Ratings of 7 or above should stand up to scrutiny in any repository setting.

HCI-PSAR Project Staff received feedback that some repository representatives found the numerical Research Value Ratings unintuitive. While HCI-PSAR Project Staff were careful to contextualize the scores in terms of cross-repository averages when delivering the project final report, repository representatives reported that they had difficulty passing on the same explanations to their Board Members and other affiliates. As a result, HCI-PSAR staff began translating the Research Value Rating numbers into descriptive “Level of Significance” terms. This addition is reflected on the “HCI-PSAR Assessment Criteria” document below.

One last adjustment to the PACSCL Survey Tool should be noted. HCI-PSAR surveyors decided to break down the Intellectual Access score into “Intellectual Access Before Survey” and “Intellectual Access After Survey,” as the HCI-PSAR component of posting survey records in the PACSCL finding aid website significantly improved intellectual access.

Finally, a word on software logistics. The HCI-PSAR staff decided to use Archivists’ Toolkit (AT) as the database to maintain and access collections information during and especially after the project. The AT program and MySQL database were installed on the laptop. However, Project Surveyors found AT to be “clunky” to navigate and use during fast-paced survey work for the following reasons:

- Archivists' Toolkit offers an enormous number of optional fields for data entry in several different tabs. A streamlined worksheet in Excel made it easier to consistently fill in the same fields for all surveys and required fewer mouse-clicks.

\(^1\) To learn more about the PACSCL Consortial Survey Initiative, visit \url{http://www.pacsclsurvey.org/}. Project documentation, including the Survey Ratings Criteria that HCI-PSAR utilized, can be found at \url{http://www.pacsclsurvey.org/documentation.html}.
\(^2\) Background on the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s collections survey can be found at \url{http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/Mellon/about.html}. 
Surveyors were frustrated that AT does not allow a finding aid ("resource") to be saved until certain fields are filled in. This makes it difficult to take notes and refine them later. For example, before saving a finding aid Surveyors would need to enter a temporary creator name. Then they would have to remember to return later and delete the record after looking up the authorized heading.

It is difficult to review and edit a finding aid in AT. The options are to click through many different fields and notes looking for errors, or to create a PDF report, scour it for errors, and then return to AT to find and correct them.

For all of these reasons, Surveyors preferred to enter data in a worksheet created in Microsoft Excel. This sheet, created for the project, exports information in EAD, an assessment report, a processing plan, and an assessments database line. The worksheet is explained in great detail below.
## Description Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection title:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator:</td>
<td>Type:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>Date expression:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date begin:</td>
<td>Date end:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk date begin:</td>
<td>Bulk date end:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection no.:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent:</td>
<td>Linear feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provenience:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access:</td>
<td>Contact repository for information about accessing this collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related collections:</td>
<td>list each collection in a separate cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical material:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Scope and Content note:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access Points:</th>
<th>Geographic names</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Names</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**HCI-PSAR Survey Worksheet (3 of 3)**

### Assessment Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Formats:</th>
<th>Architectural materials</th>
<th>Glass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art originals</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts</td>
<td>Scrapbooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio materials</td>
<td>Technical drawings/schematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological specimens</td>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botanical specimens</td>
<td>Vellum and/or parchment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer storage units</td>
<td>Video materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (negative, slide, or movie)</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation and Preservation Issues:</th>
<th>Mold</th>
<th>Deteriorating film (nitrate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pests</td>
<td>Other special issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittle paper</td>
<td>Thermofax Paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal fasteners</td>
<td>Folded items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Rolled items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>Other issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings:</th>
<th>Condition of Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Access</th>
<th>No catalog records or finding aids previously existed for this collection, but HCI-PSAR's online catalog will provide some intellectual access.</th>
<th>After survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation Quality</td>
<td>After survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Research Value</td>
<td>After survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes to repository:**

---

24
Assessment Criteria (page 1 of 3)

Physical Condition Rating:
A collection whose contents are in large part too fragile to handle is not really accessible.
This rating applies to the paper, photographs, and other types of materials found in individual collections. The ratings are intended to describe the overall condition of the materials in a collection; items or groups of materials of particular concern will be indicated in the conservation note.

5. Excellent: little damage with no further deterioration expected, based on the high quality of the material.
4. Very good: little damage with some further deterioration possible, due to the mixed quality of the material.
3. Good: expected deterioration with some further deterioration possible.
2. Fair: somewhat worse than expected deterioration with some further deterioration possible.
1. Poor: significant damage/ deterioration that makes collection difficult to use.

Physical Access Rating:
This rating applies to a collection’s physical arrangement. In considering the level of the physical access, the surveyors will take into account the complexity and size of collection. For example, a small, relatively homogenous collection in rough order is generally more physically accessible than a large, heterogeneous collection in rough order, and the ratings will reflect that fact. (Note that arrangement to the item level may not be desirable for many collections; a rating of 4 may be the top rating that is desirable for a collection.)

5. Full arrangement to item level in series and, as appropriate, subseries. Single volumes are orderly and indexed (i.e. chronological accounts with a name index).
4. Arrangement in series to file level. There is generally good order within the files. Single volumes are orderly (i.e. an account book in alphabetical order or a neat scrapbook in thematic order).
3. Rough arrangement by date, document type, function, source, or other characteristic; papers not thoroughly screened, but have been unfolded and flattened; series not fully established; files not fully established; researchers often must work through voluminous extraneous material to locate pertinent items. Single volumes might have had more than one use, or have items pasted in or otherwise be somewhat disorganized.
2. Partial or superficial arrangement and/or non-standard housing and labeling discourage use except with special staff assistance.
1. Totally unarranged; many, sometimes most, documents not yet removed from envelopes, unfolded, and flattened. Completely inaccessible to researcher.

Quality of Housing Rating:
The ratings are intended to describe the overall quality of housing of the materials in a collection; items or groups of materials within a collection may be in better or poor housing than what the overall rating indicates.

