

## **Cedar Falls Historical Society Flood Damage Assessment**

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

August 24, 2008

AIC CERT Team: Vicki Lee, Sylvia Schweri, Callie Stapp

### **Brief History:**

The Cedar Falls Historical Society is a local historical society that consists of five local sites: the Ice House Museum, a Victorian Historic House site, the 1907 George Wyth historic house, a schoolhouse, and an early gas station. The visit consisted of a survey of the Ice House, and tours of on-site and off-site collections storage spaces. The Ice House, built in 1870 and rebuilt in 1921 after a fire, was the main location for storage of objects pertaining to Iowa life in and around Cedar Falls and ranging from dentist and medical equipment to early movie, farming, and ice harvesting equipment. The Ice House Museum is located on the edge of the Cedar River, with only about 100 yards between the Museum and the River. Many of the objects were in active use in displays and dioramas which were positioned around the outer walls of the Ice House.

### **Flood Preparations:**

Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>: Sandbagging outside of the building up to the height of about 7 feet (up to the level of an outside air vent). By Tuesday afternoon, the downtown area was under mandatory evacuation.

Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>: Entry was allowed into the Ice House. The site had filled with 5 feet of river water inside the buildings, covering all objects stored on the ground level of the museum, with objects stored on an upper level being unaffected.

### **Flood Recovery:**

All flood-damaged items were removed to an off-site donated facility after an initial rinse, with very badly damaged items removed for destruction. Once moved to the off-site facility with office-type cooling capabilities, the objects were sorted by collections, (i.e. “dental diorama”, “ice harvesting diorama”, etc.), and then by severity of damage. All large items, regardless of collection, were moved only to the first floor inside the entrance because of their large size and/or weight.

### **AIC CERT's Visit**

The AIC Cert Team met with Jeff Kurtz, Executive Director of the Historical Society, and Cynthia Sweet, Collections Manager on August 26, 2008. We toured the Ice House, which is now dry and continues to house many items of the collection. We also toured the off-site storage facility, where volunteers and part-time staff are currently working on cleaning and stabilizing the rest of the Ice House objects. Work on the collections is proceeding under the Cynthia's direction and is coming along well. The collections are

very well labeled and organized, and are currently separated out according to their area of future placement. Metal and wood objects are being cleaned with appropriate solvents. Cynthia has set aside objects that are beyond the scope of her team's knowledge base, and these await future treatment. We were able to advise her on the treatment of a collection of lantern slides, as well as on the cleaning of unvarnished wood.

In general, the salvage of the collection was extremely successful. Jeff's main concern involves locating funding for new exhibits and conservation treatments. We plan to send him a list of possible granting agencies and grants, with links to their websites where he can find further information.

## **Dan Gable International Wrestling Institute and Museum Flood Damage Assessment**

Waterloo, Iowa

August 26, 2008

AIC CERT Team: Vicki Lee, Sylvia Schweri, Callie Stapp

### **Brief History:**

The museum is made up mostly of the collection of the founder and director, Mike Chapman, and opened in 1998 in Newton, Iowa. The museum moved to its present location in January of 2007. The main floor exhibit spaces and gift shop has 16,000 square feet of usable space, while the basement storage area has 5,000 square feet of useable space.

### **Flood Preparations:**

June 10<sup>th</sup>: Report of localized flooding prompts museum staff to begin to remove shop merchandise items from the basement. As the flooding proceeded, the basement filled with 10 feet of water, and then 2 ½ to 3 feet of water on the main level. While the water was rising, museum staff removed items from many of the display cases and from the walls for removal. As the staff was leaving two of the most important objects were removed by the director- an arm chair and desk of Frank Gotch, the most influential wrestler of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Flood Recovery:**

All flood-damaged items were removed and either stored at an off-site storage space or discarded. Many of the autographed photographs, library books and vintage magazines that had been stored in the main level in bookcases received significant water damage and were taken off-site in plastic storage bins. Mike said his wife had air dried the photos and loose papers to the best of her abilities and about 50% had been saved. The building was thoroughly cleaned and any affected drywall was removed. The unaffected glass exhibit cases were left untouched with objects still in place.

