

**Franklin County Historical Society  
Museums for America Grant  
Collections Stewardship Project Narrative**

Franklin County Historical Society (FCHS), Ottawa, Kansas, requests a **Museums for America** grant to support the goal of strengthening the **Collections Stewardship** of the historical society and museum. The grant is requested to support:

- \* cataloguing the 7,000 uncatalogued items in the organization's collection (10,000 items have already been catalogued), enabling effective maintenance of and efficient access to the collection;

- \* purchase of a large-format scanner and desktop computer, facilitating the cataloguing process and subsequent retrieval of collection information.

The **Mission** of the FCHS is:

- \* to **preserve** the rich history of the area through collection and maintenance of records and artifacts, through encouragement of preservation and local historical research;

- \* to **present** Franklin County's history to the public by means of museums, archives, creative and educational programming, and publications;

- \* to **promote** cultural tourism as an effective means of communicating the lessons of history to visitors and citizens of Franklin County.

### **1. Statement of Need**

With completion of the collection cataloguing, the organization will be better able to meet its goals of preserving, presenting, and making accessible all of the items in its care. Comprehensive accessibility to the collection will enhance the effectiveness with which the organization can serve the public and the efficiency with which it can fulfill its mission. Completion of cataloguing the collection is a prerequisite for the organization's goal of receiving museum accreditation from the American Association of Museums.

**The Collection.** FCHS maintains, manages and provides programming for 3 facilities: the Old Depot Museum, the Dietrich Cabin, and the Franklin County Records and Research Center, including a new storage facility. Due to its relatively long life as a Kansas historical society, established in 1937, FCHS has acquired a rich collection of items, including manuscripts and archives, architectural details, furniture, equipment and tools, textiles, ephemera, memorabilia of significant local phenomena and personages, photographs, and other artifacts and publications. The FCHS collection is used to develop permanent and changing exhibitions, for educational activities, in publications, and for historical and genealogical research by the public and staff. Materials not on display are maintained in the Records and Research Center and the storage facility.

The Old Depot Museum, an 8,000 sq. ft. facility, was constructed in 1888 as a passenger railroad depot and served in that capacity until 1960. The building was donated by the Santa Fe Railroad to the Franklin County Historical Society for use as a historical museum in 1962. The museum opened in 1963. During the past several years, the organization has accomplished major repairs and renovations to the building and parking

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lot for a total cost of nearly \$2 million, partially supported by ISTEA grants. The museum is handicapped accessible, has museum standard environmental controls in place, and is open six days a week. The museum's unique situation as a county history museum located in a large historic train depot allows the organization to interpret local railroad history as well as county history.

FCHS mounts **rotating and permanent exhibits** drawn from the collection in the museum. Permanent exhibits include an interactive model railroad installation in the former depot baggage room of the facility, along with interpretation of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ottawa events; a Victorian parlor furnished with valuable items donated by community families; displays about Native American tribes once located in the county; a 19<sup>th</sup> century school room and a general store; an immersive display interpreting the controversial role of John Brown during the Bleeding Kansas era; and displays focusing on Ottawa-based innovative commercial enterprises and entrepreneurs.

The museum recently commenced a 5-year project, "Life on the Land in Franklin County," that will result in 5 exhibitions, a web page and a book, all focusing on the history of agriculture in the area, including changing technology, crops, and political movements. The first exhibit in this series, "Breaking Ground," opened in 2006, and the second, "Grasshoppers, Grangers, and 'Pop' (Populists)," will open in 2008. A recent exhibit documented the F5 tornado that devastated parts of Franklin County in 1957. A new exhibition commemorates the work of noted local architect, George Washburn, most famous for his designs of 15 county courthouses built during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Planning is underway for a major exhibition uniting photos of Sac and Fox Indians from 1848, 1870, 1910, and commissioned contemporary photos. These tribes lived in Franklin County before they were displaced to Oklahoma.

Unique to the FCHS collection are exaggerated postcards made in 1906-7 by local photographer W. H. Martin, now considered the finest practitioner of the art of larger-than-life images, in which Martin juxtaposed giant elements with standard images to produce humorous postcards. FCHS plans to use this collection as the nucleus for a folk arts center.