5. Collection housed completely in acid-free boxes and folders in good condition. Boxes and folders have reasonable amount of material in them. Boxes and folders are correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in excellent condition.
4. Collection housed partially in acid-free boxes and folders in good condition. Most boxes and folders have reasonable amount of material in them. Most boxes and folders are correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in very good condition (expected wear).
3. Collection housed in non- archival boxes and folders but they are in good condition. Most boxes and folders have reasonable amount of material in them. Most boxes and folders are correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in good condition (somewhat the worse for wear yet intact).
2. Collection housed in non- archival boxes and folders. Significant number of boxes and folders might have unreasonable amount of material in them or are not the correct size and type for the materials they house. For bound volumes, binding is in fair condition (boards might be detached).
1. Collection housed in non- archival boxes, might have items loose on the shelf. Majority of material is not in folders and/or boxes are overstuffed or understuffed. For bound volumes, binding is in poor condition, lacking boards or otherwise compromising the text block.

Physical Condition and Access questions:
- Given the research value of a collection, what needs to be done to make the collection physically accessible at the appropriate level?
- What needs to be done to make the collection intellectually accessible at the appropriate level?
- How does the physical condition of the collection affect access?
- When do the degree of damage or deterioration and the value of the collection justify copying, filming or treatment?
Assessment Criteria (page 2 of 3)

**Intellectual Access Rating:**
Finding aids typically provide the best intellectual access to archival collections. A good finding aid includes some overall description of the collection and an appropriate level of inventory (box, folder or item-level) for the contents.

While a catalog record or a simple inventory might provide adequate access to a small or simple collection, it may not be sufficient for a larger or more complex collection; the ratings are designed to take that into account.

The ratings reflect the growing expectation that a collection is only truly accessible when a researcher can find information about it online. The highest ratings are reserved for collections with multiple online access points.

Notes on terminology:
- A substandard finding aid may be a preliminary inventory created for all or part of a collection at the time of donation or accession. It may also be a more conventional finding aid that is done to an earlier standard that is now considered insufficient for the materials being described.
- A collection-level description may be a MARC record, a set of catalog cards, or an online or offline document that describes the physical and intellectual characteristics of a collection. In some cases, an accession record can be considered a collection-level description, if it is sufficiently detailed and would be made available to a researcher.

5. Researcher has excellent access to collection: There is a good online finding aid (EAD, HTML, PDF, or other format). There is a collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution’s OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC. The collection may also be described in other online or offline sources that are available to researchers (such as a printed or online guide to collections).

4. Researcher has good access to collection: There is a good finding aid, but it is not available online. There is a collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution’s OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC.

**OR**
There is a good finding aid, online or offline, but there is no collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution’s OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC. Given the quality of the finding aid, the finding aid alone provides good access. In both cases, the collection may also be described in other online or offline sources that are available to researchers.

3. Researcher has fair access to collection: The finding aid is substandard or there is no finding aid. There is a collection-level MARC record for the collection in the institution’s OPAC and/or in a national bibliographic utility such as RLIN or OCLC. In the absence of a full MARC record, there is another type of online collection-level description. The collection-level description in online or offline sources available to researchers provides sufficient access because it is a small or straightforward collection.

2. Researcher has poor access to collection: Collection has no finding aid or a substandard finding aid. The collection has printed catalog cards or another type of offline collection-level description, but no collection-level MARC record in the OPAC or a national bibliographic utility.

**OR**
Collection has no finding aid or a substandard finding aid. The collection has a MARC record in the OPAC or national bibliographic utility, but that does not provide sufficient access because it is a large or complex collection.

In either case, the collection may be described in other online or offline sources available to researchers, but because of the complexity of the collection or the inadequacy of the sources, this provides insufficient access.

1. Researcher has no access to collection: Internal documentation such as a donor/control file or brief or inaccessible accession record serves as the only description of the collection. While such internal documentation may vary in quantity and quality, by its nature it is inaccessible to researchers.
Assessment Criteria (page 3 of 3)

Research Value Rating:
A collection is considered valuable to researchers to the extent that it includes relatively rare, extensive, or detailed information on topics that have received considerable prior attention, are gaining currency, or have apparent potential to attract significant researcher interest. A topic may be of very high, high, moderate, slight, or negligible interest. The intrinsic interest of the collection itself may also count as a topic.

Depending on the rarity, extensiveness, and detail of a body of material, the documentation on a topic may be very rich, rich, moderately rich, incidentally valuable, or slight. The Research Value Rating is determined by adding the ratings of the topics best or most substantially represented in each collection to the ratings of the quality of documentation on those topics in the collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Ranking</th>
<th>Value Scale</th>
<th>Quality of Documentation Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very high</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>very rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>moderately rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>incidentally valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negligible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>slight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sum of the Interest Ranking and the Quality of Documentation Ranking can range from a high of “10” to a low of “2” on the Research Value Rating (RVR) scale.

Level of Significance
The above criteria were designed primarily for large, professionally-staffed archival institutions, but HCI-PSAR staff keep in mind the unique nature of small repositories when assigning ratings. Project Surveyors take into account audience, resources, and expectations. Surveyors consider both current users and potential users, as well as the most-used collections at small repositories -- usually those that relate to local history, genealogy, and property research. Moreover, Surveyors recognize that convenience may be important for local researchers. Accumulated collections that mostly consist of secondary source materials (i.e. copies) with little primary source materials may receive a higher score at a small repository than the same type of materials might receive at a large, well-established repository.

The Research Value Rating can be roughly translated to the following Levels of Significance.

2-3. Slight local: Collection provides weak documentation of an event, topic, person, or organization of low to moderate interest to local historians and genealogists.

4. Moderate local: Collection documents an event, topic, person, or organization of moderate interest to local historians and genealogists.

5. High local: Collection documents an event, topic, person, or organization of high interest to local historians and genealogists.

