

**Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board**  
**Final Grant Report**  
**February 14, 2015**

**Organization:** Hardin County Genealogy Society

**Institution:** Robert G. Reed Center

**Location:** Kenton, Ohio

**Project:** Digitation & Storage of the Anna Lee Mayhorn Collection

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**Background and Report of Grant Activities from June through December 2014:**

The Hardin County Genealogy Society was founded in 1983 in Kenton, Ohio. Over the ensuing years, the organization was housed in several buildings throughout downtown Kenton. In 2003, following a bequest from his estate, the Robert G. Reed Center opened at 211 West Franklin Street. Originally consisting of two three-story storefronts in downtown Kenton, a third storefront was purchased in 2013 and restored into a conference/meeting room primarily with funds from the estate of Bruce Eddy.

As the Center has expanded its footprint over the last few years, the Society has been extremely active in acquiring, inventorying, copying, storing, and publishing numerous collections of archival materials, both public and private. These collections include diverse items such as original Hardin County Probate Court Marriage Record Books, microfilm copies of Ada, Ohio's newspapers from the Ada Public Library following their digitation, various records from the now defunct Fort McArthur Chapter D.A.R., county funeral home records, Civil War pension examination records from a local doctor, and yearbooks from the local high schools. The purpose is to preserve these unique documents and make them accessible to the public for research or educational purposes.

One of the more unique collections is that of Anna Lee Taylor Mayhorn, which was donated to the Society by her sister Ruby Taylor Coats in 2011. She was a life-long resident of Dunkirk, Ohio, who worked for many years as a newspaper reporter for the *Dunkirk Standard* and as a regional correspondent for the *Kenton Times*. As very few copies of the *Standard* are known to exist, and the newspaper was never microfilmed, this material represents one of the best assemblages of Dunkirk history. The collection consists of a variety of original research notebooks and journals; unpublished photographs; local postcards; scrapbooks; regional newspaper clippings and handwritten articles; advertising ephemera; plus genealogical information.

The project funded by the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board was to make this large collection of documents and images related to the history of Dunkirk accessible to the public. These items were previously stored in a variety of acidic folders, three-ring binders, non-archival photograph sheets, paper sacks, and small cardboard boxes. Ultimately, the research materials were combined in a large (2 x 4 x 3 foot) blue plastic storage tote after her passing. Following the donation, this tote sat near the President's desk for a year while the Society discussed the best way to utilize and store the treasure trove of rare documents.

In 2012, the Society decided to make use of the vast array of information and produce a scrapbook-style publication based on the historic information. The result was *Dunkirk Revisited: Treasures from the Collection of Anna Lee Mayhorn*. Many of the newspaper articles, photographs, and

postcards were scanned and compiled into a scrapbook-style volume presenting the history of Dunkirk. While scanning documents and looking at the amount of local historic material, original photographs and journals, it was decided that this collection needed to be transferred out of the non-archival materials and archivally preserved for the future.

One big drawback was that the Society had little money set aside for purchasing archival supplies and what funds were available were being used to preserve and make Hardin County Probate Records like Marriage, Birth, and Death Records accessible to the public. Luckily, the Society learned of the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board grant opportunity. The Executive Board decided to try to write a grant to secure funds for this collection. A successful grant request was submitted to the OHRAB which would ensure that the items would be properly preserved and available for future researchers. The Society is very appreciative to be the recipient of this grant.

Prior to the arrival of the archival supplies, the volunteers began the process of accessing exactly what was included in the collection. Due to the sheer number of documents, newspaper clippings, and images contained in the tote, it was decided to sort the materials according to a variety of subject categories (churches, schools, railroads, genealogy) rather than by type of object (photographs, newspaper clippings, postcards). During the sort, the newspaper clippings of Findlay and Hancock County were separated from those of Hardin County. A few one-off or odd items from other surrounding counties, such as Allen, Logan, or Wyandot County, were placed within the main categories rather than making a separate category for them. The Hancock County clippings were large enough to warrant its own category.

Nearly 5,000 individual documents and images were discovered during the sort. Many of these were multiple pages of a single document or hand-written notes and drafts of articles that the volunteers would later find newspaper clippings of. It took three volunteers one entire afternoon to take all of the documents out of the tote, examine them, and place the document into its corresponding subject pile. As the piles grew larger, it was decided to later sort the subject piles into smaller subsets. One example is separating train wreck articles out of the main railroad category. This also included separating the photographs, postcards, and additional images from the written documents and articles. It was also noted that there were numerous photocopies of some articles included in the assemblage. A decision was made to keep only one copy of the photocopies when the original was available to scan.

Once the subject category was broken down into smaller groups, a volunteer then scanned each photograph, image, article, or document into one of the Society's computer creating a large digital file of all of the images making sure that they were still separated into small folders by subject. Following scanning, the items were placed into individual acid-free folders to await accession numbers. These folders were then placed into acid-free document boxes which would later be placed on a storage shelf in the Robert G. Reed Center. Labels were placed on the exterior of each box identifying it for easy retrieval.

While one person was scanning, a second volunteer was creating a finding aid for each document box on a separate computer. This included the box number, main subject, and a list of images or documents contained in each individual file folder. This aid is kept at the President's desk and is available to surrounding genealogy and historic societies. A digital copy of the image database and finding aid was created and is available to researchers on-site. This limits the handling of the original documents, further preserving them for future generations.

Once the volunteers began to work on the collection, it was soon discovered that there were many more items than previously thought and it would take more processing time to complete the project. The scanning of the documents and images proved to take the longest amount of time. During the Hardin County sesquicentennial in 1983, many letters were sent to Anna May providing

genealogical histories of their families. She also researched some families in the local area. All of these genealogical items, in addition to being scanned, were photocopied and placed in the Society's file cabinets containing family file folders. If there was no existing folder, one was created and placed alphabetically with the rest.

