

**TITUSVILLE, PA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S**  
**PAST PERFECT PROCESSING MANUAL**

The historical society follows DACS requirements for a single-level description when entering records into Past Perfect because it is “a database record in a repository’s collection management database that describes archival material only at a single level” (DACS, 2007, p. 8). The items needed to locate and populate in the Past Perfect records include, at minimum:

- Reference Code (DACS 2.1)
- Name and Location of Repository (DACS 2.2)
- Title (DACS 2.3)
- Date (DACS 2.4)
- Extent (DACS 2.5)
- Name of Creator(s) (DACS 2.6)
- Scope and Content (DACS 3.1)
- Access Conditions (DACS 4.1)
- Language (DACS 4.5)

We will also include the following DACS elements in our Past Perfect records to provide the optimum description:

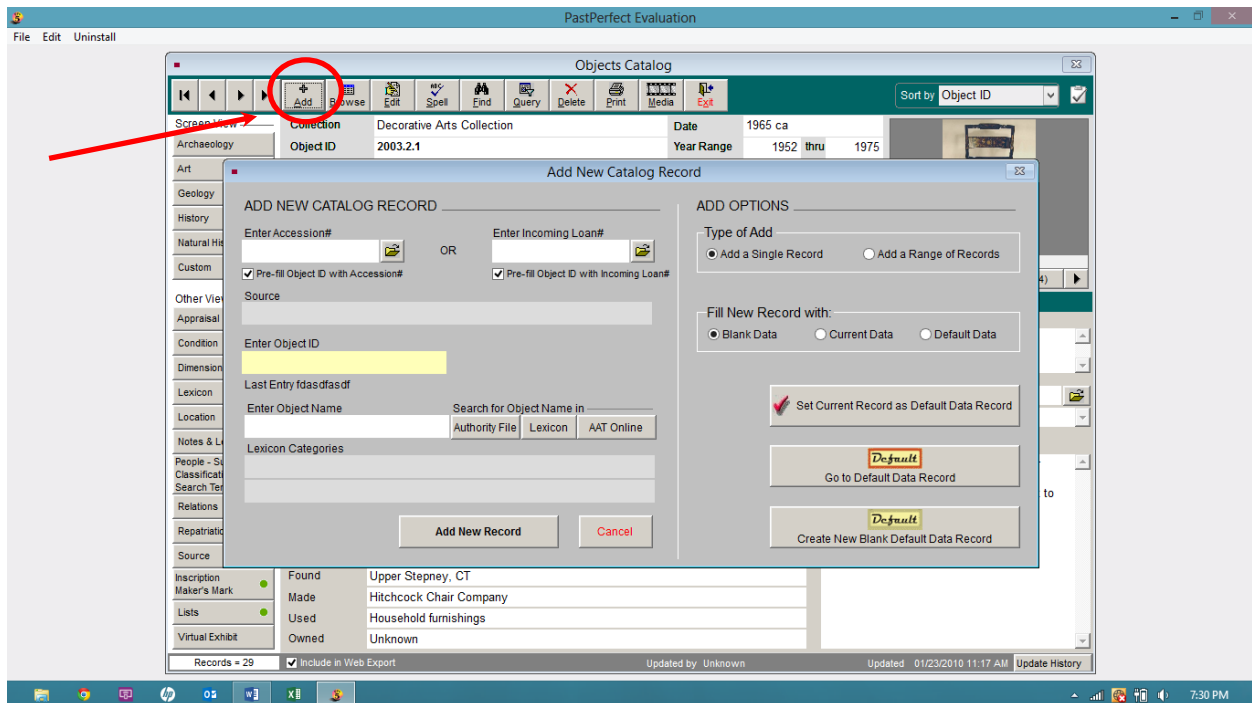
- Administrative/Biographical History (DACS 2.7)
- Access Points

The following are explanations on how to complete the required fields, in the order you will come across them in Past Perfect. Explanations for why are also provided. Please do not guess

if you are in doubt about your entries. Do not be afraid to ask. If you have any questions, please be sure to ask the volunteer coordinator.

\* \* \* \* \*

Begin by clicking the Add button at the home screen to add a catalog record.



\*\*Screen shot of Add New Catalog Record screen (↑).