### **AIC CERT's Visit**

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, we met with Mike Chapman at the museum to assess the damage to the items still on-site. We found all of the items that were still in the exhibit cases and remaining on the walls to be in good shape and generally unaffected by the flooding. We were told that all the museum objects that were removed prior to the evacuation of the building were also in good condition and stored off-site wrapped or in boxes.

Mike also showed us a statue and painting that were damaged by the flood. The statue had been broken off of its base. Sylvia looked at it and thought it could be easily repaired by a professional objects conservator; she also recommended that the statue be cleaned.

The painting had cockled from humidity but did not seem to have any other damage; we recommended that the Museum seek professional treatment for that piece as well.

The library items that had been removed are presently stored at Mr. Chapman's home in approximately 20 Rubbermaid-type storage bins. Mike brought in one bin for us to examine, which contained approximately 25 books, magazines, and comic books of varying ages. We separated the group according to condition, working to separating some stuck-together pages and fanning them out to dry. If this box is representative of others, then the numbers may be revealing: 20% (5 items) were slightly damp with no visible mold; 20% (5 items) were dry and only slightly distorted; 44% (11 items) were very damp and moldy on the covers and fore edges; and 16 % (4 items) were unsalvageable. We made recommendations to Mike as to what he could do for items in each of these categories.

### **Recommendations**

Ideally the boxes in damp or wet condition will be taken to a freeze dry facility where they would be vacuum freeze dried and then cleaned. This should happen as soon as possible if the money is available and a list of disaster recovery businesses is attached to this report in case the opportunity arises.

However, it is most likely that this will be a volunteer undertaking and in that case the following actions are recommended:

1. If space, time or volunteers are limited some thought should be given to freezing the books and dealing with them in small batches. The freezing can be done in frost-free chest freezers or at a local meat locker or restaurant that has space they might donate.
2. Establish a "triage" station for the remaining books and magazines, either on the cases that are still in place or on portable tables. Divide the books by the severity of damage as we did with the single bin. Coated paper that has not already blocked should be treated first because once it dries it is a solid block.
3. Separate and fan out books and magazines to air dry them. Dehumidifiers and fans should be used to keep the moisture level in the museum to a minimum and circulate the air to speed drying times. Books can be interleaved with unprinted newspaper, paper towels or blotter paper to aid in drying.
4. Once the books have dried they should be brushed and vacuumed using a vacuum with a HEPA filter. A regular vacuum hose nozzle should be covered with cheese cloth for the vacuuming or small, computer type nozzles can be used. This should be done outside on a loading dock if possible. Have volunteers use face masks with a N95 or N100 rating and gloves (nitrile or latex) because of the airborne mold involved in the project. These masks should be available at Home Depot or a local automotive store.

5. The books can also be pressed to help control the covers warping. They can be pressed throughout this project but care must be given that books are not left in the press overnight as blocking and molding will occur.

## **Mother Mosque Flood Damage Assessment**

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

August 24, 2008

AIC CERT Team: Vicki Lee, Sylvia Schweri, Callie Stapp

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Appendix 3: List of possible funding sources

### **1. Structures and Collection Overview**

#### *Structures:*

The Mother Mosque of America, located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa was built in 1934, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Mosque is significant as being the first structure in the United States built specifically as a place of Islamic worship. The Mosque consists of a cement and wooden structure and is divided into an upper floor and a lower level basement. The upper level is used for worship, office space, and bathrooms. The lower level basement is used mainly for meetings, as a research library, and as an educational center. It is located approximately 10 blocks from the Cedar River.

Also located on the property is a 12ft. by 12ft. prefabricated wooden shed. This shed housed reading and educational materials, as well as the papers of Islamic scholar T. B. Irving.

#### *Collections:*

The collections of the Mother Mosque consist of historical texts of varying age, modern educational pamphlets, children's educational materials, the correspondence and personal papers of Professor T.B. Irving on varied topics of Islamic issues, and new texts of Irving's translations of the Qur'an that are sold and gifted by the Mosque. Most of the collections appear to have been stored in the shed on the property rather than the Mosque itself.

