

FINAL REPORT
CURATORIAL SERVICES CONTRACT
CX5321 - 3 -0831

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FORWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following pages contain a detailed report on the methodology employed in Curatorial Services Contract 6X5321-3-0831 and an overview of the condition of collections in the custody of Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida and Mississippi Districts. The report defines the circumstances encountered when the contract began and offers recommendations for continued and periodic maintenance of artifacts.

In working with the Collection the Curatorial Services Teams attempted to gather all objects and records together so that sequential processing could be accomplished. Unfortunately, some artifacts were missing, others were not numbered or the numbers were not legible as a result of improper handling and storage. Then too, existing catalog cards contained a significant number of errors or were not done completely. All of these considerations necessitated that we spend an inordinate amount of time as we attempted to "track down" individual artifacts, correct the errors in cataloging and preserve any existing documentation.

To accomplish this, with a high degree of professionalism, we found it necessary to retain several subject matter specialists. This was especially true in the field of Florida archeology. Mr. Alan Gansehorn and Ms. Jan Loyd proved to be very knowledgable and thorough in their identifications of archeological specimens. Mr. Michael Bailey and Mr. Robert A. Cason with the Alabama Department of Archives and History provided invaluable assistance with historic cultural materials and Ms. Alice Taylor worked very diligently with collections in Mississippi and archival material in Florida.

The team is also indebted to the assistance of Ms. Sarah Zimney, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service and Ms. Shirley Payne of the Carl Sandberg Home National Historic Site. Both Ladies were extremely helpful by long distance as we worked through a plethora of computer programming problems. Within the Gulf Islands National Seashore Park we received invaluable aid and support from: Messrs Robert Bradley, W.P. Crawford, Roy W. Reaves III, Ms. Kay Threlkeld and number of others too numerous to mention. Each of us wish to acknowledge the Regional Curator, through the elapsed time required, programming problems and the curatorial concerns elevated to him for the benefit of his counsel. As a result, the collection has been examined in exhaustive proportions. Artifacts have been stored with extreme care and the recommendations, when followed, will significantly insure the stability and security of the collection.

George E. Hicks
Atlanta, Georgia

The following paragraphs offer an encapsulated overview of recommendations which are intended to assist in the maintenance of National Park Service Museum collections in the custody of the Mississippi and Florida Districts of Gulf Islands National Seashore Park. Generally, these collections focus on American Military History from 1812 to the 1945 period. Some historic archeological specimens are included in the holdings.

During calendar year 1984, the museum collections of each district were examined under the auspices of a Curatorial Services contract (CX5321-3--831) with George E. Hicks and Associates of Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of the contract was to : "properly identify, list, sort, accession and catalogue the cultural museum collections of Gulf Island National Seashore, Florida and Mississippi districts." Conservatively speaking, the scope of work was under-estimated and the quality of existing records was extremely poor... where and if they existed at all.

Artifacts in the collection were housed in a number of different areas, each with differing environments and controls. Succinctly stated the artifacts and storage conditions were as follows:

MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT

AREA: SHIP ISLAND

TYPE ARTIFACT

CONDITIONS

CANNONBALLS	INVENTORY:	PHYSICAL COUNT
	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS:	NONE
GUN/CARRIAGE PIECES	INVENTORY:	PHYSICAL COUNT
	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS:	NONE
	SECURITY:	NONE
	PHYSICAL CONDITION:	RELATIVELY STABLE
ARCHITECTURAL	INVENTORY:	NONE
	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS:	NONE
	SECURITY:	NONE
	PHYSICAL CONDITION:	RELATIVELY STABLE

AREA: DAVIS BAYOU

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS	INVENTORY:	NONE
	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS:	YES
	SECURITY:	YES
	PHYSICAL CONDITION:	STABLE
ARCHEOLOGICAL MATERIALS	INVENTORY:	NONE
	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS:	YES
	SECURITY:	YES
	PHYSICAL CONDITION:	STABLE
HISTORIC/CULTURAL OBJECTS	INVENTORY:	80%
	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS:	YES
	SECURITY:	YES
	PHYSICAL CONDITION:	YES

