

# White Paper Report

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Project Director: Amy McColl (amccoll1@swarthmore.edu)

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**White Paper**

**Grant PF-50306-12**

**Swarthmore College Special Collections Preservation Planning Project**

**Project Director: Amy M. McColl**

**Swarthmore College, McCabe Library**

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## **Background**

The McCabe Library Rare Book Room, Friends Historical Library, and the Swarthmore College Peace Collection are the three most valuable, distinctive, and distinguished collections held by Swarthmore College. Currently housed in a circa 1967 building with multiple environmental issues, these unique collections are at risk. The library building which houses the collections have experienced multiple water leaks, mold blooms, and extreme temperature and humidity fluctuations that are very detrimental to these primarily paper-based collections. Highlights of these collections include such diverse holdings as a 2-volume set once belonging to Thomas Jefferson, letters of Mohandas Gandhi, an original Edward Hicks' canvas of The Peaceable Kingdom, letters by T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden, and extensive collections of Quaker meeting materials and peace organizations' archives.

Our rationale for seeking this funding opportunity was to fully evaluate our current environmental conditions by engaging expert consultants with a proven track record in very similar projects, and to gain recommendations on how we might best address the specific problems found in McCabe Library that are adversely affecting our humanities collections. All of the members of the Swarthmore Project Team agreed that we must fully understand the preservation risks to our unique and rare humanities collections before we can move forward with a strategic plan for the library building. The planning grant project allowed us to obtain an expert assessment of current conditions.

## **Project Activities**

We engaged expert consultants with a proven track record in very similar projects, representatives from the Image Permanence Institute (IPI) at the Rochester Institute of Technology located in Rochester, NY, Jeremy Linden and Shae Trewin.

By the completion of the grant period on June 30, 2014, three consultant visits had taken place. The first visit was scheduled from Oct. 4-6, 2012, the second was scheduled from April 16-18, 2013, and the final visit took place Mar. 25-26, 2014. The consultants decided that it made sense to collect data from different seasons of the year, which can cause very different conditions within McCabe Library.

Before the first site visit, the consultants examined detailed building plans and HVAC maps provided to them by Swarthmore College Facilities staff members in order to prepare for the on-site visit. Also previous to the visit, the Project Director purchased subscription access to the eClimate Notebook software developed by Image Permanence Institute, and also purchased 15 PEM2 data loggers in order to collect environmental data from different parts of the special collections areas and mechanical areas of McCabe Library. The Friends Historical Library had purchased one PEM2 logger

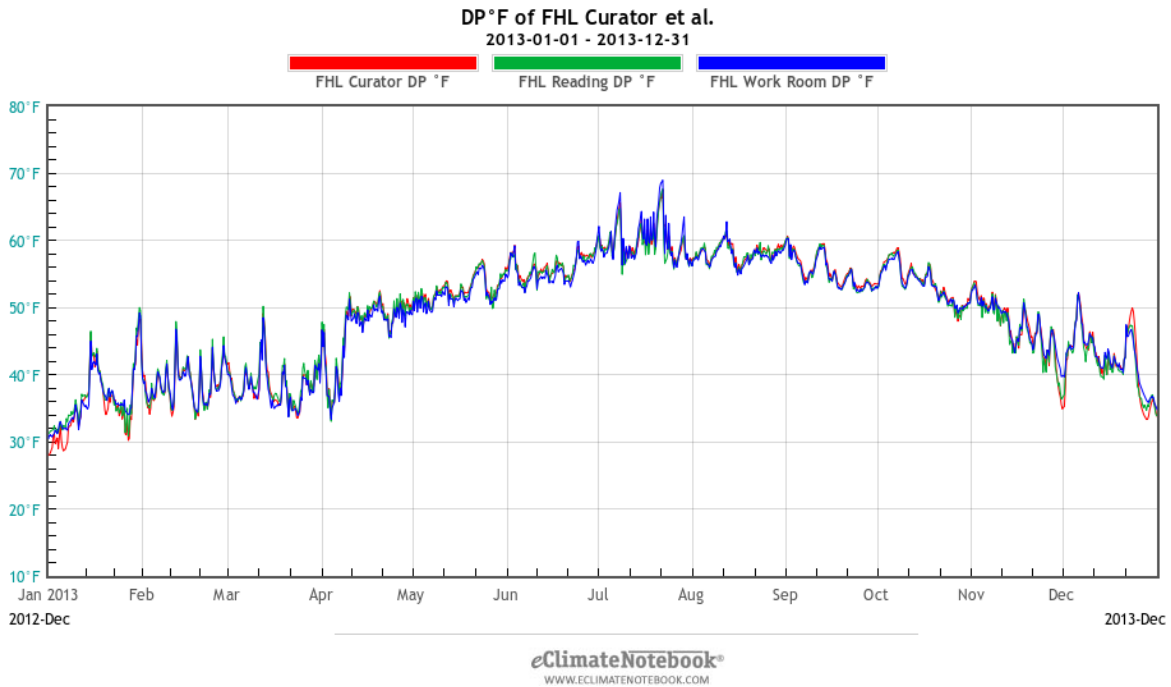
before the grant period began, so we had a total of 16 data loggers to place throughout the building.