## 2. Incident Overview

On June 12th, 2008, the Cedar River overflowed its banks and flooded the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, eventually making its way to the Mother Mosque and filling the lower level basement with river water to within 1 foot of the ceiling. The water remained for approximately one week before entry into the buildings was allowed. After entry was granted, the clean-up included removing all items from the basement, which were discarded immediately, or laid out on tarps in the adjoining yard for drying. Photographs previously displayed on the basement walls were put in water baths to remove the dirt and debris, and then dried.

Most of the educational materials were housed in cardboard boxes and the Irving papers were stored in the shed in large Rubbermaid tubs stacked on top of one another, shelves, and a small loft. The water level in the shed rose to just under the top shelf and loft. Any materials that were stored above this line were unaffected, while those below received varying levels of damage.

Imam Taha Tawil noted that most of the books in the bookshelves in the basement were mostly modern copies of books and were thrown out or burned after being removed from the building. The Imam estimated that 80% of the collections removed from the basement were discarded. The materials that were housed in the shed were approximately 70% new materials (non-historic) and 30% historical texts, newspaper clippings, and the papers of Professor Irving. The photographs that were removed and treated initially were moved to an off-site location for storage and weren't included in this assessment.

## 3. Summary of Overall Collection Condition

Approximately 74 boxes of mostly paper-based material were assessed by the AIC CERT team. Of these, 49% (approximately 36 boxes) were in good condition, 7% (approximately 5 boxes) were fair to good condition, 5% (approximately 4 boxes) were in fair to poor condition, and 19% (14 boxes) were in poor condition. In general, where material had dried in the box without removal for air-drying, mold had taken hold. Many boxes were a mix of wet or damp material and dry, visibly moldy material. Very wet material (which was designated as in 'poor condition' and also 'critical'), while slick with dirty water, was still at a point where freezing or freeze-drying might make a difference.

The AIC CERT team decided to assign box numbers to boxes that contained areas of the collection that seemed to hold greater significance, and to boxes that had any condition issues to deal with.

Included in the above box count are approximately 35 boxes containing brochures, multiple copies of non-historic texts, and Irving's files that were entirely dry and in good condition. These were left *unnumbered* and stacked on the **left** side of the shed. Seven boxes of brochures and multiple copies of modern texts that were in very poor condition

(infestation, heavy mold) were also not numbered, but rather removed from the shed for recommended disposal.

Please see the Appendix for a detailed description of the material in numbered boxes.

#### **4. General Recommendations**

Ideally the boxes in damp or wet condition will be taken to a freeze dry facility where they would be vacuum freeze dried, irradiated for sanitation purposes and then cleaned. This should happen as soon as possible if the money is available and a list of disaster recovery businesses is attached to this report in case the opportunity arises.

However, it is most likely that this will be a volunteer undertaking and in that case the following actions are recommended:

1. The few tubs in which water remains should be drained. These items should be removed and rinsed if possible. They should then be packed in boxes lined with plastic garbage bags and taken to a freezer. If there is a meat locker or other facility with a large frost-free freezer space available it should be used to freeze all the wet/damp material to prevent mold from occurring or from spreading further in the documents. These items should be left in the freezer facility and dealt with a box at a time.
2. If no large locker facility can be found several chest-size, frost free freezers could be purchased and the papers of the Irving collection and other unique items could be placed in plastic garbage bags and frozen. We recommend that the size of the stacks of paper be kept 8" – 12" high so that when time is found for drying of the materials it is not such a large amount that it becomes unmanageable for the people drying or treating the papers.
3. As time and volunteers are found for drying the materials they will be removed from the freezer and laid out in a secure area with several fans to circulate air and speed the drying process. The materials will be separated into smaller and smaller stacks as they dry. The stacks can be interleaved with paper towels, uninked newsprint or blotter paper to aid in drying. While items are out the area should be kept as cool, light and dry as possible. Room dehumidifiers will aid in the drying and should be borrowed or purchased for the project.
4. When the paper is dry it should be vacuumed clean of any dirt and mold. This should be done with a HEPA vacuum to prevent the spread of mold and the sewage that is probably in the dirt. The people doing the vacuuming should wear N95 or N100 masks and gloves. If a HEPA vacuum is not available the vacuuming should be done outside in the open air while wearing the mask and gloves mentioned earlier.
5. Lastly something needs to be done to mitigate the danger present due to the papers' exposure to sewage from the river water.
  - a. The first recommendation is to have the papers treated at a facility that specializes in fumigation or irradiation of paper, one of the disaster



recovery vendors from the list may be able to provide the service after the materials are dried.

