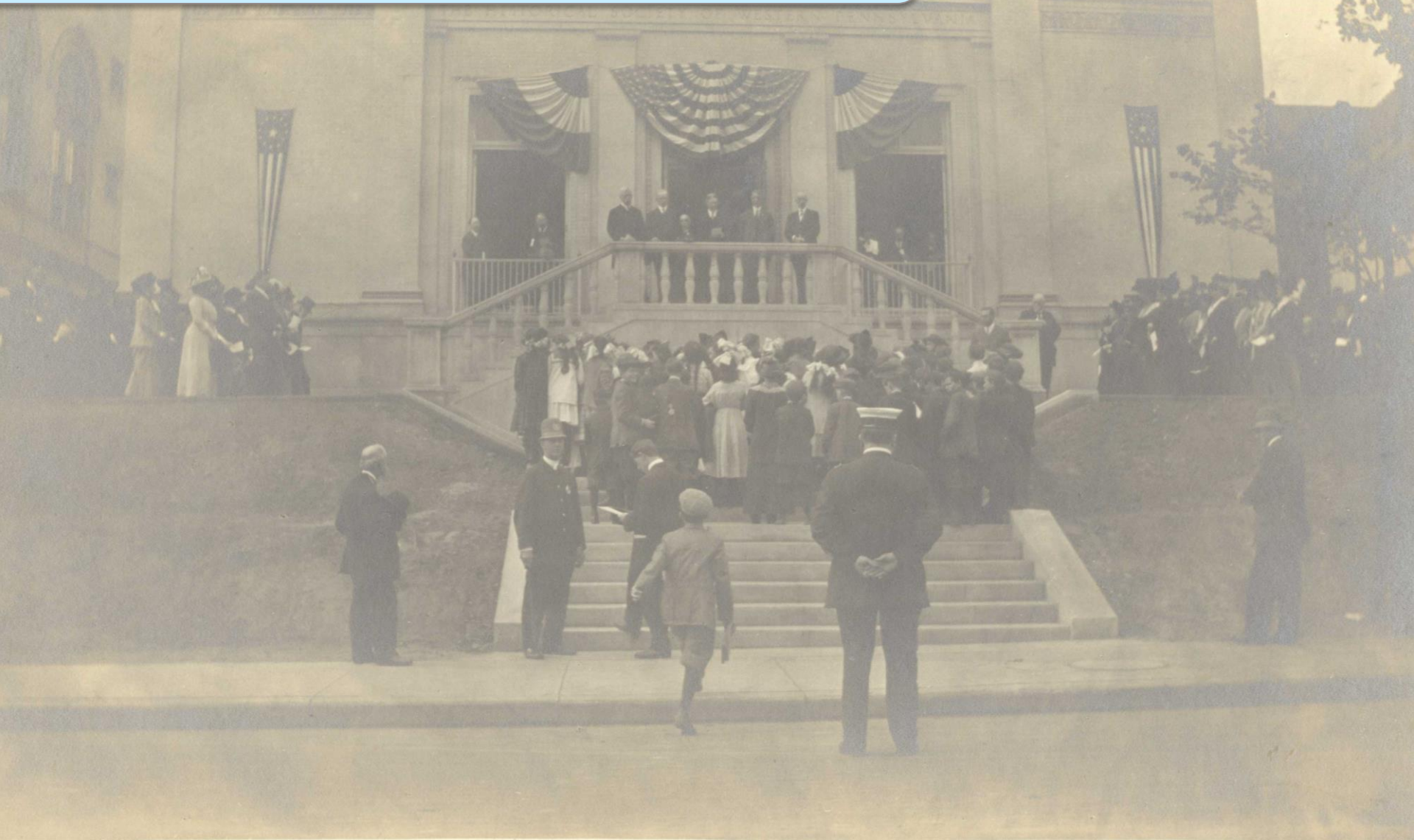


Preservation through Access: Minimal Processing at the Heinz History Center

Matthew Strauss
MARAC Fall 2015



Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania



Relaunched as the Heinz History Center

Increased Collecting



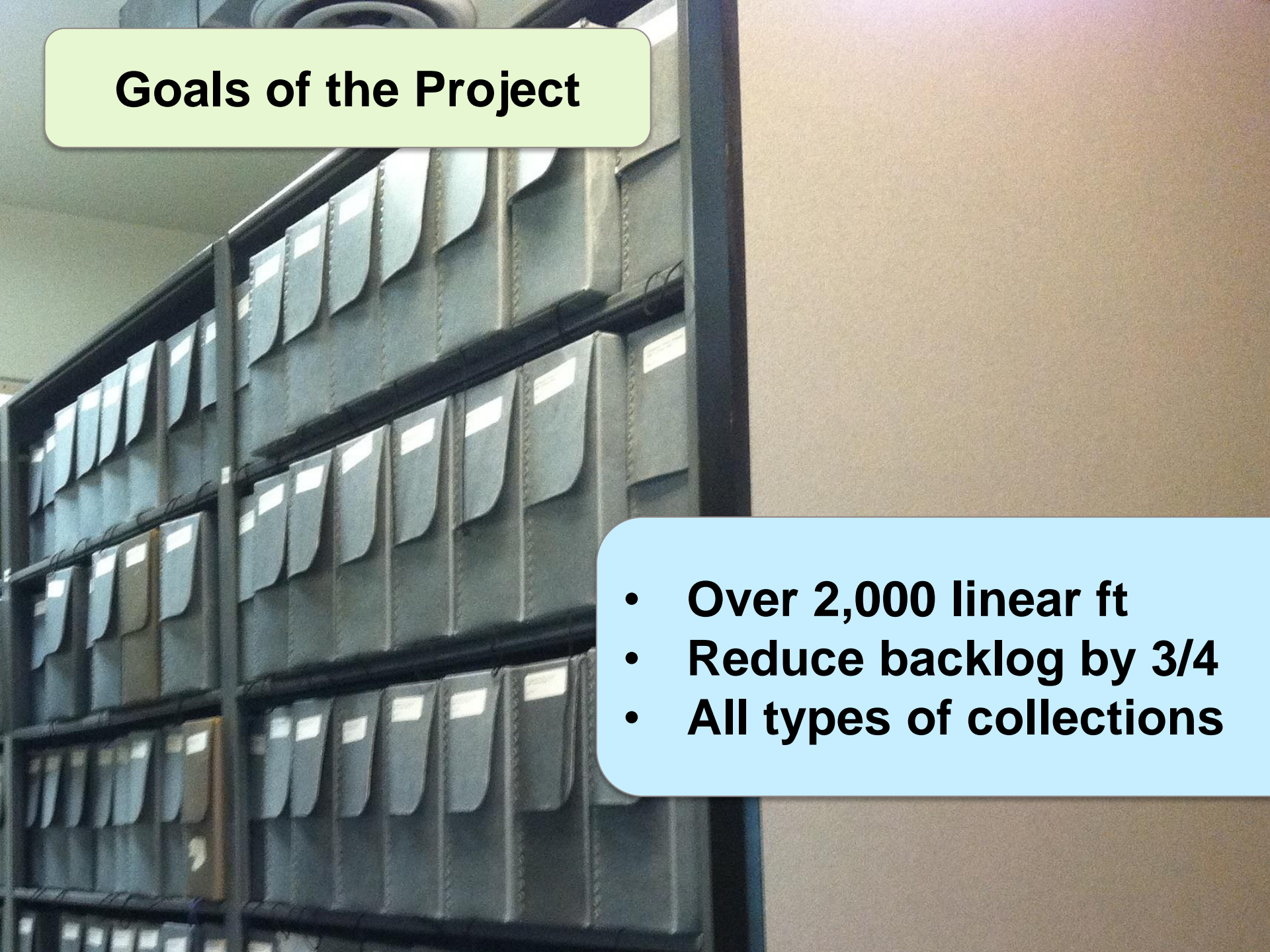


NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

NATIONAL HISTORICAL
PUBLICATIONS
& RECORDS COMMISSION

2011: Basic Processing Project

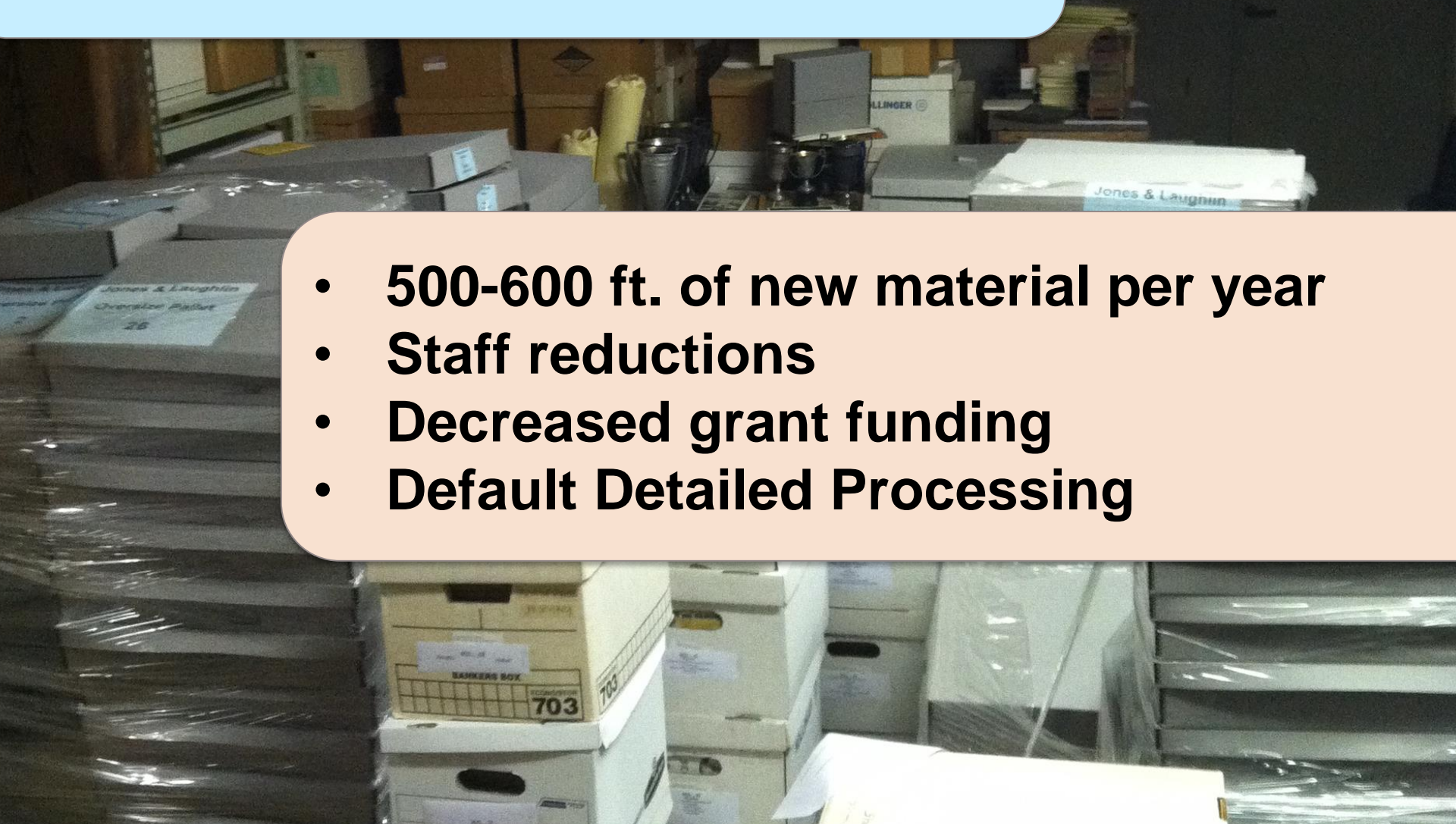
Goals of the Project



- **Over 2,000 linear ft**
- **Reduce backlog by 3/4**
- **All types of collections**

Why did the History Center need minimal processing?

- **500-600 ft. of new material per year**
- **Staff reductions**
- **Decreased grant funding**