6. Regional: Collection documents a regionally significant event, topic, person, or organization OR collection could constitute a case study for a topic of moderate interest.

7. Broad-based: Collection documents an event, topic, person, or organization of wide-ranging significance OR collection could constitute a case study for a topic of high interest.

8. Very broad-based: Collection documents several events, topics, people, or organizations of wide-ranging significance OR collection could constitute a case study for a topic of very high interest

9-10. Exceptional: Collection fully documents an exceptionally significant event, topic, person, or organization OR provides robust documentation of many topics of high interest.
Considering the Audience

HCI-PSAR surveyors retained an awareness that the audiences served by the small historical societies and archival repositories are not necessarily the same audiences served by archival collections of large, well-known institutions. Surveyors decided to shift their perspective away from the question, “To what extent would a typical researcher at a large institution like the Historical Society of Pennsylvania find this collection useful?” and instead ask, “To what extent would a typical researcher at this or a similar repository find this collection useful?”

Keeping in mind audience interests, surveyors considered actual and intended patrons, asked about most-used collections, and recognized the “hot topics” popular at small repositories—genealogy, property research, and local history. These concerns are in line with PACSCL’s list of factors contributing to the assignment of a research value score, especially the question, “How frequently over the past five years have researchers sought materials on topics substantially documented in a particular collection?”

HCI-PSAR surveyors also recognized audience resources and expectations. Patrons of small repositories may be unwilling to travel, and appreciate local convenience. They may not care whether or not they are using original documents, but might be satisfied to access the content of copies. For example, many of the collections surveyed during HCI-PSAR were comprised of secondary materials or photocopies of primary materials, typically relating to local history topics. Repositories often reported these artificial collections to be their most heavily used. In other contexts, this type of collection might receive a very low research value rating, as the materials are not unique and interest will largely be limited to local researchers. However, HCI-PSAR kept in mind the fact that such collections are very convenient and useful to local researchers, and collections that are frequently utilized by patrons demonstrably command a high level of interest. The collections were not assigned a score that would mirror a collection of original primary materials, but they did receive a higher score than the same type of collection at a larger repository might receive.

Interest in Content v. Creator

Another clarification made by the surveyors in assigning research value ratings was the distinction between interest in a collection and interest in a creator. Consider the case of a small collection of personal papers from a prominent Philadelphia socialite. It may be known from Ms. Socialite’s obituary that she worked with the Women’s Medical College, the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial, and various ethnic relief organizations, but let’s assume Ms. Socialite is not famous enough to be intrinsically interesting. The work she did and the groups she was involved with are interesting. But say this particular collection of her papers includes some photographs, personal correspondence, and genealogy research, but nothing at all related to her work or these organizations. What should the interest rating be? After being confronted with several cases like this, HCI-PSAR surveyors decided to focus specifically on rating topics actually represented in the collection, not topics that might potentially be in the collection. The documentation quality rating, then, focuses on how well the collection topics are documented—not whether or not expected topics appear in the collection.
Rough Guidelines for Interest Rating

The interest rating explanations given in the PACSCL document are very vague ("negligible" to "very high"), so HCI-PSAR came up with informal guidelines for assigning interest value.

1. Interest in collection will mainly be limited to institutional researchers.
2. Collection will be of interest mainly to local historians and genealogists.
3. Collection reflects a regionally significant topic, person, or organization OR collection could constitute a case study for a topic of moderate interest.
4. Collection reflects a nationally significant topic, person, or organization OR collection could be useful as a case study for a topic of high interest.
5. Collection documents an internationally significant topic, person, or organization, or documents many topics of high interest.

Repository Assessments

In addition to gathering information on the collections of small repositories, the HCI-PSAR staff took advantage of the opportunity to gather other relevant information on the repositories themselves. A worksheet was created for each repository to track hours spent at the repository, the names and titles of the repository representatives who met with surveyors, the location of collections within the repository, and preservation priorities. This information appears in various sections of the Final Report.

The repositories were also assessed by the surveyors in 5 areas: repository representative’s availability, repository representative’s knowledge of collection, repository representative’s enthusiasm about project, general organization of holdings, and accessibility of collection. Staff levels at each repository (ranging from “all-volunteer” to “employs a part-time or consulting archivist”) were also recorded. These assessments were not shared with the repositories, but were collected for the purposes of future project planning and as a rough census of small repositories.

Information on the environmental controls present at each repository was also collected through a self-reported Environmental Controls Survey. When possible, Surveyors asked repository representatives the environmental control questions during on-site visits, but sometimes the Environmental Controls Survey was emailed after on-site visits had concluded. HCI-PSAR staff chose to rely on data reported by the repositories rather than direct observation because direct observation would not take into consideration longitudinal changes. One day of on-site observation could not tell Surveyors, for example, that the air-conditioner was turned off over night or that the repository owned a humidifier but it was out for repairs. In cases where Surveyors suspected a repository representative’s answer to a question was inaccurate, Surveyors tried to clarify the question but ultimately accepted the repository representative at his/her word.
Repository:

**HCI-PSAR Repository Worksheet (Page 1 of 2)**

### Hours spent at repository:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Start-End</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Daily total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Repository Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repository representative(s) availability</td>
<td>Repository representative’s knowledge of collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository representative’s enthusiasm about project</td>
<td>General organization of holdings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Collection</td>
<td>Staff levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:

**Repository Representative(s):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Permissions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media</th>
<th>PACSCL finding aid site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of locations:**

