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I found my internship at Millard's Crossing Historic Village, Inc. in Nacogdoches, Texas during March and April 2010 intriguing. I was given two tasks, first to sort through boxes of items belonging to Lera Millard Thomas, Albert Thomas and their two daughters. My second task was to catalog the items into Past Perfect Software under the guidance of Assistant Professor Dr. Jennifer Perky Beisel at Stephen F. Austin State University, who is also on the board of directors for Millard's Crossing.

Lera Millard was born in 1900 in Nacogdoches, Texas. She married Albert Thomas in 1922 prior to his graduation at the University of Texas law school. They only spent a short time together in Nacogdoches before he became the United States district attorney for the southern district of Texas and moved to Houston with Lera from 1930-1936. The family then moved to Washington D.C when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1936 and remained so until his death in 1966. Lera took over his position as Senator until January 1967. She then returned to Nacogdoches and started what has now become Millard's Crossing Historic Village that she worked at creating until her death in 1993. We divided the lives of the Thomas's into nine categories by years. Then the items were placed into the category it best fit into. The work of sorting was time consuming because most of the items were documents; many of them had to be read in order to determine what category they were to be put into. Although this took many hours it was very interesting and brought insight into the life of Lera Millard Thomas who owned most of the documents. I found some very intriguing items such as her yearbooks for her junior and senior years at Nacogdoches High School. Another memorable item was a commemorative scarf for the Apollo I mission that had all of the Astronauts in the NASA program at that times signatures.

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After all of the sorting was completed it was time to set up the Past Perfect Software for museum collections management that was purchased with grant money for Millard's Crossing. We started by adding the categories that became collections in the software program. The collections were easy to create. We assigned numbers for each collection and put details in for each. Then it was time to enter each item in the computer into its appropriate collection. Items of high interest were scanned and the image uploaded to the program for ease of finding the items during inventory or research. Each item was assigned its own number and a detailed description was recorded. This is a slow process but I found it is best done with a partner. One person inputs the information into the computer and the other person makes the file, places the item in its file and puts it away while the first is typing in and scanning the next item. My partner and I accessioned about 100 items. The Past Perfect Software is user friendly for anyone with simple computer knowledge and it is easy to correct mistakes that are made with its editing capability. I enjoyed putting the items into the computer and found it simple to operate.

I gleaned much during this internship and found many experiences enlightening. The amount of time to properly sort items into their proper collection is time consuming and others doing the same task can undo the work of many others in a short period of time. Sometimes the interpretations made by individuals can vary. For example, when deciding what collection an item should be in people can interpret different. When this happens it can be discouraging when the work of others is undone or ones task is not done correctly. For example, finding an envelope with a post mark of 1982 in the collection of items from 1900 can be disheartening. This results in wasted time and frustrations as is found in most group projects. This gave me great insight into why in most museums this work is done by one individual or one person is in charge and provides close supervision. This job would not be well suited to a group of volunteers. The

lexicon in Past Perfect Software keeps the names of items the same so a bucket and pail will have the same name and can be found easily. If someone is not familiar with the lexicon or does not search through it enough to find the name of an item, one can be brought to think the item is not in the lexicon and then bring it upon oneself to add new names to the list. Another big problem is having adequate time to train everyone due to their varying schedules; this would be true with volunteers at a museum. Some institutions such as Millard's Crossing have no choice but to use volunteers for all tasks including accessioning items. Even if mistakes are made, nothing is permanent and they can be corrected. Working with a partner not only speeds up the process but can help take the confusion out of accessioning an item because we each have a different knowledge base and partners can work out the problems they encounter. Also if two persons are accessioning and a question arises there is a better chance of one remembering or if someone leaves the program the answer can be found. This would be extremely helpful if using volunteers. Over all I found this to be a rewarding experience and would like to do this type of task again in the future.

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