**Reference Code** We are a local historical society, not part of any consortium or larger group, so the repository and country identifiers found in larger institutions are not requirements for us (DACS, 2007, p. 13). The only number needed is the accession number, which Past Perfect calls both the Object ID and Access numbers. These numbers get entered at the opening pop-up immediately after pressing the Add button.

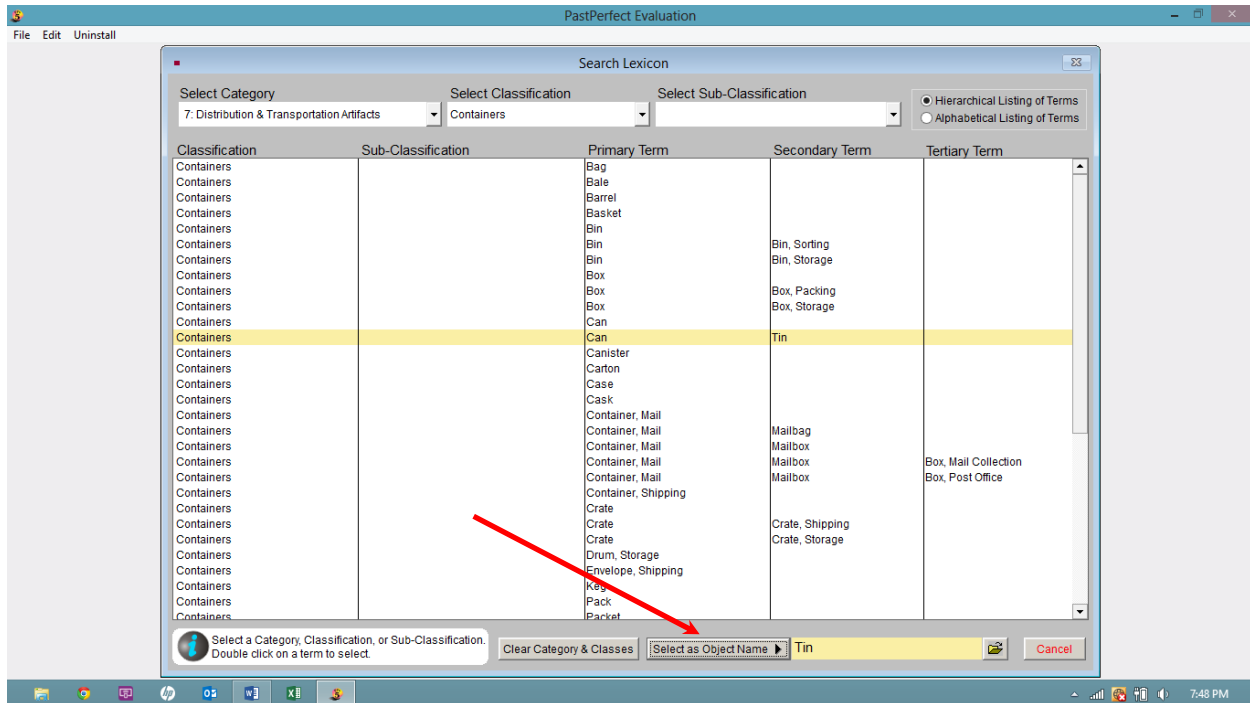
**Title** Although known as the collection's name when working with traditional finding aids, Past Perfect sees this as the object name, and prompts you to enter it in the initial pop-up when creating the record. We use Past Perfect's installed Lexicon as the controlled vocabulary since the software does not recognize Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and other standard vocabularies without adding the words to the Lexicon's dictionary, although there is a link to AAT next to the Lexicon's button. We ask that you consult AAT using the link provided to narrow your choices when a word's common name could confuse the object's true name.

- *Example:* It was necessary to determine if an apothecary tin was a container for transporting or an object used in a trade. A search in AAT Online for "apothecary" showed the container was considered a placeholder, and thus a common name based on use and not the main/standard object's name. Looking above apothecary container in the hierarchy to the first entry not in "< >" shows the item name to look for in the Lexicon. You would enter the common name into the Other Name field.

The image consists of two side-by-side screenshots of the Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) website. The left screenshot shows the search interface with the search term 'apothecary' entered in the 'Find Term or ID:' field. A red arrow points to the search button. The right screenshot shows the search results for 'apothecary containers' with a hierarchy of terms and a red arrow pointing to the preferred term 'apothecary containers'.