**Preservation Priorities:**
## Explanation of Repository Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository representative(s) availability</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Generally unavailable. RR is off the premises for the majority of surveying.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generally unavailable. RR is off the premises for the majority of surveying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Sparadically available. RR is off the premises for significant portions of surveying but checks in with surveyors on a regular basis OR RR is off the premises for the majority of surveying but is continuously available by phone.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sparadically available. RR is off the premises for significant portions of surveying but checks in with surveyors on a regular basis OR RR is off the premises for the majority of surveying but is continuously available by phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Generally available. RR is on the premises but not in the room for the majority of surveying.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Generally available. RR is on the premises but not in the room for the majority of surveying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Continuously available. RR is in the room for the majority of surveying but occupied with other tasks.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Continuously available. RR is in the room for the majority of surveying but occupied with other tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Extremely available. RR was not only in the room, but actively engaging with the surveyors and offering assistance.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Extremely available. RR was not only in the room, but actively engaging with the surveyors and offering assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository representative’s knowledge of collection</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – RR has little knowledge of what collections the repository holds or where archival materials are located. RR cannot provide any provenance information.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>RR has little knowledge of what collections the repository holds or where archival materials are located. RR cannot provide any provenance information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – RR has some knowledge of what collections the repository holds but has difficulty locating specific collections. RR cannot provide provenance information.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RR has some knowledge of what collections the repository holds but has difficulty locating specific collections. RR cannot provide provenance information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – RR has a good understanding of the repository’s collections and is able to locate most of the collections. RR can provide provenance information for some collections.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>RR has a good understanding of the repository’s collections and is able to locate most of the collections. RR can provide provenance information for some collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – RR is knowledgeable about the repository’s collections and can locate all of the collections. RR can provide provenance information for a good number of the collections.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>RR is knowledgeable about the repository’s collections and can locate all of the collections. RR can provide provenance information for a good number of the collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – RR is extremely knowledgeable about the repository’s collections and can easily locate all of the collections. RR can locate certain materials within collections. RR can provide context for collections and point to related resources. RR can provide provenance information for most collections.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RR is extremely knowledgeable about the repository’s collections and can easily locate all of the collections. RR can locate certain materials within collections. RR can provide context for collections and point to related resources. RR can provide provenance information for most collections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository representative’s enthusiasm about project</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – RR seems somewhat hostile to project.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>RR seems somewhat hostile to project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – RR seems ambivalent about project.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>RR seems ambivalent about project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – RR seems neutral about project.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>RR seems neutral about project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – RR seems enthusiastic about project.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>RR seems enthusiastic about project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – RR seems very enthusiastic about project.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>RR seems very enthusiastic about project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General organization of holdings</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Repository holdings exhibit <em>no apparent</em> arrangement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Repository holdings exhibit <em>partial or superficial</em> arrangement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Repository holdings are <em>roughly arranged</em> into general groupings, but collections are not clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Repository holdings are organized into <em>discrete units</em> that are clearly identified and physically grouped together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Repository holdings are organized into discrete units that are clearly identified and physically grouped together according to <em>archival principles</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility of Collection</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Individual collections are divided between multiple rooms and rooms are difficult to access. Some materials are stored in inappropriate furniture that may be delicate or antique, making surveying extremely difficult.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Individual collections are divided between multiple rooms. Some materials are stored in office furniture or boxes but materials are not obstructed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Individual collections may be divided across multiple rooms but materials are housed in boxes and boxes are unobstructed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Individual collections are housed in labeled or unlabeled boxes, but are stored in one area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Individual collections are housed in well-labeled boxes and stored on shelving units in one area where they can be easily accessed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Repository &quot;staff&quot; is all-volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Repository retains some paid staff, but they have no history or archival background.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Repository retains some paid staff with a history background, but no archival background.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - A professional archivist is active as a volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Repository retains some paid archival staff on a part-time and/or consulting basis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environmental Controls Survey

For the area where the **majority** of your archival materials are stored...

**Circle one:**  

**Issue:**

**yes** / **no**  Do you measure and record temperature and humidity on a regular basis?

**yes** / **no**  Do you keep temperature consistent throughout the year (not just seasonally)?

**yes** / **no**  Do you keep temperature consistent 24 hours/day (not just office hours)?

**yes** / **no**  Do you keep humidity consistent throughout the year (not just seasonally)?

**yes** / **no**  Do you keep humidity consistent 24 hours/day (not just office hours)?

Approximately what percentage of your archival collections are stored in spaces...

controlled for temperature?  ________%
controlled for humidity?  ________%
with no HVAC system?  ________%

Do you have any of the following equipment in place? (check all that apply):

___ room air conditioner  ___ hygrometer (measures humidity)  ___ thermometer
___ portable humidifier  ___ portable dehumidifier  ___ central HVAC

Please add any additional notes about your environmental conditions that you are willing to share:
Final Reports and Concluding Procedure

The Final Report delivered to each repository after surveying was a fairly comprehensive, detailed report. Its scope was developed in consultation with the HCI-PSAR Advisory Committee. It included the following sections:

- Cover Letter
- Executive Summary – List of archival collections, table of collections’ ratings, summary of preservation priorities
- Collections Descriptions – Finding aids for each collection
- Collections Assessments – Assessment reports for each collection
- Processing Plan(s) – Processing plans for all unprocessed collections with a Research Value Rating of 7 or above, OR a processing plan for the collection with the highest Research Value Rating
- Preservation Issues & Resources – General information about archival preservation best practices and resources
- General Information & Resources – General information on principles of archival organization, archival processing, archival training, grant funding, and sources of information and support for history and heritage organizations
- CD with electronic copies of the collection descriptions in PDF, EAD, HTML, and MARC formats.

Together with its final report, each repository received an HCI-PSAR Project Feedback Questionnaire and a stamped envelope addressed to a staff member at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (not anyone the repository representative would know through the HCI-PSAR project staff). The questionnaires were anonymous and sent to this third-party person in the hopes of eliciting honest feedback and criticism. A copy of the Project Feedback Questionnaire is included on the next page.

When delivering final reports, the Project Director asked repository representatives to return any corrections or edits to the collections descriptions within three weeks (or more for exceptionally long reports). If any edits were given, Project Surveyors made changes in Archivists' Toolkit and emailed electronic versions of the updated files to the repository representative. If no edits were given, HCI-PSAR staff were at liberty to add the collections descriptions to the online finding aid database at the conclusion of the three-week period.

