

Trust My Process

Creative Solutions for Hybrid and In-Office
Archival Processing

Meghan Glasbrenner

Amanda Menjivar

Bob Vay

Special Collections Research Center,
George Mason University Libraries



Who Are We?



Meghan

Processing Manager



Amanda

Manuscripts & Archives
Librarian



Bob

University Archivist

What We'll Be Talking About Today



Background & Context

How and Why We
Got Here



Meghan's Process

Manuscripts
Processing



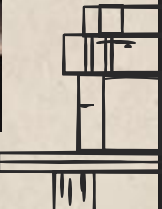
Bob's Process

University Archives
Processing



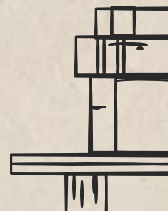
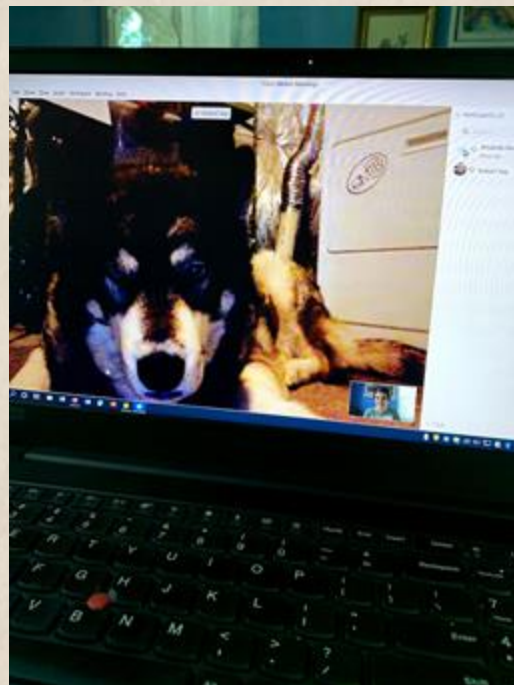
Background & Context

- Pre-Pandemic Processing
 - More “traditional”
 - Decisions made as a group
 - We are not an MPLP operation
- Pre-ArchivesSpace PUI
- Re-processing of artificial collections started the process of re-evaluation



COVID-19 Pandemic & Beyond

- “Two weeks-worth of work”
- Pivot!
- Organic change over time
 - “Two Streams” processing
- ArchivesSpace PUI implementation
- Staff Changes



Stages of Processing

For single item and/or small collections

Gather

Physically locate
and pull the items



Document

Create processing
document and take
notes



Frame

Frame Finding
Aid in ASpace



Repeat!

Start back at
Gather and begin
again!



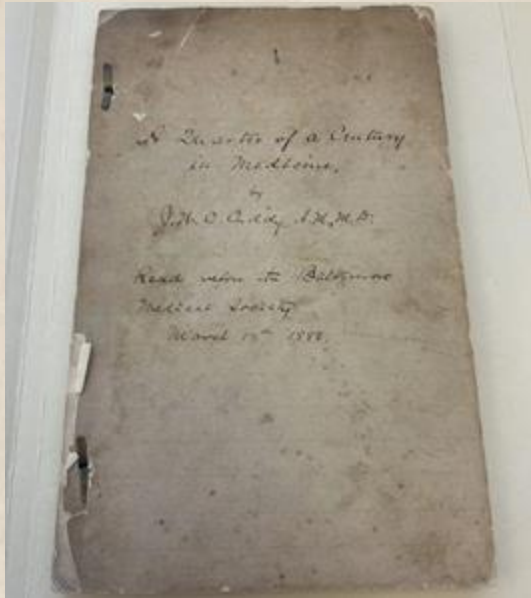
Finished!

