This preservation and access project was an ambitious task that included digitization and rehousing of three major collections. Museum staff focused a lot of time and effort on completing the project. Because of limited volunteer and intern resources, we had only two project-focused volunteers dedicated to this project. This made our progress much slower than anticipated. Therefore, we got as far as we could with the time and resources we had available.

The grant proposal for this endeavor was written during our collections storage renovation project. The collections we proposed in our grant application for scanning and rehousing were in temporary storage and not easily accessible at the time. Therefore, our estimates differed from the reality as staff began processing and inventorying.

All archival supplies were purchased from Gaylord. Of the city records processed, staff successfully photographed 19 ledgers, which are ready for upload to the Museum’s website. Our progress with the city records was slowed somewhat as more records were discovered. The Massillon Museum will continue in our preservation efforts in the remaining Jacob Coxey collection and Massillon City Records collections, with projected completion in June 2013.

This preservation project was split into three collections:

**Massillon City Records**
Volunteer Mark Pitocco has spent 105 hours photographing 6,718 pages of city records from 19 ledgers to date. Because Pitocco started in August 2012, he did not complete all 27 ledgers as was originally planned. At the onset of this project, staff did not realize that many of the ledgers contained more than 500 pages, and several additional boxes of loose papers were discovered that fell under the scope of city records. This became a much more time-consuming effort than had been originally anticipated. Pitocco intends to complete digitization of the ledgers. Grant funds were used to purchase boxes and tissue paper for each ledger in the collection, and folders and document boxes for loose papers. The grant funds covered the purchase of new archival boxes for every city record ledger and paper in the Museum’s care.

**Robert Peet Skinner Scrapbooks**
Intern Justin Haynes spent 120 hours photographing 1,235 pages of 8 scrapbooks. Grant funds were used to purchases boxes for each scrapbook, and document boxes for remaining loose
papers. This collection is completely digitized and rehoused. As a result, it was the feature of our quarterly newsletter in Fall 2012, and was the focus of an exhibit in December 2012. This collection is ready for upload to our website.

**Jacob S. Coxey Papers**

Due to lack of intern resources, archivist Mandy Pond and volunteers Lois McHugh and Liz Rinehart stepped in to assist with the project, spending more than 40 hours doing so and completing digitization of more than 100 photographs and 620 letters from the Coxey collection. An exhibit surrounding Coxey’s March on Washington has been planned for Spring 2013. Additional interns have been charged with completing this project in anticipation of that exhibit. Digitization is projected to be completed by June 2013. Grant funds were used to house additional unprocessed documents in the Coxey collection. Staff realized that many of the unprocessed boxes of “Coxey materials” were actually family items that did not focus on Coxey’s political involvement or protest march to Washington D.C. These items were therefore removed from the scope of project, shifting funds for their rehousing to the additional city ledgers that were discovered during the inventory.

**Public Access**

Part of the project’s focus was making these records available to the public in the Velma B. Erwin Research Room and on the Museum’s website. The entire website is currently being moved to a new hosting service and digital files from these collections will be posted on the website as part of the Museum’s online collections. The website is expected to launch in February 2013 at massillonmuseum.org. The materials are available for research use in their physical and digital forms in the Velma B. Erwin Research Room by appointment. The inventories of these collections, with finding aids, will be posted on the website to encourage research use.

As the Massillon Museum staff wanted to share this project with the public in order to enhance access to these important collections, it was decided that an exhibit focusing on Robert Peet Skinner would pique the public’s interest. Intern Justin Haynes of Miami University (Ohio), who digitized the Skinner collection, worked for one month to write text panels and labels to accompany photograph reproductions from Skinner’s scrapbooks that pertained to the 1903 mission to Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia). This text has also been translated into finding aids which will become available on the Museum’s website in February 2013. A small portion of the
Grant funds were used to accomplish this exhibit. The physical exhibit will be posted as a virtual exhibit on our website as well.

**Positive Outcomes:**
Because these records were digitized, it was easy to accommodate noted Robert Peet Skinner scholar, Negussie Ayele of Columbus, Ohio, during his research visit in November 2012. He requested copies of two entire scrapbooks, which was easy to facilitate with the images already prepared as a result of this project, and allowed us to search through photographs without disturbing the originals.

Many requests for Coxey materials were received in 2012. An out-of-state doctoral candidate requested materials for his dissertation, and an out-of-state researcher developing K-12 resources about Jacob Coxey were just two of those who were helped through this project. The Massillon Museum is involved in a celebration and exhibit about the 75th anniversary of the Little Steel Strike and related New Deal programs initiated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt, who consulted with Jacob Coxey, who had developed ideas for similar programs in the 1890s as a result of similarly high unemployment rates in the U.S.

This project became a large undertaking for the archives volunteers who worked on it. Having gone through this process, Museum staff will be better prepared to plan for future projects, and this will serve as a template as there are many other archival collections still in need of attention.

The Museum’s system of evaluation for the project included the number of patrons who visit the website and facilities onsite to view these records. These numbers will be monitored over the next year.

Copies of the newsletter article, annual report, and photographs of the project volunteers, researchers, and the collections before and after the project are included in this report below.
(Left) Archives intern Justin Haynes opens one of the many Skinner scrapbooks for photographing. The camera is mounted to a copy stand. He has the scrapbook supported so that the binding is not damaged during photography. (Right) Volunteer Mark Pitocco also uses the copy stand to digitize the city ledgers.

Robert Peet Skinner scholar, Negussie Ayele, examines Skinner’s press scrapbooks from the 1903 mission to Abysinnia (Ethiopia), November 2012.
Intern Justin Haynes poses with the completed exhibit about Robert Peet Skinner’s mission to Abyssinia.
City records on open shelving before (two photos) and the city records in their new OHRAB-funded boxes, labeled and ready to be put into the collections storage area.
The Skinner scrapbooks housed in their original wooden crates (before).

The Skinner scrapbooks in their new boxes on the collections storage archive shelves (after).
Massillon Museum Fall 2012 newsletter