**Educational and special events** making use of collections information and artifacts are presented by FCHS for the public in its facilities and throughout the community during the year. An annual event entitled "The Esoteric and Terrible Order of Pie Eaters" Conclave, honoring a real Ottawa organization of the 1860s and '70s, offers entertaining and scholarly presentations and a pie buffet. A program entitled "Lest We Forget" identifies unmarked graves of interesting Ottawans on Memorial Day. The organization also helps to provide programming for the Veterans' Day weekend. FCHS offers a cash award for the winner of the county spelling bee that honors a local man who wrote a well-known spelling book for Kansas children. Forums are offered to bring local collectors together to talk about their antiques.

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Among the organizations with which FCHS collaborates to enhance education, tourism, and community development in Franklin County are the schools, Ottawa Main Street Program, Franklin County Convention and Tourism Bureau, Ottawa University, the Chamber of Commerce, the Arts Council, Ottawa Library, Girl and Boy Scouts, home school organizations, Daughters of the American Revolution, veterans groups, and Community Corrections. FCHS has been involved in the formation of two regional consortia: the Territorial Kansas Heritage Alliance and a group that lobbied for and achieved the creation of a National Parks Service heritage area called "Freedom Frontier." FCHS maintains cooperative relationships with the Kansas Humanities Council, the Kansas State Historical Society, and KTWU Public Television, all located in Topeka.

Significant **publications** produced by FCHS making use of the organization's collection are: a 680-page *Franklin County History*; a major book of Franklin County historic photographs; four driving tour maps highlighting historic locations in the county; and *The Feast of Franklin County*, a compilation of photographs, quotations, and narratives regarding food that is integral to the local history, published to augment a Smithsonian exhibit on food. The FCHS director makes use of the archives to present a biweekly radio program about local history, chooses historic photos for publication in the local weekly newspaper, and publishes a bimonthly newsletter. The FCHS installed eight permanent interactive kiosks in the Ottawa business district and on museum grounds. Each is a graphic display illustrating and narrating in print and audio an aspect of local history. These kiosks received 2 state awards for design excellence.

**Investment in Institutional Capacity and Ability to Serve the Audience.**

FCHS has an urgent need for cataloguing its collection of artifacts, records, photographs, and publications to make these items readily available to staff and the public, both on-site and on-line. This project will strengthen FCHS' ability to fulfill its mission by making it possible for the **public** to have access to the documents, photos, and artifacts that are stored and on display in the collection, for use in historical and genealogical research; for the **staff** to retrieve items and information from its archives for research and development of engaging museum exhibits, educational programs, and publications; and for local **citizens** and **tourists** to explore the county's history by means of all of FCHS' programs and archives.

**Development of Long-Range Plan and Planning Process.** The FCHS Mission Statement and Strategic Plan were developed during planning retreats that were attended by staff, board members, and community members in 1991, 1997 and 2001. A planning retreat is scheduled for February, 2008. Each year the goals and accomplishments are reviewed and updated in relation to the long-range plan by community members and staff, and annual goals are set. During the year, the staff and board review and assess progress quarterly. An advisory board represents various county groups, such as schools, business and tourism constituents.

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The organization completed the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) I, overseen by the American Association of Museums, and worked on institutional and collections management assessment portions of the MAP II. The program involved 20 meetings and intensive self-assessment. Work on MAP II, however, was interrupted and not completed after the former storage building was damaged and became unusable. With the recent acquisition of a new storage facility, FCHS plans to revisit and complete the MAP II.

**About Franklin County.** Franklin County is located in northeast Kansas. Ottawa is the county seat and largest community in the county. The interstate highway (I-35) bisects the county, and Ottawa is within less than a one-hour drive from Kansas City, the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and the state capitol in Topeka. Ottawa, founded in 1864 along the Marais des Cygne River, is the business and transportation center for the mostly farming area. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, development of strong business and agriculture cultures in and around Ottawa led to the construction of spectacular Victorian homes and downtown structures, for which the community is distinctive. Many of these exceptional structures have been carefully preserved. Franklin County was the site of pre-Civil War struggles between anti- and pro-slavery factions during the period known as “Bleeding Kansas.” Abolitionist John Brown and members of his family lived in Franklin County and took part in clashes during that period. Silkville, a small silk production community, was active during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in rural Franklin County. Although this unique enterprise did not survive, elements of its idealistic social and business practices are of interest still today. The Ottawa Chautauqua was the largest residential Chautauqua in Kansas and second largest in the nation between 1883 and 1914.

According to U.S. Census information, the population of Franklin County is 26,513, of which residents of Ottawa make up 12,597. The county population is 93% white, 1.4% black, .9% American Indian, .6% Asian, 1.2% reporting two or more races, and 2.9% Hispanic. Educational levels are 85.3% high school graduates, and 16.5% college graduates. The median household income is \$42,236.