Proofread,
publish, and label
(if needed)



Write

Begin writing the
finding aid



**"A Quarter of a Century in Medicine"
by Dr. J.W.C. Cuddy handwritten
manuscript, C0437**



**Works Progress Administration
Pennsylvania Museum
Extension Project puppet and
furniture collection, C0512**

Stage 1: Gather

- Important because it is a stage that *requires* physical interaction with the items
- Locate 3-4 projects at a time, helps avoid roadblocks for progress later
- Bring all items to a single location in the processing area – designated shelf for in-process items



<https://giphy.com/gifs/sad-the-lord-of-rings-hobbit-5ihf4yMV81xK>

Stage 2: Document

- Create "Processing Notes" document for each collection – main working document for all the remaining stages
- Only exception is collections with numerous folder entries –Also create a working spreadsheet
- Photograph collection items, including important details



Stage 2: Document

C0437 – Dr. Cuddy medicine manuscript – Processing Notes

- Two heavy metal fasteners that are also making it difficult to page through the manuscript without ripping the paper – double-check with Amanda about removing them – Amanda agreed they should be removed for access to manuscript pages, a piece of acid free paper will be placed around manuscript pages and tied with ribbon to keep together and stable, will be stored in folder
- Handwritten, single-sided manuscript on lined pages, there are 56 numbered pages, with the first page not numbered (starts with 2) and then a front and back cover page. Front cover has title, author, and date information and is blank on the other side, back cover is blank but has the final page of the manuscript on the reverse side (page 56)
- Front and back covers have extensive discoloration/staining, and front cover has flaking on the edges, but the interior manuscript pages are in very good condition, with only some embedded ink stains that likely occurred when the manuscript was written
- **New Title:** "A Quarter of a Century in Medicine" by Dr. J.W.C. Cuddy handwritten manuscript
- **Physical Location:** R71, C1, S7

Description from vendor: "Cuddy, Dr. J.W.C. A Quarter of a Century in Medicine. Baltimore: 1888. Ink manuscript, screw bound, measuring 9.75 x 6.25", 56 pp. The handwritten text of a speech titled "A Quarter of a Century in Medicine", read before the Baltimore Medical Society on March 12th, 1888, by Dr. J.W.C. Cuddy, Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in the Baltimore University School of Medicine. In the first 19 pages of the speech, Cuddy reminisces about deceased professors and classmates at his alma mater, the University of Maryland, where he graduated in 1863. Next, in pages 20 through 31 of the speech, Cuddy discusses the lessons he learned while serving as a doctor in the Civil War and working as a rural doctor after the war. On practicing medicine during the war, he writes: "from a thousand battle-fields, and camps, and hospitals, there came up an anguishing, agonizing cry for medical help. With ready hand and

Stage 2: Document

C0512 - WPA puppet and furniture collection – Processing Notes

- Two boxes, will go in Oversized, no rehousing required
- **Absolutely not haunted** puppet notes:
 - o Measures approximately 22 inches long, head is made of paper mâché, marionette, has label inside jacket (see photo) – has strings? – See detail photos
 - o <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/benjamin-franklin-wpa-museum-1953071019>
- Furniture notes:
 - o All approximately 6 inches or less in length, wooden, some with metal hinges still attached and some with damage (see picture)
 - o Mostly desks and tables, one candelabra-like item
 - o Spinning wheel is attached to fabric rug
 - o 7 individual pieces of furniture, some with labels indicating the show they were used in – ***See if you can identify these in FTP collection**** - Not FTP
- Current location: OV 4, 1, 3
- **New title:** Works Progress Administration puppet and furniture collection

https://findingaids.library.upenn.edu/records/SMREP_PHM.24 - Context - use for Historical Information

<https://digitalarchives.broward.org/digital/collection/wpa/search/searchterm/furniture%20models/field/all/mode/all/conn/and/order/title/ad/asc> - Furniture examples

<https://digital.klnpa.org/digital/collection/wpa/search/searchterm/Pennsylvania%20Museum%20Extension%20Program/field/creato/mode/exact/conn/and>

Stage 3: Frame

- Create the frame of the Finding Aid in ArchivesSpace
- Done exclusively during my telework days
- Allows me to focus my in-office processing on physical tasks
- ASpace Frame = Prioritization



https://media.istockphoto.com/id/1693199554/vector/a-simple-house-frame-made-of-wood.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=OfckTi9QXF5XDhFsqJvPT_0SypS-1x3aoRFWKeSqcK4=

Stage 3: Frame

ASpace Finding Aid Outline

* = *Required as written*

Basic Information

Title: [ex: Lavinia Scott papers]

