

Cataloging Legacy Artifacts at the Lawshe Memorial Museum

Initiative status update by Keith Myhre

On November 20, 2012 Lockheed Martin (LMCO) in Eagan officially turned over Legacy artifacts to Chad Roberts, Executive Director of the Dakota County Historical Society (DCHS). These artifacts included computers, workstations, PCs/displays, miscellaneous equipment such as drum memories & disk platters, as well as memorabilia, documents/brochures/manuals, photographs, transparencies and 35 mm slides filling over 100 archive boxes. John Westergren coordinated the shipment to the museum in South St. Paul. His career summary is <http://vipclubmn.org/People7.html#Westergren>.

What has happened since then? Read on!

VIP Club volunteers at LMCO suspended their cataloging of documents, negatives, and photos until the DCHS acceptance 'check-in' process could be established.

The artifacts arrived at Lawshe Memorial Museum in December 2012 on 18 pallets; whereupon DCHS employee Andrew Fox began "Accessioning in View" the artifacts, funded by a state legacy grant DCHS received through the Minnesota Historical Society. Accessioning is the process of adding items to a museum's existing collection of artifacts. Each item was assigned a number and stored in the museum's collections. <http://vipclubmn.org/Articles/LMCOLegacyProject.pdf>.



In March 2013 cataloging restarted at Lawshe, while Andrew continued accessioning artifacts until he completed that fall. Harvey Taipale led a small group setting up five laptop workstations for cataloging. Cataloging entails identifying each item with a number or name and then entering whatever information is discernible: system/equipment, project, date, comments/description, names of people in photos/slides, physical location of item, etc. See a DCHS newsletter article for some of the process: <http://vipclubmn.org/Articles/LockheedMartinVolunteers.pdf>

Up until then, VIP Club volunteer cataloging had been done using an Excel spreadsheet, which is not the optimal data storage structure. Keith Myhre proceeded to design a Microsoft Access database and convert the Excel worksheet data into corresponding Access tables. Cutover to the "DCHS UNIVAC Legacy Artifact Catalog" database was accomplished in November 2013. All data entry since that time has been into this database, integrated with the converted Excel data. <http://vipclubmn.org/Articles/DreamRealization.pdf>.

In 2013, Harvey Taipale and Keith Myhre also aided the museum staff in preparing a second Legacy Grant request to create storyboard posters to tell the story of ERA/UNIVAC/Unisys/Lockheed in Minnesota, as well as putting together a scanning station to digitize photos, slides, and documents. The Legacy Grant was awarded in December 2013 with work by Andrew Fox beginning early 2014.

Established in 1980

A portion of the grant funds was used by Andrew and Keith Myhre to put together a scanning station configuration that has been heavily used since then:

1. Dell Precision D5500 computer (donated by Lockheed Martin)
2. Dell 1901FP monitor (donated by Lockheed Martin)
3. Kodak PS80 Picture Saving Scanning System (self-feed scanner, scans both sides of photo)
4. Epson V700 Pro flatbed scanner (scans twelve 35 mm slides at a time)
5. Synology DS1513+ DiskStation (RAID 1 configuration with two 4 terabyte disk drives)



On September 8, 2015, the Club celebrated with an open house at the Lawshe Memorial Museum to recognize the museum staff's and volunteers' efforts in completion of this second Minnesota Legacy Grant to develop posters and exhibit support material. We've linked 16 posters from the topics' listings in section 2 of our exhibits page: <http://vipclubmn.org/Exhibits.html#Lawshe>.

On September 13, 2018, the Club sponsored an Open House and Legacy Display at the Lawshe Memorial Museum to celebrate Phase I of a State of Minnesota grant to develop a Minnesota Computing History Project website [<https://mncomputinghistory.com>] led by University of Minnesota researcher Liz Semler, as well preproduction of a Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) documentary of the history of computing in Minnesota.

Phase II, funded by another Legacy Grant and the Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA), resulted in production by TPT of a one hour documentary entitled "Solid State: Minnesota's High-Tech History": <https://www.tpt.org/solid-state/>.

A dozen VIP Club IT Pioneers were interviewed by TPT producer Kevin Dragseth for the documentary that premiered October 8, 2019 at TPT's studios in downtown St. Paul [<http://vipclubmn.org/Articles/TPTclips.pdf>]. Interviewees were invited to the premiere hosted by the Minnesota High Tech Association. Unisys, Eagan was one of the premiere sponsors.

Since the initial delivery of artifacts from Lockheed Martin, numerous items have been donated or loaned to Lawshe Museum. Significant items include:

- Air Traffic Control ARTS II display console
- Air Traffic Control Input/Output Processor (IOP) used by FAA (donated by Lockheed Martin)
- AN/USQ-69 alphanumeric shipboard display (long-term loan to Lawshe Museum from the U.S. Navy)
- AN/UYK-43 shipboard computer (long-term loan to Lawshe Museum from the U.S. Navy)
- CP-2044 P-3C airborne computer (donated by Lockheed Martin in Clearwater, Florida)

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As of September 8th, 2020, almost 40,000 items donated to the Charles Babbage Institute and DCHS have been cataloged in the Microsoft Access database:

- 35 mm slides (all at DCHS) -- 8,689
- Documents/brochures/manuals/etc. – 4,184
- Failure Analysis photographs (DCHS)/negatives (CBI) -- 4,333
- Photographs (DCHS)/Negatives (CBI) -- 18,435
- Public Relations photographs (DCHS)/negatives (CBI) -- 1,817
- Publications (newsletters, etc.) – 2,400+

Current efforts are focused on cataloging 1,000+ more failure analysis photos, recently donated photos & documents, and scanning/cataloging several thousand more 35 mm slides. The slides are scanned before cataloging since it's easier to identify items/people on a computer screen than squinting at a slide on a light box. So far 8,689 35 mm slides and 12,724 photographs (25,448 TIFF images – front & back) have been scanned. Approximately 300 man-hours have been expended to manually rename the 25,448 images with file names corresponding to Microsoft Access database entries so that the images can be linked to the database and viewed when searching the database.

Yet to be tackled are 1,000+ photo transparencies, video tapes, and CD/DVDs. A longer-term goal is to scan all the photographs so that they can be viewed online, as well as the 35 mm slides being scanned now. Beyond that, scanning of documents, brochures, manuals, and the like would allow online access to them as well.

The VIP Club volunteer crew is currently comprised of Keith Myhre, Bob Pagac, Les Nelson, Jon Simon, and Greg Oxley (also the DCHS Board of Trustees Vice President). If you would like to visit on a Tuesday (when the museum is closed to the public) to see how and what the volunteers are cataloging, contact any of them prior to your visit to make sure one of them will be at the museum to show you around both the work station area and the larger artifact display area.

If you would like to visit Lawshe Memorial Museum or other DCHS facilities, check their website for open days/hours: www.dakotahistory.org/lawshe-memorial-museum.

Author: Keith's career summary is at <http://vipclubmn.org/People5.html#Myhre>.

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