- b. Organize and scan all the materials so that access to the originals may be restricted. The originals can be boxed and housed separately and only those with a true scholarly need to see the originals allowed access to them with the use of mask and gloves as a requirement.

## **Appendix 1: Box by Box Condition Description**

The AIC CERT team decided to assign box numbers to boxes that contained areas of the collection that seemed to hold greater significance, and to boxes that had any condition issues to deal with.

General overall digital photographs were taken of the interiors of all numbered boxes. Their location as of the afternoon of August 24, 2008 was noted, and photographs were taken to help record the location of boxes in the shed.

**Box 1** Irving's Papers    Cardboard box

*Condition:* Good

Location: 3rd shelf of shed loft

- \* 3 Books, 20 journals, 30-50 documents
- \* Most documents enclosed in ziplocks

**Box 2** Irving's Papers    Cardboard box

*Condition:* Good

Location: 3rd shelf of shed loft

- \* Approx. 30-40 journals
- \* Approx. 10-20 typed manuscripts. 1 book

- \* Rust from paper clips present on many documents

**Box 3** Irving's Papers          Cardboard box

*Condition:* Good

Location: 3rd shelf of shed loft

- \* Approx. 10-20 books, 40-50 journals

**Box 4** Irving's Papers          Cardboard box

*Condition:* Good

Location: 3rd shelf of shed loft

- \* 10 books, approx. 20 journals

**Box 5**                                  Green plastic bin

*Condition:* Fair to poor

Location: right side of shed

- \* Approx. 40 -50 items including journals and leather-bound books
- \* Everything damp. Several books moldy, most distorted.
- \* Estimate: Approx. 30% salvageable

**Box 6**                                  Green plastic bin

*Condition:* Poor/critical

Location:

- \* 37 identical Qurans
- \* Many wrapped in muddy plastic (original packaging)
- \* Most very wet
- \* Some moldy along fore edges

**Box 7**                                  Grey plastic bin

*Condition:* Fair to poor

Location:

- \* 1 plastic clock (working)
- \* Approx. 25 Qurans or Hadiths
- \* Books near top are in good condition
- \* 6-8 books on bottom moldy on edge and can't be opened
- \* Estimate: 50% salvageable

**Boxes 8, 9, and 10** Green plastic bins

*Condition:* Poor

Location: Rear right-hand corner of shed (alongside shelves)

- \* Box 8: Folders of documents and correspondence, many in plastic bags
- \* Damp on top, wet on bottom
- \* Dried material covered in mud and moldy
- \* Estimate: Perhaps 30-50% salvageable

\* Boxes 9 and 10 were heavy and could only be peered into through small openings under lid. Assume contents are similar to Box 8 and condition same or worse.

**Box 11** Grey bin

Condition: Fair to good

Location: Lawn (too heavy to relocate)

- \* Approx. 100 items, mix of books and files
- \* Wet on bottom, those in middle feel dry.
- \* Do not **appear** moldy
- \* Recommend separating out wet from dry

**Box 12:** Grey bin

Condition: Fair to poor

Location: Lawn (too heavy to relocate)

- \* 15 Irving translation Qurans with active mold
- \* Approx. 20 little prayer books: dry and distorted, not moldy
- \* Small prayer books could be salvaged but perhaps would not have acceptable appearance.

**Box 13:** Grey bin

Condition: Fair to good

Location: Lawn (too heavy to relocate)

- \* Children's books, pamphlets, and 10 textbooks still in plastic packaging
- \* Hardbound books (Qurans?) sopping wet under plastic
- \* Wet material (plastic-covered books) removed from box. Box with remaining damp to dry material placed on left side of shed

**Box 14:** Smaller clear bin

Condition: Fair to poor

Location: Right side of shed

- \* Approx. 75 cassettes, most still packaged
- \* Muddy, and wet under packaging
- \* Recommend: Cleaning off surface of tapes with distilled water. If any are considered important enough, sending one trial tape to electronic material recovery company to see if audio can be recovered.

