

ABSTRACT

A Wall to Wall Treasure Hunt: The Bell County Museum.

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Mentor: Julie Holcomb, Ph. D.

This professional internship experience spanned the summer months of 2022 and focused on a wall-to-wall inventory of the Bell County Museum's off-site collection storage facility. The inventory consisted mainly of glass and kitchenware, farming tools, medical objects, and oversized objects like furniture. The work included updating PastPerfect entries, photographs, locations, rehousing, and documenting Found In Collection (FIC) objects. I also participated in the construction of an in-house exhibit and set-up of a traveling exhibit. To gain a better understanding of the museum's relationship with the community and its goals I attended a board meeting and collections committee meeting. This report provides details to the work completed during the internship.

by

Approved by the Department of Museum Studies

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts

Approved by the

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My professional internship took place at the Bell County Museum in Waco, TX from May 17, 2022 to August 6, 2022. During that time my main project was a wall-to-wall inventory of the museum's offsite warehouse which housed oversized objects and anything that was not textiles, books, archival, or art. To achieve this, I created an excel spreadsheet for documentation and drew a map of the warehouse to track my progress. I also updated descriptions, locations, and photos in PastPerfect. As I progressed further in the warehouse, I used more of my own discretion to rehouse an item, change its nomenclature name, or flag it for possible deaccessioning if I thought it was necessary. Another important aspect of the inventory project was flagging all FICs and creating a database with all their photos as well as anomalies.

This project allowed me to exercise my knowledge on tackling FICs and the deaccessioning process. I feel much more confident about dealing with unmanaged aspects of collections. I also became much more familiar with the nomenclature system and queries and keyword searches in PastPerfect. The only major difficulty I had with the inventory project was the monotony of certain shelving sections that seemed like they would never end. Fortunately, this was not too much of an issue because I had some other smaller projects to break up my time spent at the warehouse.

The second set of projects I had were exhibit related which I was really excited about because assisting with an exhibit construction was one of my goals for the internship. The first exhibit was an in-house exhibit called "Electric Bell County" which showed how life changed in the county when electricity was introduced. First, I helped pack up the traveling exhibit which was occupying the space, then I removed nails, spackled walls, sanded, and painted. Then I helped curate the list of potential objects and devising a floor plan. I learned to check for ADA compliances, how to 'texture' a display, and create themes throughout the exhibit that tie back to

the title. It took us about two weeks from deconstruction of the traveling exhibit to completion and opening night of the in-house exhibit.

Because I am trained in the proper methods of handling artifacts it was a little painful to see how some of the larger artifacts were handled as they were moved from the warehouse to the main museum. As a county museum the Bell County Museum has access to county Maintenance so they frequently use them to help move large things. While this is nice for the budget, it was not exactly best practice. The curator did her best to oversee the move and thankfully nothing was damaged.

The next exhibit required much less time. It was a community exhibit of local artists that was traveling to local museums. It consisted of framed art which the curator taught me how to hang at optimal viewing height. My other project was preparing storage cabinets for housing a collection of hats. The cabinets needed cleaning, archival padding, and to be labeled. I also created little tags that were meant to remain in the cabinet when the object was removed. That way its place would not be accidentally taken by a different object if it was out on display for a prolonged period of time.

An area I really got to utilize my coursework knowledge was a collections numbering document I created for the museum to begin building a procedures packet for volunteers. It was a little harder than I anticipated to write out descriptions for best practice procedures. I had to remind myself that common knowledge in the museum field most likely is not known to new volunteers.

I was not able to practically use the “Deaccessioning Today” book very much throughout the internship mostly because it discussed a lot of things that would require the input of the

director and therefore was above my position to frequently engaged in. But it was a very good conversation piece for the curator and I. We compared the advice and best practices in the book to the actual operations of the museum. Overall, I was very satisfied with the internship. I met all my goals, was given challenging and engaging projects, and the staff was always willing to have thorough discussions with me about any questions I had.