FLORIDA DISTRICT

AREA: FORT BARRANCAS (EXHIBIT)

<u>TYPE ARTIFACT</u>	<u>CONDITIONS</u>
HISTORIC/CULTURAL MUSEUM OBJECTS	INVENTORY: COMPLETE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: YES SECURITY: YES PHYSICAL CONDITIONS: STABLE
ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORIC MATERIALS	INVENTORY: NONE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: NONE SECURITY: INADEQUATE PHYSICAL CONDITION: UNSTABLE CONDITIONS THREATENING
<u>AREA: FORT PICKENS</u>	
ARCHIVAL MATERIALS	INVENTORY: NONE IN 5 YEARS ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: INADEQUATE SECURITY: INADEQUATE PHYSICAL CONDITION: SOME INSTABILITY
EXHIBITED ITEMS	INVENTORY: 40% NEVER CATALOGED, NONE IN 5 YEARS ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: INADEQUATE SECURITY: INADEQUATE PHYSICAL CONDITION: SOME INSTABILITY
STORED-GUN PARTS	INVENTORY: NONE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: NONE SUBMERGED IN WATER SECURITY: INADEQUATE PHYSICAL CONDITION: EXTREMELY UNSATISFACTORY
STORED-ARCHEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS	INVENTORY: NONE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: LIMITED SECURITY: INADEQUATE PHYSICAL CONDITION: STABLE, MIXED POORLY STORED

FLORIDA DISTRICT CONTINUED

STORED-HISTORIC/CULTURAL
OBJECTS

INVENTORY: NONE IN 8 YEARS
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: LIMITED
SECURITY: INADEQUATE
PHYSICAL CONDITION: DIRTY, UNSTABLE
POORLY STORED

AREA: FORT PICKENS

TYPE ARTIFACT

CONDITIONS

STORED ORDNANCE

INVENTORY: NONE
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS: NONE
SECURITY: NONE, REPEATED
INSTANCES OF THEFT
PHYSICAL CONDITION: DETERIORATING
LIVE/INERT ROUNDS
STORED IN PUBLIC
AREA

Factually speaking, there has been no thorough inventory performed with the collections within at least the past five (5) years. Florida based personnel responsible for the collections have not fulfilled rudimentary responsibilities in securing the collection, storing the artifacts, maintaining the specimens, or in accounting for them, Gun parts to the historic shield guns on Santa Rosa Island were knowingly stored in an out-building (with a leaky roof) and permitted to stay submerged in water in garbage cans. Cannonballs...live explosive ordnance as well as inert rounds... were stored in a public area behind a weak iron gate secured only with a padlock. Repeated thefts and break-ins were recorded, especially as the Pensacola Area's annual gun show approached.

All of the foregoing are established facts, identified at least nine (9) months prior to the start of the curatorial services contract. Similarly, one-of-a-kind carriage pieces that have been on Ship Island have been stored in a public area, without security or environmental controls. Their physical size and weight has been the lone deterrent to theft.

ACTIONS TAKEN - MISSISSIPPI

Previous to the arrival of the Curatorial Services Team, Mississippi personnel worked with the Regional Curator to consolidate collections in the new Visitor Center and on Ship Island. Reference works and curatorial supplies were assembled for the team's use. Actions taken to resolve the collection's deficiencies, with recommendations for their continued maintenance are as follows:

AREA SHIP ISLAND

TYPE ARTIFACT

CANNONBALLS :

ACTION TAKEN

Cannonballs were examined, marked and cataloged. Thereafter they were moved to the Florida district where they were sandblasted, primed with Porter Paint Primer 235, marked and stored by calibre in an environmentally stable storage area. Larger 15-inch projectiles and gun parts were retained on Ship Island.

RECOMMENDATION:

Examine weekly to ascertain that there is no evidence of rust, spalling or exfoliation. Chamber of shells should be misted weekly with WD-40.