After the final visit, HCI-PSAR staff prepared a 1-2 sentence "blurb" about the repository's mission, background, and archival collections to be posted in HCI-PSAR's directory of participating repositories. The blurb was emailed to the repository representative, who was given two weeks to return any changes or edits. If no response was received, a reminder with a new two-week deadline was sent. If there was still no response by the end of this period (at least a month from the delivery of the report, HCI-PSAR staff were at liberty to add the repository's blurbs to the directory.
Hidden Collections Initiative
For Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories

Project Feedback Questionnaire
Your answers will be kept confidential

1. Overall, how closely does the quantity and type of information in the archival collections survey report match your expectations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Falls far below expectations (1)</th>
<th>Falls somewhat below expectations (2)</th>
<th>Meets expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (4)</th>
<th>Well exceeds expectations (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How useful was each of the following sections of the archival collections survey report?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Not useful at all (1)</th>
<th>Of little use (2)</th>
<th>Moderately useful (3)</th>
<th>Very useful (4)</th>
<th>Enormously useful (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collections Descriptions</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections Assessments</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing Plan(s)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Issues &amp; Resources</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Information &amp; Resources</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there anything that is missing or could be improved in the report, or in any of the above sections?

3. How much new information about your collections was uncovered through the survey process and the archival collections survey report?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of new information</th>
<th>No new information (1)</th>
<th>Very little new information (2)</th>
<th>Moderate amount of new information (3)</th>
<th>A fair amount of new information (4)</th>
<th>A lot of new information (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(over)
3 (cont’d) Regarding new information about collections, check all of the following that apply:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The report listed collections or large groups of material I didn’t know I had.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The report described the contents of collections I hadn’t previously had the opportunity to examine.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The report listed misplaced collections or items I had been searching for.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The report put my repository’s archives into logical groupings (collections), and I feel I now have a better grasp over my holdings as a whole.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While preparing for the HCI-PSAR surveyors, I discovered collections, archival materials, and/or old inventory lists I didn’t know about, had forgotten about, or had misplaced.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: (Please list)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. How likely is the project to initiate or guide you in future work with your archival collections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very unlikely (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat unlikely (2)</th>
<th>Not sure (3)</th>
<th>Somewhat likely (4)</th>
<th>Very likely (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check all of the following that you are likely to undertake as a result of the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organize or process a collection</th>
<th>□</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undertake conservation/preservation work</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in environmental controls</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase/read an archives training guide or manual</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend an archives class</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for a grant</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please list):</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Which of the following adjectives describe your experience with the project? (Circle ALL that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enjoyable</th>
<th>burdensome</th>
<th>inconvenient</th>
<th>revealing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>waste of time</td>
<td>confusing</td>
<td>educational</td>
<td>useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please add any additional adjectives or comments:

Please use the stamped, addressed envelope provided to mail the questionnaire to: Director of Archives and Collections Management, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Social Media

The HCI-PSAR Project Surveyors maintained three social media profiles: blog, Facebook, and Twitter, in that order of priority. The blog, located on the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s website at http://hsp.org/hcipsar/blog, helped to publicize the small repositories and highlighted exceptional resources, favorite collections, and centerpiece documents. Project Surveyors received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the repository representatives, who in several cases asked for permission to re-print the blog in their own newsletter. In several known instances, repositories received research queries based on blog posts. Given the sometimes lengthy time lapse between site visits and final report delivery, the blog was also an important demonstration that no repositories were being neglected and the project was progressing. Whenever a new blog was published, the authoring Project Surveyor emailed the relevant repository representative to let them know about it and to establish a follow-up point of contact after survey work was concluded.

The Facebook and Twitter pages were used almost exclusively to promote blog posts, providing links to new blogs while “tagging” the related repository’s own Facebook or Twitter page when one existed. The Facebook and Twitter feeds were also used to promote low-cost archives-related workshops, websites, and other resources staff thought likely to interest small repositories.
Nuts and Bolts

Entering Data into the Survey Worksheet

General Notes on Entering Text

- Pasting text: Pasting in text can cause problems. Copying from another cell in the worksheet can change formulas; copying from an outside program can alter formatting. Most of these problems can be avoided if you copy from and paste into the formula bar at the top of the Excel screen, rather than directly into the cells.

- Font style: Special font styles applied in Excel (such as bold, italic, underline) will be lost during the translation to XML. The font styles can be applied after the data has been ingested, or the code can be written in manually. See http://www.loc.gov/ead/tglib/elements/emph.html for the approved options.

To make the text display:

Haywood wrote Little Eddie in 1947.

Use this code:

Haywood wrote <emph render="italic">Little Eddie</emph> in 1947.

- Ampersands (&): The & symbol can cause errors when importing the XML to a collection management database. The problem can easily be avoided either by typing out “and” or typing out “&amp;” instead of just “&”.

- Autoformatting: Microsoft Word and other word processors automatically impose a few subtle style/formatting changes: "straight quotes" become “smart quotes,” ’single quotes’ likewise are changed to a ‘curly version,’ two--hyphens become an em—dash, and three...periods are replaced with a single-character…ellipsis. This autoformatting does not occur in Microsoft Excel, but text pasted in from Microsoft Word or from an internet source often includes these formatted characters. They will cause problems when the XML is imported into a collection management database if they are not replaced with their plain versions (" or ' or – or .../...).

Worksheet - Description Section

Date(s) of Survey: Enter the day surveying on the particular collection began.

Time spent: Use this space to keep track of how much time was spent on the collection, both on-site and off-site. It doesn’t matter whether one or two people were working on it at once—just record how long the file is open and being worked on. Record the time, in hours, as a decimal—for example, 1 hour and 30 minutes would be recorded as “1.5”

Surveyors: Enter your name (s).

Collection: Don’t type anything in this cell. It will fill in automatically.