The background image shows the exterior of the Bell County Museum. It features a large, curved glass-enclosed porch with a white frame and dark metal supports. To the right, a wall is covered with numerous dark, irregularly shaped objects, possibly fossils or mineral specimens, mounted on a light-colored background. In the foreground, there are several stone benches and a small sculpture of a bull's head.

A Wall to Wall Treasure Hunt: The Bell County Museum

Michelle Skroch



Museum Background

History

- Library built in 1905 and Museum founded in 1975

Mission Statement

- The Bell County Museum exists to engage and educate the community by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the prehistoric and historic heritage of Bell County.

• Not Numbered

Projects and Goals

- Internship was collections focused
- Inventory Project
- Exhibit experience
- Board Meeting
- Collections Committee Meeting

Table

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Heat Store

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Heat Store

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Store

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Loom

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							5 Cut Door
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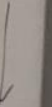
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9	8	8	
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Supplies

Research



Roll-Up Door



Inventory Project

91-45.2	Chain link - " " " " " "	2 1/2 x 4 " link	used to join 2 chains. General	35E	"
91-45.3	Chain link - " " " " " "	7/8 x 1/2 " loop	used for gate latch	35E	"
91-45.4	Pin - " " " " " "	7/8 x 1/2 " loop	" " " " ?	35E	"
91-45.5	Pin " " " " " "	7/8 x 1/2 " loop	used for gate or barn	35E	"
91-45.6	Pin " " " " " "	4 3/4 x 4 x 2 1/2	possibly used as stake	35E	"
91-45.7	Implement " " " " " "	16 x 16 x 3 " loop	probably used to tie up different things	35E	"
91-45.8	Hook with Chain " " " " " "	4" x 3 1/2"	used to secure gate to post	35E	"
91-45.9	Gate Latch " " " " " "	7 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 2 1/2	Handle for Gate	35E	"
91-45.10	Gate Handle " " " " " "	13 1/2 x 1 x 3 1/2	To secure gate to post	35E	"
91-45.11	Gate Latch " " " " " "	Dunlop pronged Hook for hog chain		35E	"
91-45.12	hog Chain Hook hand forged ca. 1905	large pin with 4" screw prongs on end		35E	"
91-45.13	Gate Holder - Hand forged ca. 1905	5 1/2 x 1 1/2" adjustant wheel in center		35E	Found in old collection
91-46.1	Postet Wrench - Horse Mfg. ca. 1902	8" x 3/4"	30" special not adjustable	35E	"
91-47.1	Crescent Wrench - Mfg. by Williams ca. 1901	3 1/2" diameter with 3 1/4" bar		35E	"
91-48.1	Horse Harness Ring with bar. hand forged	20" long	tung's hinged on end & bent for hook	35E	"
91-49.1	Blacksmith's Tongs - probably hand forged	16 1/2 x 8 1/2	possibly hand forged nut & bolt tool	35E	"
91-50.1	Crescent wrench with bolt tool on one end	9" long in taper to 3/4" on bolt end		35E	"
91-51.1	Crescent wrench with bolt tool with 430			35E	"
91-52.1	Bow Saw - metal blade, cutlet 27", wooden side arms and cross piece. One side piece is old axe handle fair condition			72A	Tom Knowles Hayes
91-53.1	Saddle - wooden cantle covered tee, narrow fork, high cantle, square skirts, raw straps. Bought in			72A	



Collection		Date	ca. 1900
Object ID	1992.019.0002	Year Range	
Object Name	Scoop	Catalog Date	
Other Name		Cataloged by	
Other#		Status Date	/ /
Old#		Status by	
Accession#	1992.019	Status	
Home Location	Warehouse		