- **Default Detailed Processing**



Did minimal processing represent a big change for the History Center?

- **Notion of “processed” changed**
- **Access typically given to unprocessed collections**
- **Took serendipity out of the equation**

NHPRC Collections Database

Prior to the Project

Accession # 1996.0185 Location E080d Catalog Prefix MSS Catalog # 911 NHPRC Add Record

Title

Murphy Family Papers and Photographs

Processor Meghan Hall

Start Date:

Processed Date: 01/31/2013

Completed Date:

Description Administration Track

Creator Name 1 Murphy family

Creator Name 2

Date Range 1890 to 1928

Linear Ft. 1

Boxes 1

Language English

- Small pilot project
- Revamped descriptive guidelines
- Collection management database



MPLP 101

**Christine Weideman, Dan
Santamaria, Robert S. Cox, PASCL**

Photo: Johannes Jansson

How Much Preservation Work Can We Do?

- New Boxes and Folders when needed
- Folder loose items
- Don't overfill boxes

Flags Will Flutter On Memorial Day
Over The Graves Of America's First Soldiers
Who Rest In Beulah Church Cemetery

The present Beulah Presbyterian Church Chapel, built in
1837, is headquarters for the historical society.

IT WAS 211 years ago. But with a little imagination
you can almost hear snarls and swords clanking
and horses neighing as Gen. John Forbes' army
routed the battle in what we call William's
In 1762 a part of the Forbes' army
would set out the appropriate site of the Beulah Pres-
byterian Church.
That was a strategic spot, a high pla-

How Much Preservation Work Can We Do?