\*\*Screen shot of AAT for apothecary containers – guide term for containers (↑).

Double click on the name you wish to use as the object's title name and press the Select as Object Name button.



\*\*Screen shot of Lexicon for containers – tin can (↑), which provided the item name Tin.

### **Main Screen:**

**Fill in the Collection field from the finding aid that accompanies the object.**

**Fill in your name in the Cataloged By field.**

**Language** Enter the language found in the material in the **Other Name field** if there is one represented. If you previously entered a common name in the Other Name field, move it to the Search Terms field located in the People-Subjects-Classification-Search Terms screen (discussed in detail later in the manual). Language takes precedence over a common name.

**Date** Past Perfect allows us to specify dates in the upper right corner of the record: (1) the date the catalog record was created (Catalog field), and (2) the date the item was created (Date field).

DACS allows for both types to be used when describing items (DACS, 2007, p. 24).

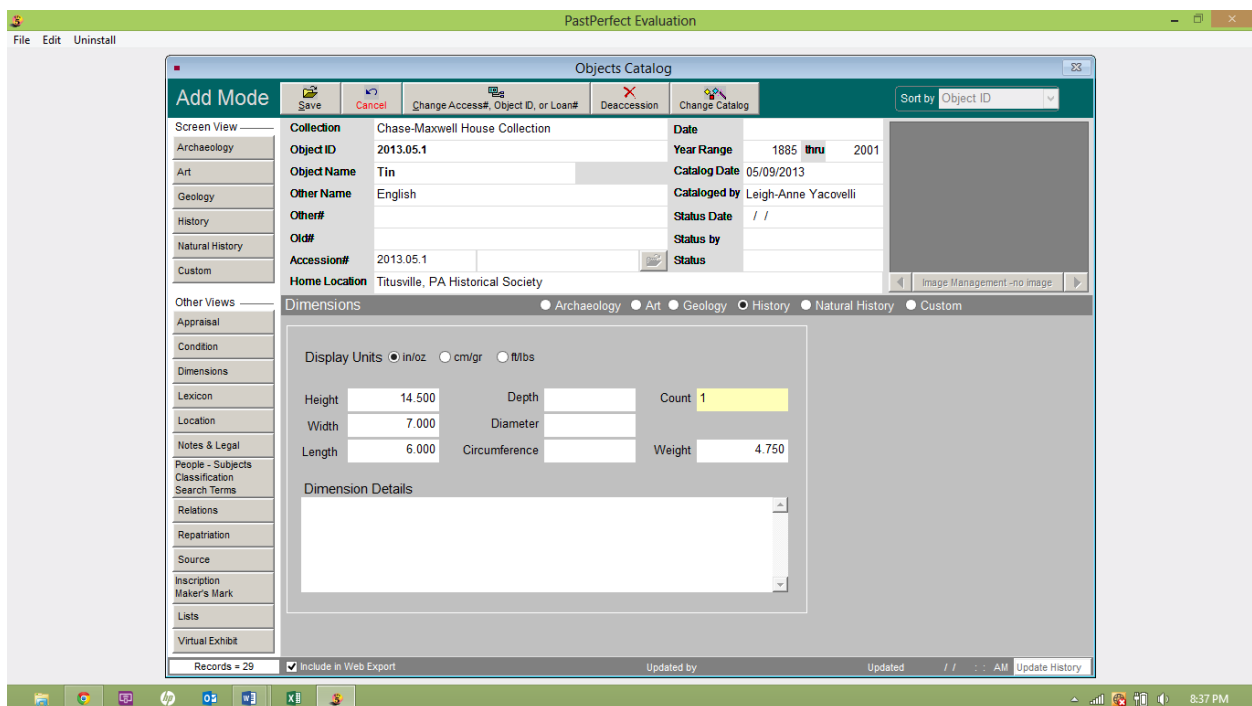
- (1) Past Perfect automatically fills in the date the record was created in the Catalog field. Do not be alarmed that it does not follow ISO standard. Our historical society decided to deviate from the standard to allow for the ease of automation from the software.
- (2) The Date field allows for an approximate date, if one is not known, for the creation of the item, per DACS 2.4.12. There is also the ability to enter a date range for an item's creation instead, per DACS 2.4.7, in Past Perfect's Year Range field.