Identifier: Collection number [ex: C0506]

***Level of Description:** Collection

Publish?: Do not click (M&AL duty)

Language(s): Of collection materials (prominent)

Dates

***Label:** Creation

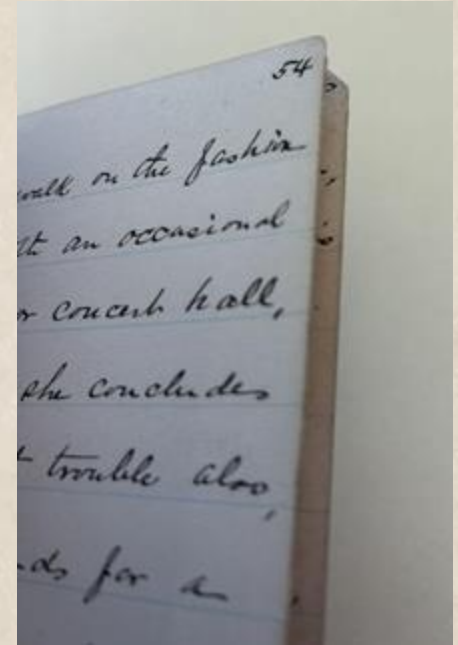
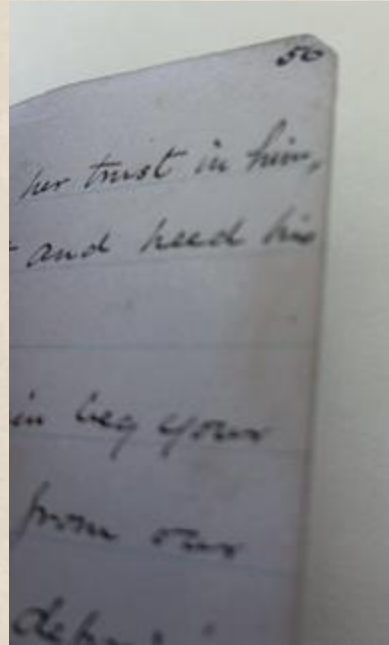
Expression: [ex: 1930-1997]

Type: [ex: Inclusive]

Outline document used for consistency

Stage 4: Write

- Write the remaining finding aid sections!
- Done exclusively during my telework days
- Scope & Content – Photos for reference
- Focus on collection at a time at this stage

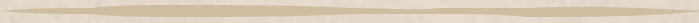


Stage 4: Write

Scope and Content

A handwritten 56 page manuscript by Dr. J.W.C. Cuddy, Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in the Baltimore University School of Medicine, and read before the Baltimore Medical Society on March 12, 1888. The manuscript is titled "A Quarter of a Century in Medicine" and details the lessons Cuddy learned while serving as a doctor in the Civil War, lessons regarding rural medicine, the many advances that have taken place in the medical profession over the course of his career such as new medicines, germ theory, and the thermometer, and concludes by discussing the problems arising from the growing trend of specialization among doctors.

Information in this Scope & Content note was all based on the documented notes and photographs and written entirely during my telework days



Stage 5: Finished!

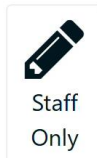
- Proofread all information in ASpace
- Move Processing Notes document to Completed FY# folder
- Send to Amanda for final approval/publication
- Label and shelve one last time!



Stage 5: Finished!

Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collection

 **Collection** Identifier: C0512



 George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

|  Works Progress Administration Pennsylvania Museum Extension Project puppet and furniture collection

Collection Overview

Collection Organization

Container Inventory

Scope and Content

This collection includes a Benjamin Franklin puppet and 7 individual pieces of miniature wooden furniture.

The Benjamin Franklin puppet measures approximately 22 inches in length and includes a papier-mâché head, a rounded cap filled with straw, and some strings showing possible use as a marionette. The left foot is detached and placed inside the box next to the puppet. Label inside of jacket reads: "State-Wide Museum Extension Philadelphia Unit W.P.A."

Stage 6: Repeat!