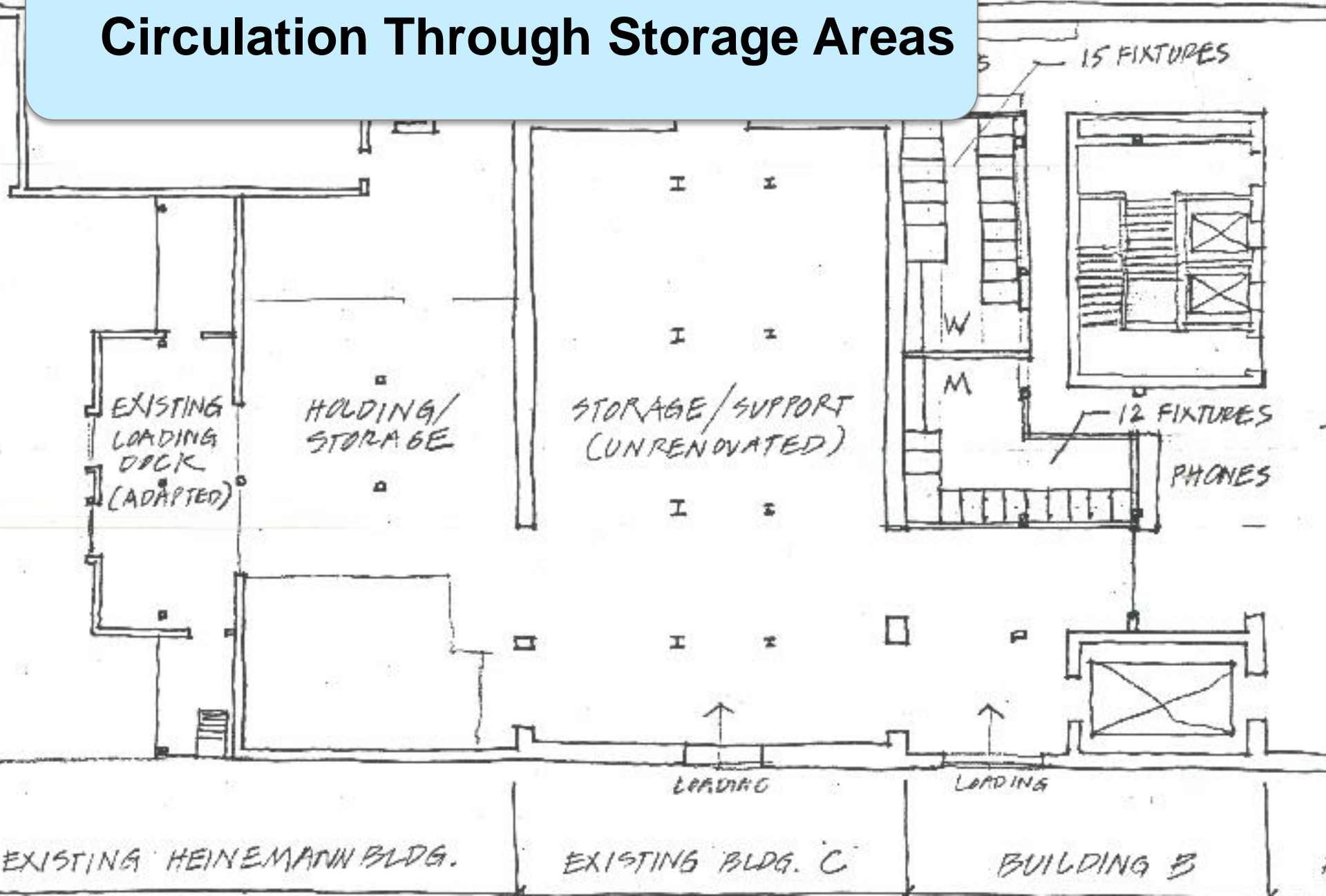
- Deframe
- Separate newsprint
- Interleave photographs
- Wrapping volumes

Collections are better off now



And there were unexpected benefits...

Circulation Through Storage Areas



Shrinking collection size

**Deframing
Efficient Housing
Weeding**



**Restricting material with security or
privacy concerns**



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "B. Franklin". The signature is highly stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "B" and a long, horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Separating Museum Objects



Processed holdings helps other divisions

a/v and born-digital material

Potential funding opportunities

Strategic Planning



Informs future budgets, grants, etc.

United Jewish Federation Photographs, Heinz History Center

NHPRC

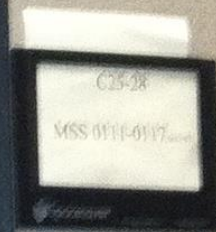
DOCUMENTING DEMOCRACY

National Historical Publications and Records Commission



Westinghouse Museum Collection, Heinz History Center

Preservation of Future Collections



Avoid looking unprofessional!

Fill the reading room!

Document and advocate!



Thank You!

Matthew Strauss
mstrauss@heinzhistorycenter.org