**Name and Location of Repository** Enter "Titusville, PA Historical Society" in the Home Location field underneath the accession number since we are the holding institution. Past Perfect also allows us to specify the location, as in the part of the building, cabinet, etc., the object can be found. These fields are covered in "Scope and Content."

The screenshot shows the 'Objects Catalog' window in 'Add Mode'. The 'Home Location' field is circled in red and contains 'Titusville, PA Historical Society'. The 'Location' field is highlighted in yellow and contains '14'. The 'Temporary Location' field is empty. The 'Date' field is empty. The 'Reason' field is empty. The 'Authorized by' field is empty. The 'Moved by' field is empty. The 'Notes' field is empty. The 'Last Invented Date' field is empty. The 'Invented by' field is empty. The 'Dataset' field is empty. The 'Loan Options' section includes 'View Loan Screen', 'View Loan History', 'Put on Loan', and 'Put on Exhibit'. The 'Exhibit Options' section includes 'View Exhibit Screen', 'Change Exh Label', and 'View Exhibit History'.

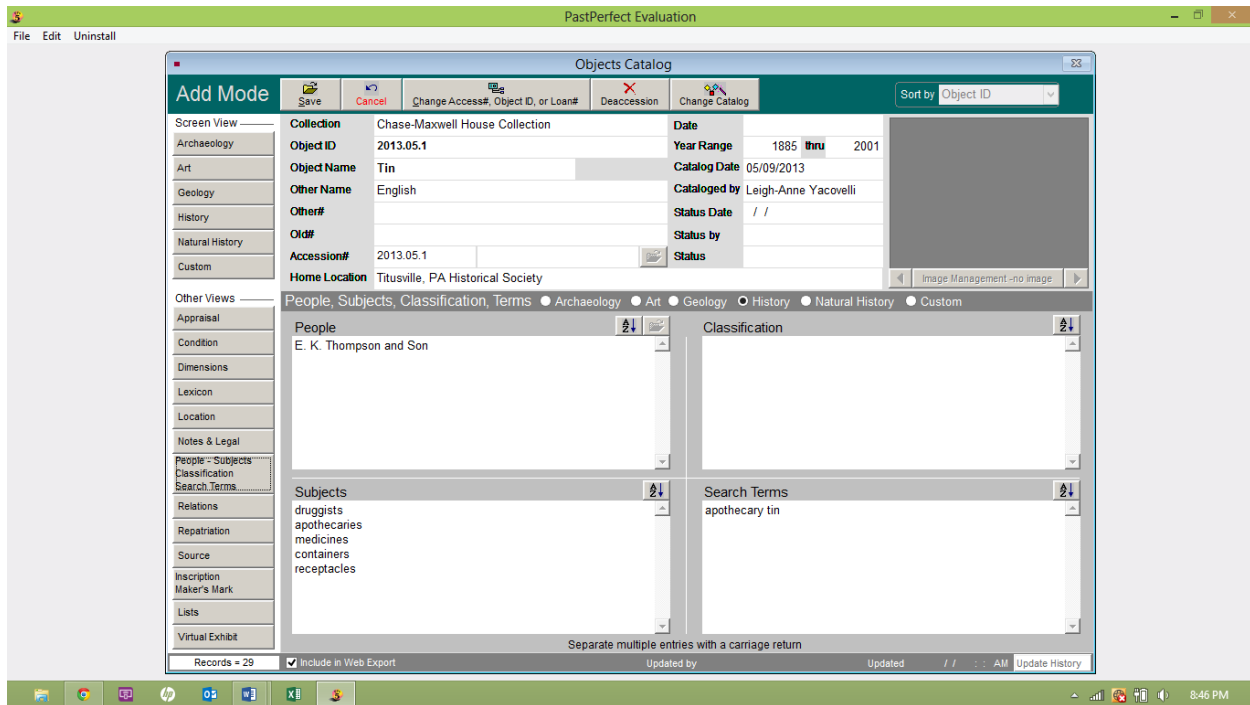
\*\* Screen shot of Location screen (↑).

