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Need for New Esva Heritage Center Highlighted in Consultant's Report



Photo: Leigh Grinstead, an archival consultant from Lyrasis, trains library staff member, Jazmine Collins, in techniques for handling and storing historic papers.

(ACCOMAC, VIRGINIA) May 17, 2019 – Eastern Shore Public Library recently hosted an archives consultant to evaluate the preservation needs of the library's local history collections. The consultant was funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant. The grant also included a half-day workshop for library staff and representatives from Shore museums. The outcome of the consultant's day two day visit was to produce a twenty-nine page report on the observations of the collections. The report made recommendations to ensure preservation of the collections which includes their organization, storage, and access.

The Eastern Shore Public Library's local history and archives collections include the books in the Eastern Shore Room; the Eastern Shore Room Collections of materials donated to the library or collected over the past forty years by the librarian Miles Barnes, now retired; and the recently acquired Frances Bibbins Latimer Collection and the Kirk Mariner Collection. The Latimer and Mariner collections are not stored at the library in Accomac due to space limitations. The library is planning to build the Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center at the new regional library in Parksley, opening in late 2020.

The consultant's report identified numerous threats to the collections that will be resolved once the collections are moved to the new facility. Current Accomac library storage issues highlighted in the report include inadequate and congested space, water leaks, masonry damage, fluctuations in temperature and humidity, and numerous other faults with the building. The report also recommended new equipment. The library's Foundation recently applied to another federal grant to fund this equipment that will help with storage, security, and digitization projects.

“This report is an important first step in ensuring our Shore’s valuable archival treasures are here for future generations,” stated Cara Burton, Library Director. “In addition to learning about our collection needs, staff began training to learn how to teach the public ways to preserve their own family collections. This is one of our goals for programming in the new Heritage Center: to teach Shore residents to be family archivists, genealogists, and historians.”

To learn more about the planned Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center, visit shorelibrary.com. To learn more about the library’s history resources, visit espl.org or call the library at 757-787-3400.

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