RVR: Don’t type anything in this cell. It will fill in automatically.
Repository: Type in the full, unabbreviated, proper name of the repository.
Collection title: Type in the DACS-compliant title for the collection.
Creator: Once you have figured out who was the creator of the collection, go to the Library of Congress Authority Headings website at http://authorities.loc.gov/ and look up the authorized name for the creator under the Name Authority Headings. If a heading exists, enter it exactly as it appears, and choose “naf” as the source. If your creator is not listed, formulate the name yourself according to DACS, and choose “local” as the source. Under “Type,” select whether the creator is a family (“fam”), individual (“pers”), or corporation/group/organization (“corp”).

Dates: If you have beginning and end dates for the collection, enter them in “Date begin” and “Date end” as full years (e.g. “1975”, not “75”). If you have beginning and end dates, you may choose to also enter bulk dates (but you cannot enter bulk dates with a date expression). You may choose to write a date expression instead of or in addition to beginning/end dates. Follow DACS guidelines for date expressions (e.g. “circa 1875-1900”, “1900 November 12 - 1902 October 1”, “circa 19th century”).

Collection No.: Enter the collection number here. If the collection you are surveying has already been assigned a number, record it here. (Sometimes an accession number may serve as the collection number, although that is not ideal in case additional materials may be accessioned at a future date.) Otherwise, number collections consecutively in survey order. HCI-PSAR surveyors used a 2-4 letter repository prefix, period, 2-digit number (e.g. “AA.03”, “HPHA.12”).

➢ This is a good opportunity to save your work! HCI-PSAR surveyors titled each file with the collection number, underscore, collection name keyword. For example, Jerri Blank scrapbooks, collection AA.03, would be saved as “AA03_Bland.xls”

Extent: Measure the collection and write down a measurement in linear (preferred) or cubic feet. Use the “Note” field to record the number of boxes/folders/items or any additional information you would like. It will appear on the finding aid as a “General Physical Description Note.”

Locations: Record the location(s) where the collection is stored. Listing the room should be sufficient for most small repositories. Where locations are not clearly marked, HCI-PSAR surveyors asked repository staff if there was a name by which a particular room was informally known. If all else fails, use cardinal directions and common sense to come up with a name for each locations: e.g. “West Attic,” “Curator’s Office,” etc.

Provenance: It is sufficient to record whether the acquisition was a gift/purchase/acquisition, who the donor was, and the year, in the format “Gift of Susan B. Donor, circa 1997.” For assembled collection, the provenance statement may read, “Materials collected by the Random Historical Society at various times.” If there are any accession numbers associated with the collection, they may be noted here (e.g. “Gifts of Susan B. Donor, 1993-1999. This collection is associated with accession numbers 1993.27, 1995.14, and 1999.07”).

Access: Use this field for the “Conditions Governing Access Note.” Once the repository name is recorded at the top of the survey worksheet, the repository name will automatically be inserted into the access field to complete the stock phrase “Contact Random Historical Society for information about accessing this collection.” If surveyors wish to add a more specific statement—if there are, for example, patient files that will cause the collection
to be closed to researchers for a limited period—simple delete the contents of the field and write in a custom note.

**Related collections:** List only related *archival* collections, not books or articles. Do not bother listing collections just because they deal with a similar subject matter—look for other collections containing substantial amounts of material by the same creator. Refer to the related collections in this format: Repository, Collection title, dates, collection number. For example, “Historical Society of Pennsylvania: Belfield papers, 1697-1977, coll. 3159.” List each related collection in a separate cell.

**Languages:** If the collection is entirely in English, don’t touch this cell. Otherwise, delete the contents of the cell and enter information that will appear in a “Language of Materials Note.”

**Biographical material:** Enter information for the “Biographical/Historical Note” in these cells. You can enter up to five paragraphs, each in a separate cell.** Write a narrative, in complete sentences. While on-site, surveyors may jot down a few notes or leave the field entirely blank. It will probably be necessary to return to do a little bit of research, flesh out the note, and polish it for public consumption. The off-site time researching and writing, in addition to the on-site time, should be included in the survey time at the top of the worksheet. Because this is just a survey, there is no need for the note to be exhaustive or perfectly written. However, as many of the subjects of small repositories’ collections are not generally well known, HCI-PSAR surveyors did attempt to provide a good amount of context. Include birth and death dates (for business or organization, include founding and closing dates), why the person or entity is important, and major milestones. Focus on aspects of the person or organization most relevant to materials present in the collection. Wherever possible, save time by copying text from obituaries, other finding aids, the subject’s website (for an organization still in operation), or sources found inside the collection, but always cite your sources. Use a separate cell for each paragraph. List your sources (if any) under the Bibliography heading, using the Chicago Manual of Style to format your citations, and listing each source in a separate cell.**If more than five paragraphs are needed, indicate a paragraph break within a cell by writing "</p><p>" between the two paragraphs. [The starting "<p>" and closing "</p>" are otherwise automatically encoded in the EAD tab.]

**Scope and Content note:** Enter up to five paragraphs, each in a separate cell**—this should be a brief, narrative description of the contents of the collection as a whole. Again, surveyors may take rough notes while on-site and return later to flesh out and polish up the scope and content note. The scope and contents note should be written in full sentences and ready to be made public. All of this time should be included in the survey time. Include a list of the types of documents (i.e. correspondence, diaries, financial records, etc.) and general subjects covered. Note anything you found that was not expected, and conversely, any topics and materials that you expected to find but did not. If there seem to be groupings or sub-groupings of materials, describe this organization.**If more than five paragraphs are needed, indicate a paragraph break within a cell by writing "</p><p>" between the two paragraphs. [The starting "<p>" and closing "</p>" are otherwise automatically encoded in the EAD tab.]

