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Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board Regrant Award FINAL REPORT

Submitted by email to fprevits@ohiohistory.org January 25, 2017

INSTITUTION: Anderson Township Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio

PROJECT: Preservation, Organization and Storage of Families Histories Collection

PROJECT MANAGER: Janet Heywood, ATHS Research Chair

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SUMMARY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Anderson Township Historical Society proposed this project to preserve and organize significant collections of items relating to the family histories of those who settled the area and those who have lived here over the last two centuries. With the assistance of the OHRAB Regrant Award of \$1,478 we were able to purchase archival storage materials to aid in the preservation of these collections. We want to preserve the materials while facilitating their use in response to inquiries and in providing background for our interpretative displays and in our public outreach.

Since we received the OHRAB grant in April 2016 we carried out the following steps.

1. Selected, ordered and received archival storage materials from Gaylord Archival as proposed in our original budget. We were pleased to find that Gaylord offers discounts off the catalogue list prices for bulk orders. We were able to order the items we had originally planned (with a few minor exceptions that were not needed) and with some funds from our Anderson Township Historical Society budget ordered additional items we found necessary during the course of the work. Copies of the invoices for these items are in an attached PDF.

2. Transferred the contents of 35 large binders, several file drawers and miscellaneous bags and boxes into archival file folders and cases. The folders are now organized, labeled and stored in archival document cases. The items constitute some 15.3 cubic feet of materials. We found during the process that we needed more internal box dividers and supports than we had originally thought. The materials were collected over the last four decades by volunteers focused on acquiring the materials. These items included many family group sheets prepared by ATHS volunteers and genealogical record sheets in various formats donated to the Society. We also found originals and copies of documents such as diaries; wills; letters; photographs; newspapers and clippings; some maps; cemetery records and plats; church records; and schools, social organizations and business materials. Original documents, fragile items and photographs were placed in polyester sleeves and polypropylene and polyethylene envelopes. Newsprint clippings were photocopied onto Permalite 20# paper.

We were surprised by how dusty the papers that had been stored in 3-ring binders were and spent some time removing dust. And we were also impressed how quickly metal paper clips leave rusty imprints on papers. We removed hundreds of paper clips and found imprints on papers that had been put into storage as recently as 2003. We also noticed that even careful storage in 3-ring binders leads to curled edges on papers over time.

3. Created first-round finding guides to the collections. We made Excel spreadsheets and MS word document lists for the items moved into the new archival storage. We have tallied over 10,000 items (where "an item" refers to single sheets as well as folded and bound newspaper issues and booklets).

Most of the papers and items stored in the 3-ring binders had been roughly arranged by surnames. Over the years the items had been collected and placed in the notebooks, the filing became somewhat erratic and items were added that did not fit in the surname filing scheme. During the transfer into archival file folders, we had the opportunity to group the items as originally planned for those pieces that did fit into the surname scheme. Our spreadsheet for the family history papers uses 977 primary surnames used for filing. There are, of course, multiple surnames involved in even the simplest family history. For example on the many Family Group Sheets in this collection there is a primary surname used for filing -- generally the husband's last name of the core family being described -- and then there are maiden names of mothers and wives as well as the surnames of the spouses of children. Creating electronic finding files that facilitate locating materials related to a broader spectrum of names will be a future project for genealogy volunteers. We attach as separate files PDFs an Excel spreadsheet of family names (PDF 3) and an example of an Excel spreadsheet (PDF 4) of items in three family folders. Other items that had been stored in binders included papers related to the Township and Township organizations such as schools and churches. These documents also are now stored in archival file folders and cases.

We found collections of items that had been donated to the Society that were diverse in their content and had not been previously analyzed. Since April 2016 we have also received new collections of family materials and a major collection of issues of the *Mt. Washington Press*, local newspaper published from 1938 - 1995. The work of adding these items into the permanent collections and preserving the newsprint is beyond the scope of the current OHRAB grant. We were, however, able to use what we learned during the transfer of the accumulated collections to help us process these welcomed new additions.

We have scanned over 150 items including samples of letters, cards, wills, land records, and tax receipts. We also scanned some 1800s farming brochures such as 1870s seed catalogues and 1860s broadsides from Ohio firms advertising state-of-art farming equipment. We have also scanned over 100 photographs. There are hundreds of items that warrant scanning as both a means of preserving the contents as well as making the information accessible. One of our future projects will be to scan more many items and link the images and records in our Past Perfect database.

ITEMIZED LIST OF EXPENDITURES AND PROJECT COST MATCH.

Attached in a separate PDF file (PDF 2) are itemized lists of the items purchased with the OHRAB grant of \$1,478 and additional AHS funds. There are seven sheets of invoices from Gaylord Archival. The total was \$1,579.60, of which \$1,478 came from the OHRAB grant.

Project cost match was 237.25 hours specially spent on this project with a value of \$5,077.15 (237.25 hours at \$21.20 per hour). This is all volunteer time since AHS has no paid staff. Our budget submitted for the grant designated 125 hours of volunteer time. Fortunately for organizations such as AHS operated by volunteers, using more time than budgeted is easier to do than for organizations with paid staff whose work hours may not be flexible.

PUBLICITY We have included publicity about the grant award in issues of the *Surveyor*, the ATHS newsletter. We had an article about the OHRAB grant award and ATHS project in the April 2016 issue of *Anderson Insights: the Voice of Anderson Township*, a quarterly newsletter sent to every household in Anderson Township. (PDF file 5 April 2016 *Insights* is attached. See PDF “page 6” or print page 11 -- lower right-hand side for the story.)

INCREASED INTEREST IN COLLECTIONS ATHS members are excited about the possibility of creating future special exhibits based on information we have the family collections. We have some public exhibit space available in buildings on our site on Clough Pike and at the History Room at Anderson Center.

We are very busy working completing the manuscript for a book *Anderson Township, Ohio* to be published by Arcadia Publishing as part of their Images of America series. The materials in our family history collections are very helpful in this work. We are working to have the book available in 2018 in time for the 50th anniversary of ATHS and 225th anniversary of Anderson Township itself. We are also receiving more donations to our collections. Attached is a copy of the most recent issue of *Anderson Insights*, the Township newsletter, January 2017, in which there is an article with some sample images from the ATHS collections (PDF 6 on PDF page 4 or print pages 6 -7). The Anderson Township web page runs a “Throw Back Thursday” image on Thursdays, using images supplied by ATHS.

We are very grateful to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for the Regrant Award and appreciate the efforts the OHRAB makes to obtain this funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, National Archives and Records Administration. The OHRAB Regrants make an enormous difference to local historical organizations such as ours.

December 2016

Attached as separate PDFs:

- 1 ATHS Final Report text
- 2 ATHS items purchased
- 3 ATHS Excel Family Names
- 4 ATHS Excel example of family items
- 5 ATHS AT Insights April 2016
- 6 ATHS AT Insights January 2017

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Celebrating the history of Anderson Township
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