**Scope and Content** Past Perfect does not have a Scope and Content section like a typical finding aid would present it. However, items from the same folder, box, etc., can be related to each other. To do this, you are required to fill out the Room, Cabinet, Shelf, and/or Container fields – whatever is applicable to the object – in the Location screen. The entries will populate an authority file so we can search for items in the building by location.



\*\*Screen shot of Dimensions screen (↑).

**Extent** This is both the number of items and the amount of space it takes up at the historical society. The fields related to this requirement are located in the Dimensions screen of Past Perfect. The count is always one, since we are entering each item individually. If there are multiple copies of the same item, they should be entered individually in case one is ever damaged, lost, or loaned out. The size and weight should be in either inches/ounces or feet/pounds.

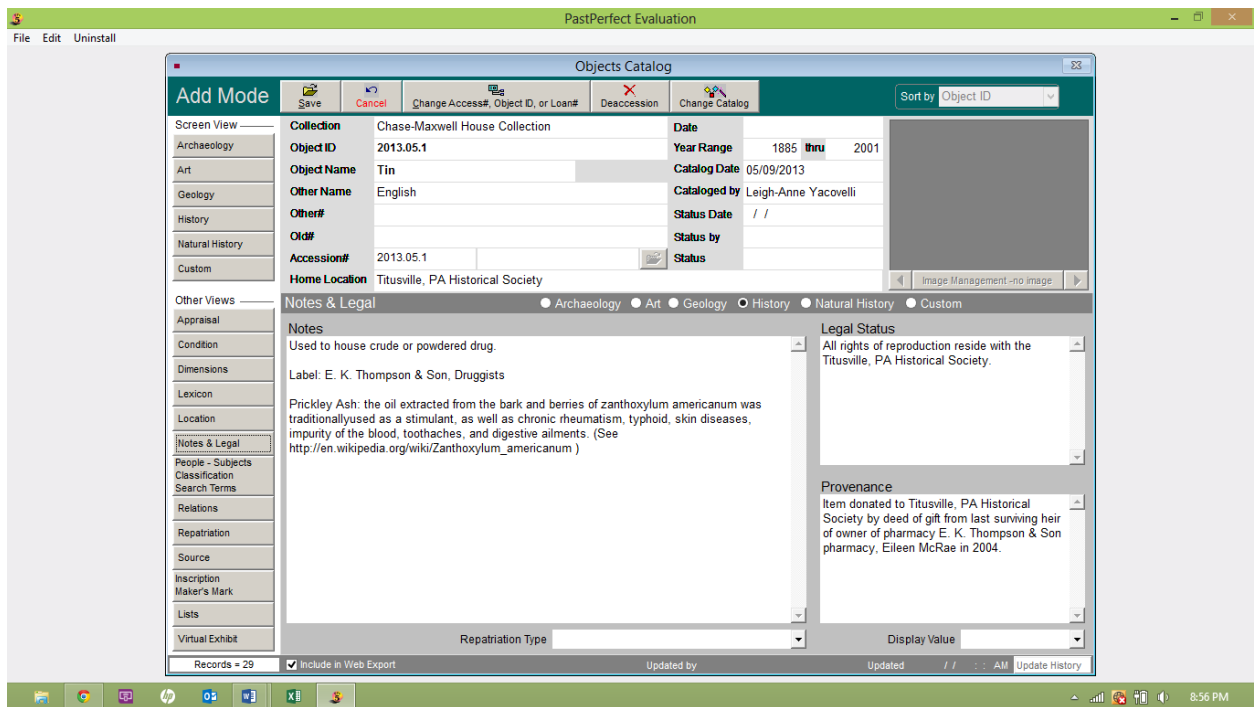


\*\*Screen Shot of People-Subjects-Classification-Search Terms screen (↑).

**Name of Creator(s)** Past Perfect's People-Subjects-Classification-Search Terms screen, specifically the People field, allows you to enter the name of the creator and other related people to conform to DACS standards if the creator is not the collector (who gets entered in the History screen if this is the case). Past Perfect also creates a "Names Authority File" as required by DACS 9.7 when the People field is used. Before you enter any name, please check the Word file titled "Union List of Artist Names" before entering new names into Past Perfect. This ensures consistent spelling and the inclusion of special characters and initials. Please type names inverted (Doe, John A. not John A. Doe).