**Abstract:** It is easiest to write the abstract last, after the biographical and scope/content notes are already finished. Summarize the collection with 1-3 sentences of biographical/historical
background, and 1-3 sentences about the scope and content of the collection. Be sure that the full title of the collection and date span appear somewhere in the abstract.

**Access Points**: Enter each access point in a separate cell, organized under the appropriate type (Geographic names, Names, and Subjects). Check the Library of Congress Authority Headings website at [http://authorities.loc.gov/](http://authorities.loc.gov/) to look up the appropriate heading, or formulate one yourself according to DACS. Select the appropriate source, and under names, the appropriate type as well (family (“fam”), individual (“pers”), or group/organization (“corp”)).

**Congratulations! You’ve finished the Description Section. Now it’s time to move on to the Assessments Section.**

- This is a good opportunity to run spell-check!
- This is a good opportunity to save your work!

**Worksheet - Assessments Section**

**Special Formats**: Look at the list of special formats. If any are included in the collection you are surveying, write an “x” in the appropriate box. Unless the special format will be obvious to the staff, write a little about the format in the Notes section. For example, “The Random Historical Society photograph collection” will obviously include photographs, but if you also checked off “glass,” you may want to explain in the Notes section, “This collection includes four daguerreotypes, located in Box 2.” If you check off Computer storage units, Audio material, or Video materials, you should always list the formats you noticed.

**Conservation and Preservation issues**: Look at the list of conservation and preservation issues, and write an “x” next to any you noticed. If you wish to provide any specific location information (e.g. “Surveyors noticed silverfish in the Attic Storage Room”), that can also be put in the “Notes” field. The assessments worksheet already includes the following stock phrases: “Nitrate film becomes flammable as it deteriorates and should immediately be put in cold storage,” “Metal fasteners can become rusty and should be removed,” “Newspapers are inherently acidic and fragile; content should be photocopied,” “Tape will lose its stickiness and fall off,” “Thermofax paper is extremely acidic and will degrade surrounding materials; image on thermofax paper will fade and should be photocopied,” “Folded items should be flattened,” and “Rolled items should be flattened and put in flat-storage if feasible.” If you wish to provide any more detailed guidance, put it in the “Notes” field as well.

**Ratings**: Enter a numerical score, from 1 to 5, in the left column, and your justification for each score in the right column. Refer to the PACSCL Survey PDF document and the HCI-PSAR interpretation addition. Both Project Surveyors should discuss their views on the collection and reach consensus before assigning a score. The justifications will be read by the repositories, so write in complete sentences, avoid jargon, and keep your comments professional and respectful. After you have filled in the Documentation Quality and Interest scores, the Research Value score and Level of Significance descriptor will populate in the Ratings section and on the top of the sheet.
Creating a Processing Plan

This section is only relevant if you are going to make a processing plan. HCI-PSAR surveyors created a processing plan for the highest research-value collection at each repository AND for all collections with a research value rating of 7 or above.

**Desired level of processing**: Select from the given list of options (rubric borrowed from Holly Mengel and Courtney Smerz, PACSCL-CLIR Hidden Collections Processing Project, “Surveying and Minimal Processing Manual”):

*Collection level processing*
- Description: Includes a collection level record in EAD (at least DACS single level minimum); no action taken other than the creation of the collection level record.
- Arrangement: As is.
- Preservation: Rehoused only if unserviceable in current housing. Check for mold, pests and nitrate film.

*Series level*
- Description: Collection Level Record and finding aid with series/subseries list. Described at the series/subseries level with information about their location in boxes.
- Arrangement: Put series and boxes and/or volumes into rough order.
- Preservation: Replace damaged boxes; house items or folders found loose on shelf; tie up damaged and/or unboxed volumes with book tape. Check for mold, pests, and nitrate film.

*Folder level*
- Description: Collection Level Record and finding aid with folder list.
- Arrangement: Put series and folders or volumes in order within boxes. DO NOT order material within folders.
- Preservation: All unbound materials should be in archival boxes in order to arrange series groupings; refoldering into archival folders only if damaged or do not fit; tie up damaged volumes or place in boxes. Check for mold, pests and nitrate film.

*Item level*
Description: Collection Level Record and finding aid with folder and/or item list. Item level processing is almost always only associated with traditional processing.

Arrangement: Put series and folders or volumes in order within boxes and on the shelf. Records are arranged within folders

Preservation: All preservation work normally associated with traditional processing is completed, including removal of metal fasteners, rubber bands, and unfolding documents.

**Estimated time: Hours per linear foot:** For folder-level processing, use 5 hours per linear foot as a base-line for corporate/institutional records, 6 hrs/lft for personal papers, and 8 hrs/lft for family papers. Add 1 hour per linear foot for each of the following circumstances as applicable: handwritten papers, NO existing arrangement, existing item-level organization.

**Supplies:** Supplies are difficult to estimate, but do your best. Over-estimate. 3 document boxes per record carton and 15-20 folders per document box is a good starting point.

**Existing order:** This field automatically populates with whatever you write in for the Physical Access Rating on the survey worksheet tab. If you would like to change/elaborate on the contents, copy the cell, right-click to choose “Paste special,” and under “Paste” select “Values.” Then you can modify the text in this cell.

**Potential series:** Recommend a logical series organization for the collection. You may also suggest subseries if desired.

**Notes to processors:** This is the place to record any special notes about the collection, and anything you think processors should know. Explain the approach you would take to processing the collection. Highlight out any potential problems or issues to be aware of.

- This is a good opportunity to run spell-check!
- This is a good opportunity to save your work!

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**Extracting Data**

**Finding Aid**

**In Excel:**

Open the tab labeled "EAD." Select all of Column A, and copy.

**In a plain text editor (such as Notepad):**

Paste the copied text. Go to File→Save As... Type in a title for your file, but save it with the extension .xml. For example, "AA03_Blank.xml". You now have an XML file ready to import into a collection management database.