History

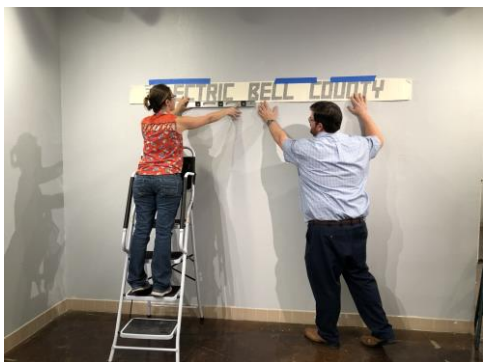
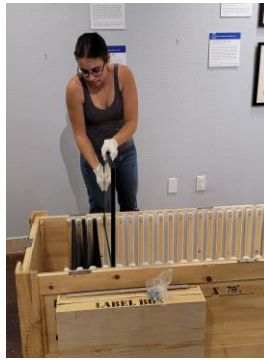
☐ Archaeology
☐ Art
☐ Geology
☒ History

Description

Grain scoop/belonged to [REDACTED] who farmed in the Killeen area and Salado/born in Llano Co. in 1883 and moved to Bell County ca. 1898/donor remembers seeing her father using the scoop for grain/29" handle/16 x 14" scoop



Electric Bell County



Bell County Museum's Newest Exhibit

ELECTRIC BELL COUNTY

ELECTRICITY CHANGED EVERYTHING

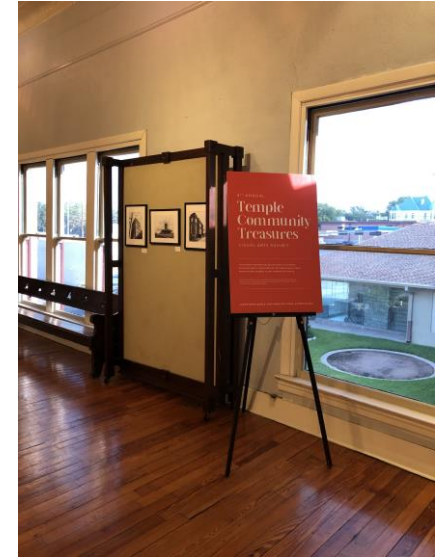
JULY 1
TO
JANUARY 7

BELL COUNTY MUSEUM
201 N MAIN
BELTON

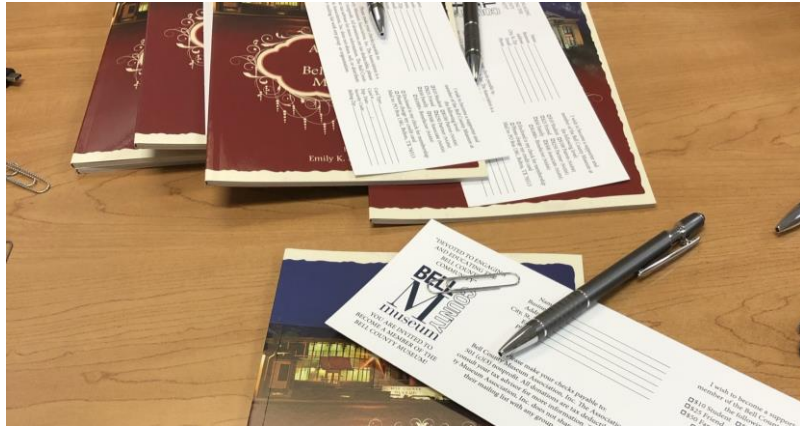
Coleman Hampton · 1st
Executive Director, Bell
County Museum
5d · 🌐

Always excited to create
community focused exhibits.
"Electric Bell County" features
electric and pre-electric objects
in our collection and tells the
story of electricity coming to TX
and Bell County.
[#bellcountymuseum](#)