## **2. Project Design**

At this time, 10,000 items of the approximately 17,000 items in the collection have been catalogued, using the software PastPerfect designed specifically for museum management. This project is designed to provide additional staff and equipment to catalogue the remaining 7,000 items in the collection during the coming 2 years. When completed, access to major portions of the collection will also be made available on-line.

The organization’s director is proficient in the use of PastPerfect software; however, it will be necessary to provide training for additional staff members. This training is offered by Pastime, the producer of PastPerfect software, at various locations. The FCHS archivist and its registrar, who are part-time employees, will be trained in the

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use of the software and will work additional hours to catalogue the collection. To accomplish completion of the cataloguing within 2 years, interns who are current graduate students in the University of Kansas' Historical Administration and Museum Studies Program will also be hired and provided with PastPerfect training. Consultants from the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka and the Kansas Collection at the University of Kansas are available to the FCHS staff as needed.

Acquisition of a large-format scanner will enable cataloguers to scan items, particularly paper items and photos, some of which are quite fragile, for catalogue files and afford future researchers with graphic access to collection items. Acquisition of a desktop computer dedicated to the process of cataloguing and retrieval will enable the organization to efficiently proceed with the cataloguing, without disturbing other day-to-day operations.

It is estimated that each of the 7,000 uncatalogued items will take 1½ hours to catalogue, for a total of 10,500 hours. Creating each catalogue file will include writing a description of the item, taking a photograph of the item, and making a preliminary conservation assessment which will be prioritized by urgency of the preservation need. Retrieval of conservation assessment priorities is a capability of PastPerfect software.

The organization will extend the work hours of 2 part-time staff persons, the archivist and the registrar, so that each can devote 15 hours/week to cataloguing the collection. The museum receptionist will assist with cataloguing, under the supervision of other staff, for 10 hours/week. The 3 staff persons will spend a total of 40 hours/week, totaling 4,000 hours during the 2-year grant period. Additionally, 2 graduate students from the University of Kansas Museum Studies Program will be hired to work exclusively on cataloguing the collection. Each intern will work 25 hours/week, totaling 5,000 hours during the 2-year period. Volunteers will contribute the remaining 1,500 hours needed to complete cataloguing within the 2-year period. The FCHS director will oversee all aspects of the project. Following training in use of the software, the archivist and registrar will supervise the volunteers' and receptionist's cataloguing activities.

Costs for training 2 staff persons and 2 interns to enable them to become proficient in PastPerfect software include: training fees @ \$300 each, subsistence costs @ \$100/day x 3 days each, and travel expenses @ \$200 each, for a total of \$800 each for 4 persons equals \$3,200 for training. The large-format scanner and desk-top computer dedicated to the cataloguing project will be purchased for \$3,000.

### **3. Project Resources: Time, Personnel, Budget**

As described in the Project Design section, FCHS estimates that cataloguing the 7,000 items in the collection will take approximately 10,500 hours, at 1 ½ hours per item.

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The process will be accomplished over a 2-year period, utilizing the part-time registrar and archivist, each of whom will work 15 additional hours/week; the receptionist who will assist 10 hours/week as time permits; and 2 museum studies graduate students, each of whom will work 25 hours/week. Volunteers overseen by trained staff members will be used as needed to complete the project.

FCHS Director Deborah Barker will be responsible for project implementation and oversight, and financial and grant management. Ms. Barker (see resume) has an MA in Art History and completed her course work for a PhD. in Art History at the University of Kansas. She has been FCHS director since 1990, during which time major renovations and repairs to the museum have been completed; the permanent and rotating exhibits are dramatically improved in content, variety and number; programming has expanded beyond the museum into the community; and a research center has been acquired, which maintains a growing collection and archives. Ms. Barker is a genealogist, who oversees responses to requests for information and assists researchers on-site. She was a field reviewer for IMLS General Operating Support (GOS) grants for several years.

Laura K. Miller has served as Museum Registrar at FCHS for 2 years. Prior to working at FCHS, Ms. Miller worked at the Kansas Museum of History, Topeka, KS, 1990-1997. Her duties there included maintaining files for artifacts (over 100,000 items) and donors (over 50,000). She typed accession records and worksheets for donations and maintained a database of donors and artifacts. Ann Shephard has served as Museum Archivist at FCHS for 5 years. She is a former school secretary and has completed computer classes at Neosho County Community College. Both the registrar and archivist work part-time, but will increase their hours to take on cataloguing responsibilities. Both the archivist and registrar will receive a 3-day training session in the use of PastPerfect software, which will be used for cataloguing.