- Get to start on new group! (Note the genuine excitement!)
- Once Stage 5 is completed for **all** of the collections pulled in Stage 1

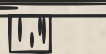


The Best of Both World



My
Experience
Processing in
a Hybrid
Work
Environment

S





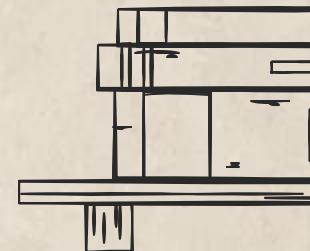
**Covid 19 Outbreak
in Virginia begins on
March 3, 2020**

**Telework at Mason
starts March 17, 2020**

**SCRC had just started a very involved
CLIR grant project. *Lots of spinning
plates!***


**-Scanning/OCR - Media Editing -
transcription - spreadsheet
-website development**

**SOME of us were allowed to come into
the office on a limited sched.**



wpa.gmu.edu/audiocollection

Voices of the WPA:
Oral Histories of the Works
Progress Administration



USA WORK PROGRAM WPA

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Follow us

- Getting the **MOST** out of the office and home office
- **TRIAL** and **ERROR**
- Developed **ROUTINES** and stuck to them
- Completed the Grant Project!

Flash Forward to Post COVID!

- In 2022 I became University Archivist - acquisition, collection management, reference, meetings and...
- Processing physical collections (foldering, boxing, creating description at the folder level, ASpace)
- Hybrid Work Schedule at Mason Libraries since 2022 (1-2 days WFH each week)
- Some things can only be accomplished in the office, but home office is quiet and distraction-free
- Particularly certain parts of the processing, um, “process.”

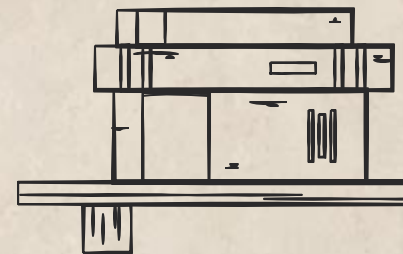




Manual Labor

VS.

Intellectual Labor



Physical Control

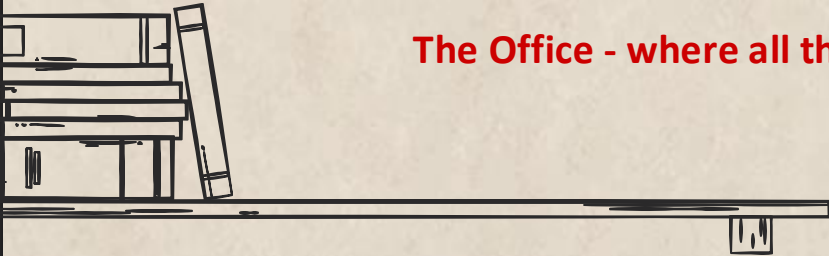
- Hauling boxes - Initial Survey - Weeding
- Preservation Actions
- Foldering and Folder Labelling
- Reshelving

Intellectual control

- Inventories - Metadata Entry (into spreadsheet)
- Finding Aid Prep (describing the whole and parts of the collection and creating notes in ArchiveSpace).



The Office - where all the physical processing takes place.



My Takeaways:

- **Choose projects that are suitable.**
- **I.E. those that require both physical processing and data creation and manipulation.**
- **Daily planning and goal setting.**
- **I like to lock myself in to the physical work when I'm in the office.**
- **Same goes for working from home. Finish all you have prepared.**
- **Revel in your success!**



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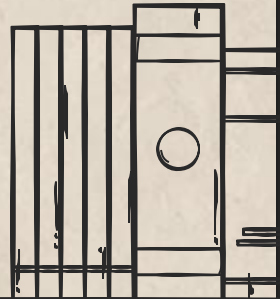
Number of Finding Aids Published Since FY 2022

~430*

Linear Feet Processed from FY 2022 onward

~700

*Does not include large grant-funded collection that was processed from 2021-2023



Thanks! Any Questions?

Contact Info

Department Email: speccoll@gmu.edu

Emails: amenjiv2@gmu.edu; mglasbre@gmu.edu; rvay@gmu.edu

Website: scrc.gmu.edu

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