

Mathews collection at Massillon Museum may spur restoration efforts

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The Massillon Museum hopes a recent survey of paintings by William T. Mathews, nicknamed the "Painter of Presidents," will help secure funding for restoration and conservation efforts.

The museum has the largest collection of Mathews paintings and drawings with more than 25 paintings and an additional 25 drawings.

"The Mathews collection is very important to us," said Alexandra Nicholis, museum curator. "We have the

largest known collection (of Matthew's work). He came from a very artistic family. His brother was a well-known Civil War illustrator."

So when the museum was awarded a collections-based survey grant from the Intermuseum Conservation Association in February, they determined the Mathews collection would be the best candidate for the inspection.

While a lot of the collection needs some work but is still exhibitable, Nicholis said there are three paintings that need some extra TLC.

"Three paintings were donated by a

family member (of Mathews). They were kept in a garage," she explained. "Most are exhibitable. The average visitor many not realize they need work. To the naked eye, you are unable to see (it needs work)."

While the museum is still waiting for a report, Nicholis said the results of the inspection can be used as leverage to secure funding for restorations efforts.

Restoration efforts could be a simple as cleaning the work of art with an enzyme product to restretching the canvas and reapplying paint to the chips or scratches.