Two additional part-time employees will be hired. They will be expected to have computer skills and pertinent training. The organization plans to hire graduate students in museum studies from the University of Kansas, since these students have had training in museum cataloguing. These new employees will be expected to attend a 3-day training session in the use of PastPerfect software. Volunteers and the museum receptionist will work some hours on cataloguing under supervision of one or more of the trained cataloguers.

FCHS will match the costs of the project on a 1:1 basis. The director will devote ¼ of her time to the project while the cataloguing is taking place, to prepare job descriptions, interview and hire interns; initiate staff training; acquire equipment; schedule cataloguing staff; provide oversight and consultation for cataloguing staff; evaluate progress and accuracy of the cataloguing activities; supervise the project budget; develop user response and evaluation tools; and initiate on-line availability of the collection once the cataloguing is completed. FCHS will absorb all additional administrative costs, including supplies, the receptionist's salary, maintenance of the

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FCHS facilities, and other indirect costs. The value of volunteer time spent in cataloguing will be used as in-kind match.

#### 4. Impact

Completion of cataloguing its collection will enable FCHS to meet its goals of preserving, presenting, and making accessible its collection.

**Access to the collection.** This project will strengthen FCHS' ability to fulfill its mission by making it possible for the public to have vastly more access to the documents, photos, and artifacts in the collection, for use in historical and genealogical research; for the staff to retrieve items and information from its archives for research and development of engaging museum exhibits, educational programs, and publications; and for local citizens and tourists to explore the county's history by means of all of FCHS' programs and archives.

**On-line access.** Currently patrons do not have on-line access to information and other items in FCHS' holdings. As a result of this project, FCHS will offer on-line access to significant collections for its patrons.

**Conservation and preservation.** The cataloguers will do a preliminary conservation assessment of each item as it is catalogued. Following cataloguing, the software used will enable staff to identify those items most significantly in need of conservation attention. With this information in hand, FCHS will be able to attend to the needs of the collection in a timely way and provide better management of the collection.

**Accreditation.** Museum accreditation from the American Association of Museums is a high priority of FCHS. Completion of cataloguing the collection is a prerequisite the organization must achieve before it can reach that goal.

**Evaluation.** Currently FCHS makes use of formative evaluation in the design phase of exhibits and summative evaluation of all new exhibits. Visitors' surveys provide information regarding the effectiveness of FCHS' museum and educational programs. Additional evaluation tools will be developed during this project. An evaluation survey will automatically call for assessment responses from on-line users, and an evaluation survey will request assessment responses from on-site archival users.

## BUDGET FORM - PAGE FOUR

### Section B: Summary Budget

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries and Wages	55,750.00	44,750.00	100,500.00
2. Fringe Benefits		21,374.00	21,374.00
3. Consultant Fees			0.00
4. Travel	2,000.00		2,000.00
5. Supplies and Materials	1,800.00	2,260.00	4,060.00
6. Services	1,200.00		1,200.00
7. Student Support			0.00
8. Other Costs			0.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1–8)	60,750.00	68,384.00	129,134.00
9. Indirect Costs		14,700.00	14,700.00
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)	60,750.00	83,084.00	143,834.00

### Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS	60,750.00
2. Cost Sharing:	
a. Cash Contribution	68,084.00
b. In-Kind Contribution	15,000.00
c. Other Federal Agencies*	0.00
d. TOTAL COST SHARING	83,084.00
3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)	143,834.00
% of Total Costs Requested from IMLS	42.20%

\* If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

## Schedule of Completion

August, 2008	Director prepares job descriptions for interns; advertises internships in Ottawa, Lawrence and University of Kansas newspapers; reviews applicants' credentials; schedules interviews; hires interns. Director schedules software training sessions.
September, 2008	Staff and interns attend software training sessions. Director purchases computer, scanner and software for use by cataloguers.
October, 2008- May, 2010	Staff and interns work toward cataloguing 7,000 items in Franklin County Historical Society collection. Throughout the length of the project, the director supervises the project, schedules cataloguers time, evaluates cataloguing procedures and results, consults with cataloguers, oversees of project budget, and prioritizes conservation needs of collection items.
February –May, 2010 availability of project.	Director develops collection users' response and evaluation tools; develops on-line usage procedures; announces on-line collection information; and prepares final report for project.