During the first visit, the consultants met with the project team, including Amy M. McColl, Assistant Director for Collections and the Project Director; Christopher Densmore, Curator of the Friends Historical Library; Wendy Chmielewski, Curator of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection; Susanna Morikawa, Archival Specialist in the Friends Historical Library; and Tom Cochrane, HVAC Specialist in the Swarthmore College Facilities Department. Locations for the PEM2 data loggers were determined and the loggers were placed, with 5 located in the mechanical room, and 11 placed in different collections areas on several levels of the building.

There are four different air handling units (AHU) within McCabe Library, and during the initial meetings, it was determined that the focus of the grant would be AHU 2, which covers the area containing both the FHL and Peace Collection spaces as well as many other collections and personnel spaces. In addition, two data loggers were housed in the Rare Book Room, which is covered by AHU 4. The funds allocated for this grant limited detailed analysis by the consultants to the spaces covered by AHU 2, but we were able to collect relevant data for AHU 4 as well.

During the initial site visit, Amy McColl and Tom Cochrane developed a monthly schedule for collecting data from the 16 PEM2 data loggers, and that will continue throughout the grant period. Amy McColl then uploaded the data collected into the eClimate Notebook software, where the consultants viewed and analyzed the data remotely in order to recommend tweaks to the system. Project team members were given training in how to use eClimate Notebook by the consultants.

A screenshot from eClimate Notebook, showing unsafe environmental conditions in the Friends Historical Library's Curator's office:



The metrics and risk ratings in the table below are based on historical data from the monitored collections environments:

Location Dataset	Date Range	Natural Aging	Mechanical Damage	Metal Corrosion	Mold Risk	T °F	%RH	DP °F	TWPI	%DC Max	%EMC Min	%EMC Max	MRF
Basement 62	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	74.4	40	47.2	36	1.41	5.3	10.4	0
Basement 79-80	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	73.8	39	46.6	38	1.22	5.5	9.8	0
FHL Curator	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	71.7	43	47.2	38	1.15	5.9	10	0
FHL LL 55-56	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	73.8	40	47.1	37	1.25	5.5	10	0
FHL Reading	2012-08-23 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	72.4	42	47.6	36	1.02	6	9.6	0
FHL Work Room	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	73.7	40	46.9	36	1.24	5.5	9.9	0
Peace LL 40	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	OK	GOOD	74.3	39	47.2	36	1.3	5.3	10	0
RG4 27-66	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	RISK	GOOD	73.2	41	47	37	1.42	5.5	10.5	0
Tech Services	2012-10-03 to 2014-08-05	RISK	OK	RISK	GOOD	72.5	42	46.8	38	1.42	5.5	10.6	0.01
Average (9 locations)						73.3	40.7	47.1	36.9	1.3	5.6	10.1	0

Before the second site visit, it was determined that one of the PEM2 loggers located in the mechanical room was no longer working correctly. The consultants determined that this was not a crucial area for data collection, and the defective logger has since been removed. It was also determined that one of the loggers set to collect outside air data should be moved from its original location to a covered area on the roof.