**Box 15:** Grey plastic bin

Condition: Poor

Location: Lawn (too heavy to relocate)

- \* Multiple copies of the Quran or religious texts
- \* All are damp to wet
- \* Fore edges of books covered in black mold
- \* Would need to irradiate to save

**Boxes 16** (gray bin), **17** (red bin), and **18** (green bin):

*Condition:* Poor and critical

Location: Front right corner of shed

- \* Documents and files, many in plastic bags
- \* All very wet, many slimy
- \* Very smelly, probably toxic with flood water
- \* Recommend: sorting through wearing protective equipment. Separate out important material, air dry. Either irradiate, or segregate in storage and label as toxic (requiring gloves and particle mask).

**Box 19:** Irving's files          Cardboard box

*Condition:* Good

Location: 3rd shelf in shed loft

- \* Mixed files, many in plastic

**Box 20:**          Green plastic bin

*Condition:* Fair to good

Location: Top of rear stack in rear left corner of shed

- \* Multiple copies of Quran
- \* Could not lift off of stack to sift through
- \* Top layers: appear in good condition

**Box 21:**          Grey plastic bin

*Condition:* Poor

Location: Top of bins in front of rear-most corner stack, rear left corner of shed

- \* Multiple copies of Qurans near top
- \* Too heavy to move down and sift through
- \* Very moldy and smelly
- \* Those visible appear unsalvageable

**Box 22:**          Green plastic bin

*Condition:* Poor

Location: 2nd in stack in rear left corner of shed

- \* Due to weight of box above, could only see top layer of contents
- \* Multiple hard-bound texts (Qurans?)
- \* Covered in dried mud
- \* Moldy and smelly
- \* Assumption: not salvageable

**Box 23:**          Green plastic bin

*Condition:* Poor

Location: Underneath Box 22 in rear left corner of shed

- \* Lowest bin in stack: full of water up to edge.
- \* Appears to contain multiple Qurans (could not lift lid to explore further due to weight above)

\* Books in smelly, toxic broth: anything valuable should be hosed off, dried, and irradiated

**Box 24:** Green plastic bin

*Condition:* fair to good

Location: Right side of shed

- \* 5 scrapbooks and several damp journals and books
- \* Can salvage contents of scrapbooks while still damp

**Box 25:** Green plastic bin

*Condition:* good

Location: Right side of shed

- \* Less than a quarter full of dry books

**Box. 26:** (Irving files) Pink plastic bin

Condition: Fair to good

- \* Mix of articles, typed manuscripts, brochures, and correspondence,
- \* Wet and in zip lock bags, many papers bound with rusty paperclips
- \* 2-5% moldy
- \* Contents given a 'test' salvage by AIC team members, as a demonstration. Papers air-dried over course of 36 hours, then returned to bin.

## **Appendix 2: Contact information for disaster recovery companies with freezing or freeze-drying capacities**

### **Freeze-drying:**

**Munters**      <http://www.munters.us/en/us/>

#### **Iowa and Minnesota District Office**

1800 East Cliff Road, Ste. 8

Burnsville, MN 55337

1-800-MUNTERS (686-8377)

1-952-831-9418

Fax 1-952-736-0115

<http://www.munters.us/en/us/>

**Belfor**      <http://www.us.belfor.com>

Nearest Responding Offices -

Chicago □ BELFOR USA □

650C Anthony Trail □

Northbrook, IL 60062-2542 □

Phone: 847-205-0580 □

FAX: 847-205-0582 □ □

**Kansas City** □

BELFOR USA □

112 Greystone Ave. □

Kansas City, KS 66103 □

Phone: 913-371-8200 □

FAX: 913-371-4600

For Iowa flooding, website recommended contacting David Cripe at 630-890-4100

### **Local Cold Storage Providers (for freezing only):**

Worley Warehousing, Inc.

