



Preservation Foundation *of the Lake County Forest Preserves*

DATE: August 11, 2021

MEMO TO: Nels Leutwiler, Chair
Preservation Foundation Board

FROM: Nan Buckardt
Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$4,841 grant from unrestricted funds to digitize the Bess Bower Dunn Museum's Orson V. Young Collection and Company B, 96th Illinois Infantry Collection.

FINANCIAL DATA: This Preservation Foundation grant will provide matching funds to a \$4,840 grant from the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board, received in June.

As of June 30, 2021, the Preservation Foundation had \$301,882 in unrestricted funding. Staff anticipates raising an additional \$58,000 by December 31.

The total of grants payable from unrestricted funds is: \$11,798 (2021); \$100,965 (2022) and \$57,350 (2023).

BACKGROUND: Civil War related objects and archival materials are a primary focus of the Dunn Museum collection. From 1861 to 1865, more than 1,900 Lake County men volunteered for the cause. From a total population of approximately 18,000, this represented 11% of Lake County residents at the time.

The Civil War remains one the most studied periods in American history. With the war's continued relevance, it is imperative that the Dunn Museum make its Civil War materials available to historians, teachers, students, and history enthusiasts. Though the public can access these primary source documents in-person by appointment or walk-in hours in the Teich Family Reading Room, digitization exponentially increases their reach and utility. Digitized collections are made available to the public through the Illinois Digital Archives (IDA).

Orson V. Young Collection, Company D, 96th Illinois (BBDM 92.33)

Orson V. Young was 16 when he enlisted from Newport Township in Lake County. He was eventually promoted to sergeant and, though wounded in the heel at the Battle of Chickamauga (September 20, 1863), remained with the command. "Although one of the youngest men in the Company, he was never absent from duty and participated in every battle and skirmish in which the Regiment was engaged." The collection is comprised of letters from Young to the family at home, as well as photographs and documents that have been fully transcribed but not digitized. The documents reveal Young's strong opinions about a peace with slavery still intact, about

emancipation, and the lack of letters coming from home. Young's letters provide researchers insight into the "common soldier" and his motivations for fighting. The letters complement the museum's Minto Family Collection, by providing additional perspective on the regiment's role in the war and his comrades.

Company B, 96th Illinois Infantry Collection (BBDM 92.34)

The official records of Company B, 96th Illinois provide insight into the military service of its men. The 334 documents include muster rolls, quartermaster reports, and leaves of absence. Records vary in size from large muster rolls, which must be scanned in sections, to documents with information on both sides of the paper, to several booklets with upwards of 10 pages or more. This collection has not been transcribed, so it is currently only accessible to Dunn Museum staff and researchers under direct staff supervision. When available online it will be useful to military historians and as a genealogical resource. These official records are a valuable resource for details of the company's inner workings and often provide rare insight into an individual soldier's service.

A \$4,841 grant from the Preservation Foundation will provide matching funds to a \$4,840 grant from the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board. The two grants will be used to increase the hours of Steve Ferrigan (350 hours over 12 months) to complete digitization of both collections and make these collections available on IDA. Mr. Ferrigan has been a regular, part-time employee at the Dunn Museum since 1999 and has served as digitizer since 2003. Mr. Ferrigan has completed many similar projects over his 18 years with the District and has the experience and skill to complete this work.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Operations Officer, Chief Development Officer/Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation.

PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:

Date: _____

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: _____ Nays: _____
Voice Vote Majority Ayes: _____ Nays: _____