During the second site visit the consultants primarily met with Tom Cochrane in order to go over more detailed HVAC protocols, and they also held meetings with the project team to be sure that all participants understood how eClimate Notebook worked and to

discuss any environmental problems observed in our collections spaces. The loggers were examined to be sure that they were in working order, and the consultants did a more detailed analysis of the HVAC map and Facilities schedules for heating and cooling. Several changes were made to the HVAC protocols.

The third site visit included an assessment of the changes made in HVAC protocols, and a review of the recommendations made by the consultant to project staff in order to improve preservation conditions for the special collections in the short-term and long-term. Tom Cochrane worked with Jeremy Linden in order to find the right combination of settings, which could improve conditions going forward. Details of those recommendations can be found in the consultants' report in Appendix 1. However, it became clear that without more radical changes to the mechanical system or the spaces that hold our special collections, preservation conditions would continue to deteriorate.

### **Accomplishments**

We received the completed consultant's report in September 2014, so the main goal of the project was fulfilled at that time. Detailed environmental data from the PEM2 loggers has been collected since October 2012. This data will help inform our next steps as we seek to improve the environmental conditions for our special collections. The consultants worked very closely with the project team to adjust environmental controls where possible. We have already seen some improvements in certain areas of the library, especially in the Rare Book Room since the AHU that covers that area is mainly a collections-only space and does not house personnel. Another positive outcome has been a much more detailed understanding of how the HVAC system in McCabe Library operates, and a closer working relationship between library and Facilities staff members.

The eClimate Notebook software and PEM2 data loggers have proven to be a valuable tool in capturing environmental data for McCabe Library, and we hope that the data will build a strong case for a radical change in library infrastructure as Swarthmore College moves ahead with its Campus Master Plan, currently underway. As of September 2014 there are plans to include a library addition to house special collections, and a renovation of the existing spaces in Phase 2 of the plan. We hope that the final report from this grant will provide real evidence that this is a necessary project to ensure the long-term preservation of our most valuable collections.

### **Audiences**

#### Friends Historical Library

During the period of the grant, Friends Historical Library served approximately 750 non-College-affiliated users. Of these about 520 were academics from other institutions (including undergraduates and post-graduates) and independent scholarly

researchers. The remaining visitors were general researchers of local and family history and related topics.

2014 is the College's Sesquicentennial, so FHL's collections were used heavily for research during the period of the grant. The FHL provided office space for the author of the Commemorative book. FHL also supervised two additional students over the summer of 2013 who were employed by a group of alumni filmmakers to do photographic research. A Sesquicentennial exhibition was mounted using materials from FHL, and a number of related web-based products were produced using FHL collections.

A number of Swarthmore faculty used the collections of FHL in for course-related assignments. These include: The American Civil War, Oral History (History); Campus Architecture, History of Photography (Art History); Black Liberation 1969 (Black Studies Program); and Nature Narratives (English).

Other academic institutions that used our collections for coursework include the graduate program at Longwood Gardens, Delaware County Community College, Penn State Brandywine, and College of New Jersey. Other groups like the Delaware County Library System, Tyler Arboretum and innumerable Quaker meetings were given tours.

#### Swarthmore College Peace Collection

SCPC was open for 481.5 days during the grant project period. 545 researchers contacted the Peace Collection; some received resources by mail or email, but did not visit, some visited in person (and are included the 628 figures). Approximately 30% of users were faculty or senior scholars; 20% were graduate students; 30% were members of the general public; 10% were undergraduates; and 10% were other or of unknown status researchers from 25 countries (from North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia) contacted us for information and SCPC resources.

Research topics included individual women and women's organization involved in peace activism 19th century through the 20th century; religious aspects of peace activism around the world; World War I and interwar peace activities, especially around the League of Nations; World War II-conscientious objection; non-violent resistance to Nazi regimes; 1950s civil rights movement and anti-nuclear protests; 1960s Vietnam war topics (war resistance, draft resistance and evasion), Nigerian-Biafran Civil War; 1980s anti-nuclear movement; wars in Central America; feminism and gender relationships in peace organizations; and members of the general public tracing relatives who served as World War II conscientious objectors, or who were tracing family members who were refugees from Europe during World War II, or refugees from IndoChina during the Vietnam, Cambodian, Laotian wars.