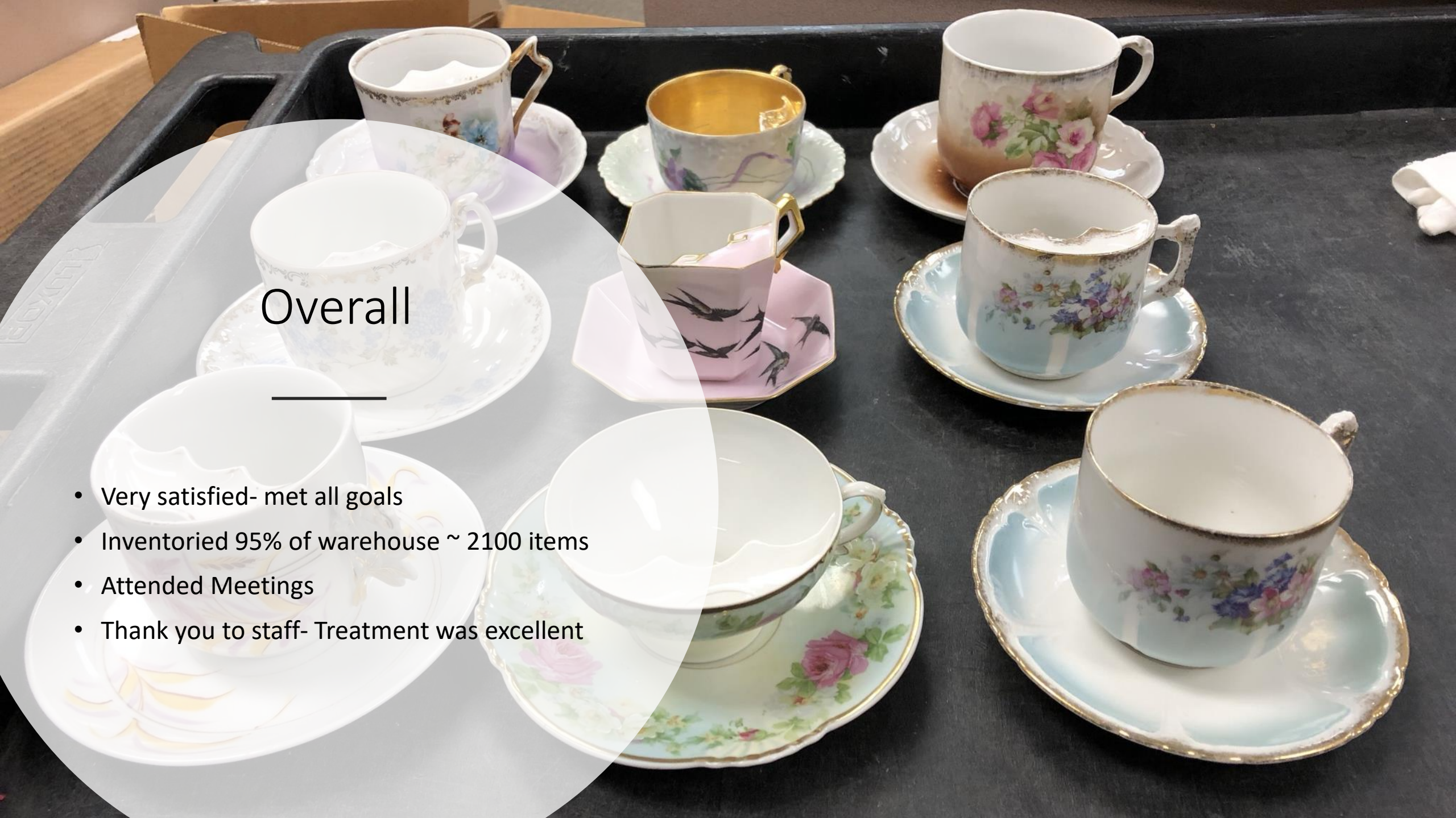




Temple Community Treasures

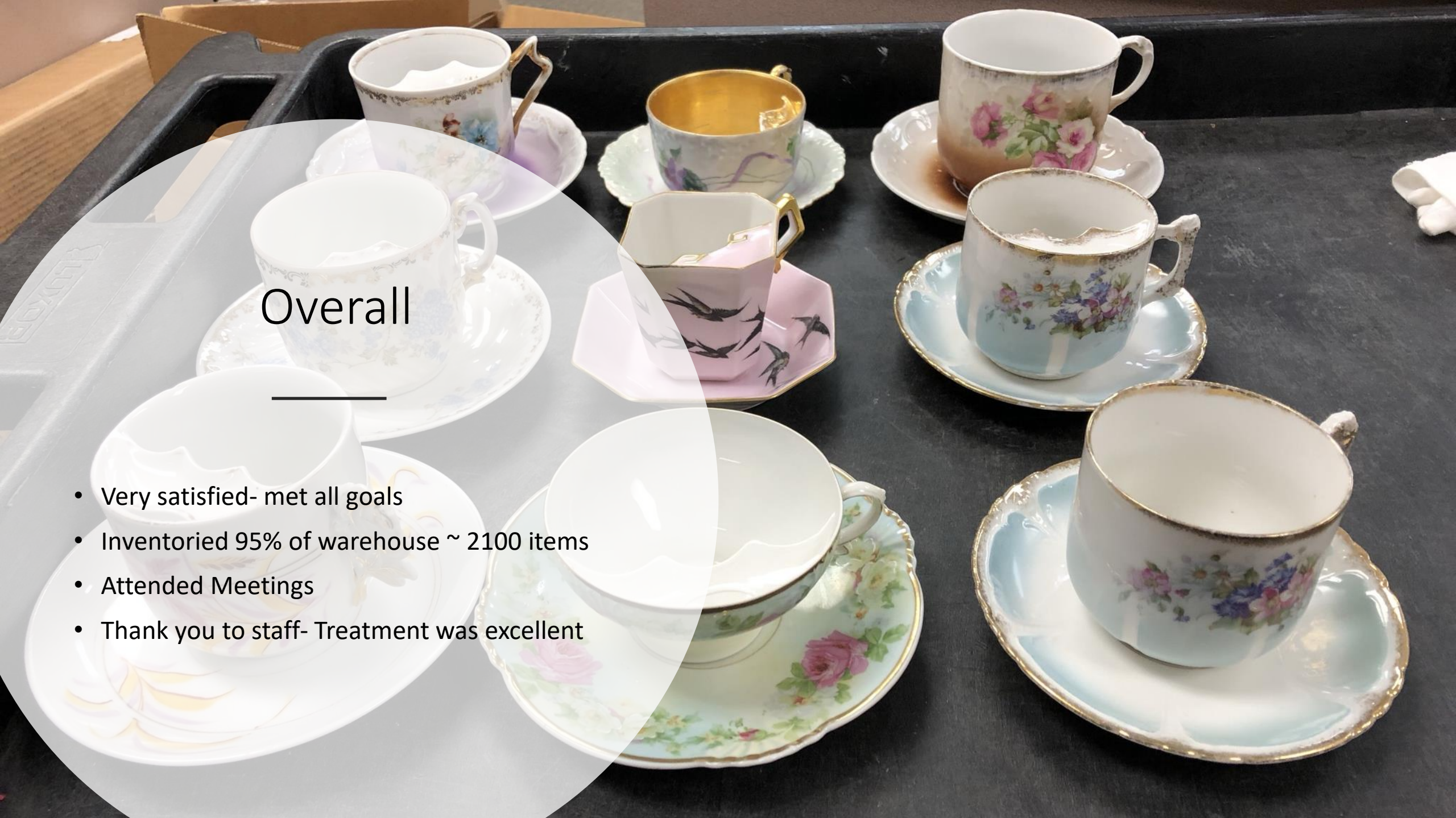


The Small Things



Overall

- Very satisfied- met all goals
- Inventoried 95% of warehouse ~ 2100 items
- Attended Meetings
- Thank you to staff- Treatment was excellent

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