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Trouble-Shooting the EAD

- Go to the folder where your EAD file is saved, and double-click to open it in a web browser. Check to make sure the entire document renders; if not, you have to find the error in the EAD.
- Most problems occur in the <bioghist>, <scopecontent>, and <controlaccess> sections. If you’re not sure where the problems are, try deleting all three sections and then importing them one at a time until you find the section(s) with errors. When you know where the problem is, look carefully at the section to try and identify exactly what’s going wrong. [Note: While you’re trying to identify the location of the problem, you might import the same file several times into your database. Each time it will save to the same Resource ID #, but the notes could potentially accumulate each time—for example, if you imported a file 3 times before isolating the <bioghist> note as the problem, you might have three “Abstract” notes associated with the resource. Be sure to delete the extra notes.]
- Common errors come from ampersands (change & to &amp;), elipses (change … [1 character] to ... [3 periods]), curly quotes (change “ and ” and ‘ and ’ to " or '), and dashes (change — to --).
- Paragraphs beginning with a quotation mark sometimes cause errors as well. Look at the EAD in the plain text error, and make sure there are no extra quotation marks outside the <p> tags.
- Make sure that all the authority headings on your worksheet are attributed (local/naf/lcsh), and that a name type is selected (person, family, corporate body).

Here is an example of a flawed EAD (errors circled in red):

```
<bioghist id="ref3">
<head>Biographical/Historical Note</head>
<p>"Woodlands Cemetery Company of Philadelphia was founded in 1840 with the stated goal that the beautiful landscape and scenery of that situation [Hamilton's estate] may be perpetually preserved, rescuing the site from imminent industrial use and the later residential development of West Philadelphia. Streetcar suburbs. Today's landscape is a virtual arboretum — includes seven aged but magnificent English elms & fifteen trees that qualify for State Champion status."</p>

<emph render="bold">Bibliography:</emph>
</bioghist>
<controlaccess>
<geoname source="" Philadelphia (Pa.)"></geoname>
<name source="naf">Woodlands Cemetery (Philadelphia, Pa.)</name>
</controlaccess>
```
Here is the corrected EAD (to fix the missing authority headings sources/name type, go back to the survey worksheet tab and select from the drop-down lists):

```
<bioghist id="ref3">
<head>Biographical/Historical Note</head>
<p>"Woodlands Cemetery Company of Philadelphia was founded in 1840 with the stated goal that "the beautiful landscape and scenery of that situation [Hamilton’s estate] may be perpetually preserved," rescuing the site from imminent industrial use and the later residential development of West Philadelphia's "streetcar suburb." . . . Today's landscape is a virtual arboretum--it includes seven aged but magnificent English elms & fifteen trees that qualify for State Champion status."</p>
</bioghist>
<controlaccess>
<geoname source="lcsn">Philadelphia (Pa.)</geoname>
<corpname source="naf">Woodlands Cemetery (Philadelphia, Pa.)</corpname>
</controlaccess>
```

**Assessment Report**

**What are my options?**

Assessments aren’t encoded in a standard format like EAD for finding aids, so transferring the data isn’t as straightforward. You should take some time to think about what is best for you. On the HCI-PSAR project, we decided that we didn’t like the Assessment Reports generated by our collection management database (Archivists’ Toolkit, now obsolete) from an aesthetic standpoint. We did, however, want our assessment information to be stored in the database in the long-term, so that future users could find all the information from our project (descriptive and assessing) in one place. We decided to make a PDF assessment report directly from the survey worksheet for each collection, but then wait until the end of the project to put all the collections assessments data into our collection management database. You may decide to follow this procedure, or you may decide it is easier for you to manually enter assessment information for each collection into your collection management database as you go. If you go this route, you may still want to keep a spreadsheet of all the assessments data so that you can track your statistics and run data analysis. (For example, what percentage of collections were rated a 7 or above for Research Value Rating? On average, how long did it take to survey a collection? On average, how long did it take to survey one linear foot of material?)
**Make a PDF of the assessment report as it is displayed**

1. Look over the assessment report and adjust the height of cells as necessary to ensure that all the text is visible and there are no large empty spaces.
2. Right-click the "assessment report" tab and select "Move or copy..."
3. Check the box to "Create a copy" and select "(new book)" as the destination.
4. Select the entire sheet (click on the little square in the top, left corner between column "A" and row "1") and "Copy".
5. Right-click and select "Paste special"
6. Under "Paste," select "Values"
7. Save the new workbook, or export as a PDF from Excel, or copy-paste into a Word Document as desired.

**Printable Processing Plan**

1. Look over the processing plan and adjust the height of cells as necessary to ensure that all the text is visible and there are no large empty spaces.
2. Right-click the "processing plan" tab and select "Move or copy..."
3. Check the box to "Create a copy" and select "(new book)" as the destination.
4. Select the entire sheet (click on the little square in the top, left corner between column "A" and row "1") and "Copy".
5. Right-click and select "Paste special"
6. Under "Paste," select "Values"
7. Save the new workbook, or export as a PDF from Excel, or copy-paste into a Word Document as desired.

**Collection Statistics**

You may want to keep a spreadsheet of collections assessments so that you can run statistical analysis. (For example, what percentage of collections were rated a 7 or above for Research Value Rating? On average, how long did it take to survey a collection? On average, how long did it take to survey one linear foot of material?)

1. Start a new, blank excel workbook. Then, in the HCIPSAR Survey Worksheet workbook, go to the tab labeled “database.” Copy row 1, which contains column headings, and paste it into your workbook. Now save the workbook as something you will remember, such as “AssessmentsDatabase.xls.”
2. Go back to the survey worksheet you have been working in, and select and copy all of row 2 (which automatically populates with the ratings and assessment data you entered on the first page of the workbook). Go to your Assessments Database workbook, and paste in the data values—be careful to Paste Special→Paste Values.
3. Repeat step 2 for all the collections.
4. Analyze data as desired! Consider adding a second tab to your assessments database worksheet and entering in repository-level assessments from the repository worksheet, if you are using it.

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