AREA SHIP ISLAND

TYPE ARTIFACT

GUN/CARRAIGE PIECES

ACTIONS TAKEN:

Concrete residue exfoliating metal was removed by brushing and chipping at the direction of the Regional Curator. Pieces numbered and cataloged.

RECOMMENDATION:

Carriage pieces should be carefully preserved as "one-of-a-kind" items. Therefore, it is recommended that they be removed from Ship Island, professionally treated by a qualified conservator and used for exhibit items in an environmentally stable area.

The Rodman gun and gun fragments should be monitored for excessive deterioration and, as a minimum, treated in place by painting on a cyclical basis. Provide accurate and responsible interpretation for the visitor.

AREA: SHIP ISLAND

ARCHITECTURAL

ACTION TAKEN:

Pieces of embrasure frames, shutters, etc.. were lot cataloged and stacked to permit uniform stress and air circulation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Sample specimens should be professionally treated by a qualified conservator and stored in a stable environment. The casemate housing these objects should be made into a secure storage area.

AREA: DAVIS BAYOU

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

ACTION TAKEN:

Archival Materials were cataloged/lot catalogued as appropriate and stored in a secure environmentally stable museum/archival storage area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Historical correspondence and record books should be de-acidified and treated by a qualified paper conservator. Court case documents should be examined, indexed and unnecessary duplication eliminated by deaccessioning.

AREA: DAVIS BAYOU

ARCHEOLOGICAL MATERIALS

ACTION TAKEN:

Archeological specimens in the collection are typified by no known provenience. Pieces were lot or individually cataloged and placed in the museum storage area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Enforce the local policies recently developed concerning limiting those artifacts which may come into the collection without a known provenience.

AREA: DAVIS BAYOU

HISTORIC/CULTURAL OBJECTS

ACTION TAKEN:

Artifacts were cataloged individually whenever possible and lot cataloged only as a last resort. The many erroneous identities were corrected in so far as possible. A great many objects were cleaned for the first time and all were properly prepared for storage.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Artifacts should be examined visually at least every month to determine if rust, mold or mildew is present. Metal Artifacts should be misted with WD-40 until further treated by a properly qualified conservator. Inventory annually. Institute a cyclical maintenance program.

AREA: FORT BARRANCAS (EXHIBITS)

HISTORIC OBJECTS

ACTION TAKEN:

Historic objects and exhibited reproductions were cataloged, marked and returned to display.

RECOMMENDATION:

Metallic Artifacts on display need to be returned to Harper's Ferry for further treatment by a qualified conservator.

AREA: FORT BARRANCAS (STORAGE)

ARCHITECTURAL OBJECTS

ACTION TAKEN:

Historic and architectural objects in storage at Fort Barrancas were separated by type and cataloged individually or by lot whenever applicable. Metal objects were coated with WD-40 when ever required.

RECOMMENDATION:

Create a secure, environmentally stable storage area to house these objects to that area. Fumigate all objects in storage to rid them of the pests which infest the wooden pieces. Properly conserve the original and/or early architectural elements. Prepare measured drawings of historic elements with materials specifications.

AREA: FORT PICKENS

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

ACTION TAKEN:

Items were individually cataloged, numbered and filed. Items were designated for duplication whenever the need existed. All items were placed in acid free sleeves and/or storage containers and numbered.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Original or "best" duplicate should be retained in the museum storage areas. A separate set of copies of relevant reference materials should be maintained by the interpretive staff. Original materials should be duplicated and deacidified.

AREA: FORT PICKENS

EXHIBITED ITEMS

ACTION TAKEN:

Cataloged and identified all items on exhibit, 42% of which had never been accessioned or cataloged. Corrected the identification of the items improperly/incorrectly named. Applied preservatives where applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Initiate a system of exhibit maintenance as set forth in the Manual for Museums. Perform a physical inventory of exhibits weekly to determine theft, loss and/or deterioration. Place gaskets around exhibit doors to eliminate dust and stabilize the environment within. Rotate items on exhibit to preclude deterioration/discoloration of items on display at least annually.