**Access Points** The People-Subjects-Classification-Search Terms screen also allows for access points to be entered when appropriate and available. The Subjects field should contain only words that describe the subject of a work of art, such as a barn found in a painting. Please search

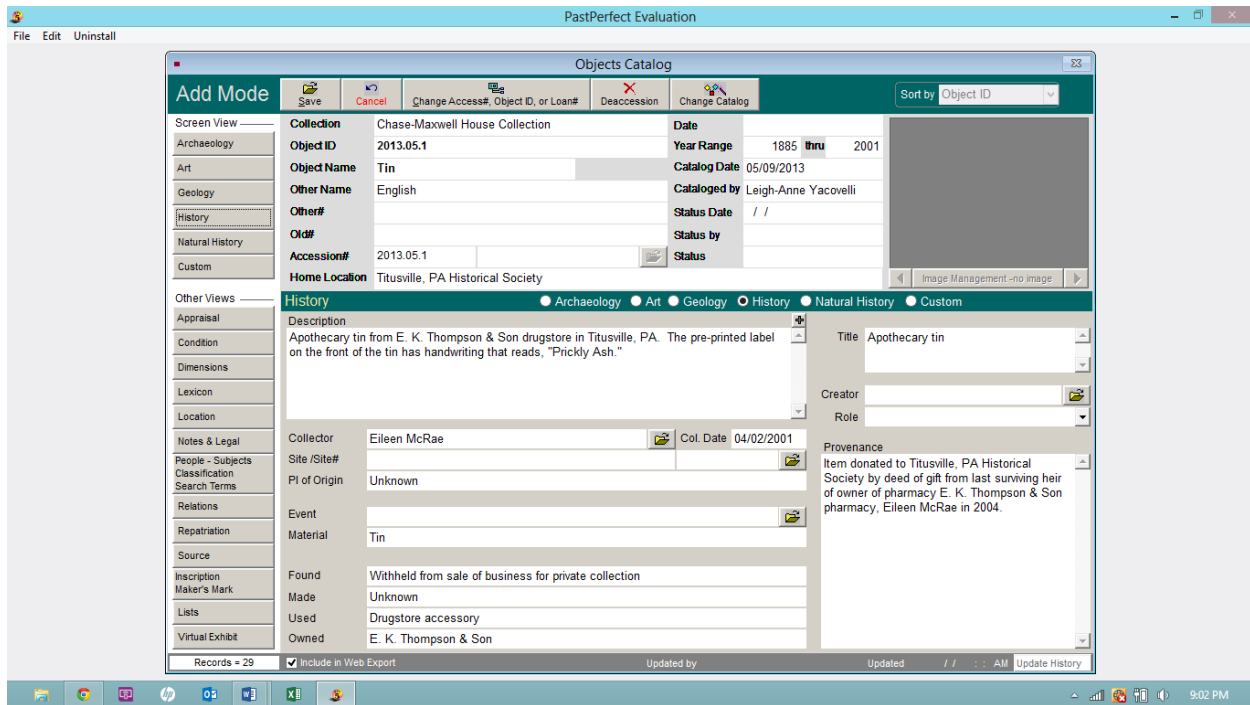
the Word file titled “Thesaurus for Graphic Materials” (TGM I: subject terms) for possible entries in the Subjects field. The Search Terms field is filled in using a combination of TGM I: subject terms, AAT, and local terms and family names that researchers might use when searching the collection. Remember to add any common name you could not enter in the Other Name field here. We will not be filling in the Classification field.



\*\*Screen shot of Legal screen (↑).

**Access Conditions** Any access restrictions imposed by government rules, the donor, physical limitations, etc., are entered in the Past Perfect Notes & Legal screen. The notes field is a good way to explain the restrictions, such as why or when they will get lifted. The legal field is where any copyright reproduction rules or blanket restriction statements are entered.





\*\*Screen shot of History screen (↑).

**Administrative/Biographical History** Completely filling in Past Perfect's History screen not only covers Scope and Content (discussed above), but also this secondary DACS requirement. Please be sure to fill in every field in this section. The Title field is the common name for the item. Bring any empty fields and questions/concerns to the volunteer coordinator's attention for completion.