[www.worleywarehousing.com](http://www.worleywarehousing.com)

319-365-5247

423 Southgate Ct SW

Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Millard Refrigerated Services

319-351-2090

2710 Highway 6 E

Iowa City, IA 52240

Crystal Distribution Services  
319-234-6606  
1656 Sycamore St  
Waterloo, IA 50703

Twin Rivers Storage  
319-526-5354  
625 N Y St  
Keokuk, IA 52632

Millard Refrigerated Services  
319-385-9948  
2227 E Commerce Dr  
Mount Pleasant, IA 52641



### **Appendix 3: Selection of possible funding sources**

#### Exhibit-related:

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)  
<http://www.neh.gov/grants/grants.html>

- America's Historical and Cultural Organizations Implementation Grants  
"America's Historical and Cultural Organizations implementation grants support traveling or long-term museum exhibitions, library-based projects, interpretation of historic places or areas, interpretive Web sites, or other project formats that creatively engage audiences in exploring humanities ideas and questions."

Deadline/s: January 23, 2008, August 27, 2008

- Interpreting America's Historic Places Grants  
"Interpreting America's Historic Places grants support public humanities projects that exploit the evocative power of historic places to address themes and issues central to American history and culture, including those that advance knowledge of how the founding principles of the United States have shaped American history and culture for more than two hundred years. Interpreting America's Historic Places projects may interpret a single historic site or house, a series of sites, an entire neighborhood, a town or community, or a larger geographical region... Project formats for Interpreting America's Historic Places planning grants might include visitor orientation exhibits, interpretive displays and labeling, revised scripts and content-based education training materials for docents, publications such as brochures or guidebooks, interpretive driving or walking trails or tours, annotated itineraries, trail signage, video or audio displays, on-site interactive media, and digital products."

Deadline/s: January 23, 2008, August 27, 2008

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)  
<http://www.ims.gov/applicants/name.shtm>

- Museums for America Grant  
"Museums for America grants are designed to be flexible: funds can be used for a wide variety of projects, including: ongoing museum work, research and other behind-the-scenes activities, planning, new programs, purchase of equipment or services, and activities that will support the efforts of museums to upgrade and integrate new technologies."

Deadline: November 1, 2008

## **Conservation Planning/Assessment**

- NEH Preservation Assistance Grants

For conservation consultants, planning, storage furniture, environmental monitoring, related training.

“Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions, such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, arts and cultural organizations, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities, improve their ability to preserve and care for their humanities collections.”

Deadline: New guidelines available in winter 2009 for 2010

- IMLS Conservation Assessment Program Grant

“The general conservation assessment (unlike a detailed collection survey) provides an overview of all of the museum’s collections as well as its environmental conditions and policies and procedures relating to collections care.”

Deadline: December 8, 2008

## **Conservation Treatment**

- NEH Challenge Grants

“NEH challenge grants help institutions and organizations secure long-term improvements in and support for their humanities programs and resources ... Challenge grants most commonly augment or establish endowments that support humanities activities in education, public programming, scholarly research, and preservation.”

Deadline: May 1, 2008

- Bank of America/IMLS American Heritage Preservation Program

“Grants will help to preserve specific items, including works of art, artifacts and historical documents that are in need of conservation.”

**Deadline:** September 15, 2008

- IMLS Connecting to Collections Statewide Planning Grants

“The Statewide Planning Grants, an important component of the Connecting to Collections initiative, aim to foster partnerships among organizations in a state, commonwealth, or territory to implement recommendations of the Heritage Health Index... Over the next two years, IMLS intends to award a grant to each eligible state, commonwealth, or territory to advance their collective conservation goals guided by the Heritage Health Index recommendations.”

Deadline: October 16, 2008

- Conservation Project Support

“The Conservation Project Support program awards grants to help museums identify conservation needs and priorities, and perform activities to ensure the safekeeping of their collections.”

Deadline: October 1, 2008

Religion-Related:

- The Luce Foundation’s Theology Program

<http://www.hluce.org/theologyprog.aspx>

The Luce Foundation’s Theology Program encourages the development of religious leaders through theological education, and fosters scholarship that links the academy to religious communities and other audiences.