AREA: FORT PICKENS

GUN PARTS

ACTION TAKEN:

Removed gun parts from water and allowed them to dry thoroughly. Brushed and cleaned each individual piece, saturated each with WD-40 and cataloged items according to name of the artifact if item was still recognizable.

RECOMMENDATION:

Examine parts weekly for deterioration and/or signs of rust and exfoliation. Mist weekly with WD-40 as a deterrent to further damage.

AREA: FORT PICKENS

STORED ARCHGOLOGICAL SPECIMENS

ACTION TAKEN:

Archeological specimens were cataloged by local subject matter specialists.

Many erroneous identifications were corrected and dating standardized. Items were individually/lot cataloged as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION:

Enforce the recently developed local policies concerning limiting those artifacts which may come into the collection without a known provenience. Inventory/accurately determine exactly what items are on-loan from the collection, properly accession and catalog. Examine monthly to determine/verify that deterioration has been arrested.

AREA FORT PICKENS

STORED HISTORIC/CULTURAL
OBJECTS

ACTION TAKEN:

Cultural museum objects were individually or lot cataloged whichever was applicable. Incorrect or inaccurate identifications were corrected in so far as possible. Objects were washed or cleaned and preservatives applied whenever applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Artifacts should be examined visually every month, at least visually to determine if rust, mold or mildew is present. Metallic (ferrous) objects should be misted with WD-40 on a weekly basis, until they can be properly cared-for by a qualified conservator. Institute a cyclical maintenance program.

AREA: FORT PICKENS

STORED ORDNANCE

ACTION TAKEN:

Ordnance in the form of cannonballs and rifled projectiles were examined to determine whether or not any of the objects contained explosive charges.

Those "live" projectiles were segregated. Inert rounds were sandblasted, primed with Porter Red Primer 235 after consultation with the Regional Curator. Storage rack for the cannonballs was designed and partially built by the Curatorial Services Contractor and installed.

AREA: FORT PICKENS

STORED ORDNANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Projectiles should be examined weekly for evidence of rust, spalling or exfoliation... especially the chambers of the shells. A weekly misting of WD-40 should be applied to the chambers of these shells until they can be fully treated by a qualified metals conservator.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Specific professionally trained individuals should be designated to account for and maintain the collections they should be further held accountable for their actions, non-diligence and/or inefficiency.

2. Collections exhibit/storage areas should be placed on an ever-changing--but several times daily-- security check by Park Rangers.
3. Access to the collection, exhibits, and storage areas should be limited and this key control strictly enforced.
4. Perform a written, physical inventory and inspection of the collection on an annual basis as a minimum.
5. Change hygrothermograph paper and apply preservatives to metallic objects...especially shell chambers...on a weekly basis.
6. Install electrical controls on existing air conditioner or add dehumidifiers to control the humidity in the storage area. This can be accomplished by a humidistat or dehumidifier on a timer.
7. Build an "air lock" inside the entrance to the museum storage area to preserve the environment inside the building as personnel enter/exit.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT'D)

8. Perform annual cyclical maintenance on all historic ordnance, guns or gun fragments and all metal in general as it awaits professional conservation.
9. Compose a responsible collection policy and establish a list of those items that are needed/required for the collection and the Parks exhibits as well as the areas in which it will concentrate its activities for a responsible interpretive collection.
10. Prepare a written directive to Park personnel firmly prohibiting personal collecting activities on park grounds and especially conservation of Park Service Artifacts. This has been done verbally by local and regional officials and continues to be ignored especially at Fort Barrancas by local personnel.
11. The Park Curator should perform a monthly inspection in all districts to insure that all accessioning and cataloging is current, accurate and completely performed on a professional basis by properly trained personnel.
12. File previous "blue copies" of the catalog records in the accession folders.