#### Rare Book Room

83 items were paged from the Rare Book Room collections during the period of the grant, and were used by a variety of scholars and Swarthmore College community members. The most-used collection during this period was the W.H. Auden Collection, including research done by a visiting scholar from Cambridge University in Great Britain who spent several days reviewing Auden manuscripts and annotated monographs. Another scholar from Great Britain was interested in studying Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on Sunset Strip*, a seminal artists' book that marks the movement away from fine letterpress artists' books to works designed for mass production. In addition, many College community members used materials from the Rare Book Room materials in order to prepare for the Sesquicentennial celebration. A faculty member in the History Department had his students consult several volumes from the Rare Book Room for one of his classes, and each year students from a book arts class at the University of the Arts hold a class in McCabe Library in order to look at examples from our fine press/artists' book collection.

Several exhibits and talks over the grant period incorporated volumes from our extensive artists' book collection, including exhibits of books published by Red Hen Press, Ninja Press, Janus Press, and an exhibit of artists' books inspired by classical studies.

### Summary

The ultimate impact the project will have on the audiences for these collections will be a better understanding of the preservation conditions for the rare and unique materials housed in McCabe Library for special collections and Facilities staff members, and recommendations that will inform plans to improve those conditions dramatically in the future. We have made some strides in reducing negative impact with the assistance of the consultants for the project, but we will need to accomplish more drastic improvements if we want to realize optimal environments for these irreplaceable collections. The consultants' report will be shared with administrators who are currently involved with the Campus Master Plan (the URL is in the Grant Products section below), with the hope that a special collections addition to the Library can be part of the long-range goal. Currently a major capital campaign is underway, with the hope that library building renovations can begin within the next 5-7 years.

### **Evaluation**

No formal evaluation of the project has been completed; however, the consultants' report provides special collections staff with the necessary guidelines and recommendations to move forward in working with Facilities staff members to continue to improve the environment for the special collections housed in McCabe Library. The consultants' expert analysis of our current systems and recommendations for improvements to the preservation environment will inform our preparation for a



probable addition to McCabe Library to house our special collections, with special emphasis on the fact that collections spaces and personnel spaces must be in different zones. During the course of the grant period, the HVAC Specialist learned about optimal conditions for the Library's special collections, and he is now sensitive to the need to balance acceptable conditions for the collections, and comfortable conditions for staff members who occupy the same spaces as the collections. Thus, we feel that the project was highly successful in working toward the ultimate goal of vastly improving our preservation environment for our most valuable humanities collections.

### **Continuation of the Project**

The Library has renewed its subscription to the eClimate Notebook software used during the grant period, and the Project Director and HVAC Specialist from the Facilities Department will continue to collect data from the PEM2 data loggers in order to observe fluctuations in the environment in the special collections spaces. The HVAC Specialist will refer to the consultants' report as a starting place for attempting to make changes to settings in the mechanical systems as warranted by changing environmental conditions in McCabe Library.

Attempts have been made by special collections staff members to complete some of the smaller improvements recommended by the consultants, but in many cases those improvements (such as the request for timed light switches in the basement, and for the replacement of bulbs in the lighting fixtures) have not been fulfilled due to financial and time constraints in the Facilities Department.

### **Long Term Impact**

As stated previously, the consultant's report will be shared with administrative staff working on the Campus Master Plan in the hope that it will inform the construction of an addition to McCabe Library with the sole purpose of housing special collections, including the collections of the Friends Historical Library, the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, and the materials currently housed in the Rare Book Room. Optimally, the space will have separate zones for collections and staff, as recommended by the consultants. If completed, the new collections space would resolve the current preservation problems and ensure the long-term preservation of these very significant collections.

### **Grant Products**

The primary grant product is the consultants' very detailed report. This will help to inform next steps for our preservation efforts, and will hopefully give us momentum to have an addition to the library built for the sole purpose of housing our special collections with the correct environmental controls for optimal preservation.

Additionally, the Library is included in the Campus Master Plan as part of Phase 2. The URL for the Plan is here:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/campus-master-plan>

Specific mention of the library expansion can be found in this *Swarthmore College Bulletin* article from January 2014, found here:

<http://media.swarthmore.edu/bulletin/?p=1188>

The findings of the project have been instrumental in focusing attention on the environmental issues facing the Library's special collections, and the hope is that the addition to the building will happen quickly enough to have a strong impact on long-term preservation.