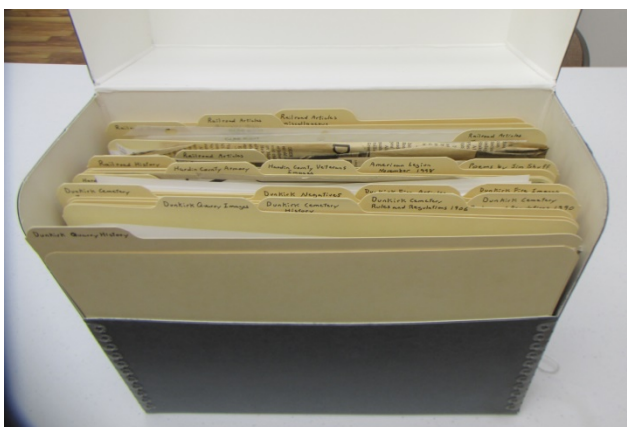
The family files and completed archival document boxes are sitting on the shelf waiting researchers and family members to journey to the Center looking for information on their ancestors in Dunkirk and northern Hardin County. One of the best parts about the project is how well the volunteers got to know the history of Dunkirk, Ohio by reading and examining the documents in the Anna Lee Mayhorn Collection, thereby continuing her mission to share the story of Dunkirk. The Hardin County Genealogy Society is grateful to the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board for this grant. It has allowed the Society to preserve and share a unique collection of historic materials related to Hardin County and northwest Ohio.



Photographs showing the blue plastic tote containing the Anna Lee Mayhorn Collection as it looked when donated to the Hardin County Genealogy Society by her family and representative images from the collection when examined prior to the start of this project.



Photographs showing an initial sort of railroad documents and images from the collection while volunteers decided the best way to organize the large assemblage of materials, and the placement of photographs into individual acid-free file folders following scanning.



Photographs showing documents in labeled acid-free file folders placed into acid-free document boxes and the completed boxes placed on a storage shelf in the Robert G. Reed Center, home of the Hardin County Genealogy Society.

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miniam Court no. 08.

Dewitt C. Smith	Carl C. Gillen
A. Custin	E. Harvey
Rev. W. B. Lindsay	Alexander Akin
Wanda B. Lindsay	D. M. Harvey
Mary A. Mahan	Clomet Rager
Walter Tegarden	Rebecca Rager
John Neff	Zinn Woods
John Gillen	

C. S. Bowers	Edward Kefer
William Guckes	Maggie Custin
Jacob Stein	Dell Smith
H. Hensel	Sarah Tegarden
Alvin <sup>2</sup> Hensel	Amanda C. Akin
Trentmen	Dola Harvey
Harvey	Clara Kefer
Sophia Harvey	

Dr. C. C. McLaughlin  
17 June 1898

L. J. Dickason  
Past Supreme Chief

J. W. Gansel  
Super Chief

F. L. Saydon

Nov 8-01



SCENE FROM THE PENNSYLVANIAN TRAIN WRECK IN DUNKIRK ON NOV. 9, 1941

## Dunkirk train wreck left 12 dead, 41 hurt in 1941

By ANNA LEE MAYHORN  
Times correspondent

DUNKIRK — As I heard a train whistle for the crossing, it brought back memories of 60 years ago, Nov. 9, 1941, when the Pennsylvania came screaming into Dunkirk from the west. The lumbering freight was coming into town on the westbound tracks. This freight was called "The Reamer" by the crew.

As the freight pulled into town at 10:15 p.m. the crew heard an unusual pounding on the left side of the steam engine and brought the train to a halt. They found one of the 1,000 pound cylinder heads had blown. As the cylinder head flew from the train it landed along the eastbound rail where the Pennsylvania hit it.

The Pennsylvania came roaring out of Chicago, stopped at Lima and flew eastward with 77 passengers, 25 in coaches and 49 in the Pullmans. The officials from Chicago said the train was an eight-car combination passenger, baggage and mail train.

It was snowing lightly and a beautiful Sunday evening on Nov. 9, 1941.

The massive engine was instantly derailed after hitting the cylinder head, and plowed into and under the signal tower demolishing it. Ray Swartzkopf, operator of the control tower said he noticed the headlight "swerving from side to side and swaying back and forth," as the locomotive approached within 400-500 feet of the tower. It burrowed into the control tower under the top floor, as Swartzkopf and his relief man, Bucky Davis, clammed to safety unharmed. They had been on the platform "watching the trains for 'hot boxes' etc. The first passenger car passed the wrecked locomotive and remained on its wheels. The second car, from which most of the dead were taken, struck the locomotive ripping it open from end to end.

When the engine left the tracks going under the tower, the coal tender lost its wheels and skidded on the rails almost to Main Street. The gate operator at Main Street crossing had the gates down but no train appeared.

All ambulances from Kenton and Findlay were summoned. A train was dispatched from the Crestline Junction to take the survivors on their trip east. Wrecked trains came in on both the Pennsylvania and N.Y.C. roads to help clear the wreckage, fearing there would be more bodies.

Of the 77 passengers on board, only 12 were killed and 41 injured. Most of the dead and injured were in the coach, an all-metal car ripped wide open when passing the engine, lying on its side, under the tower.

The cars were upright and pulled to Dola where they were lined on the sidetrack, with men working around the clock to clear the right of way. The control tower equipment (switches) were renewed and placed "temporarily" in the depot to the north of The Pennsylvania tracks.

It was 1943 when the present brick tower was finished and put into use. During all this time, a switchman would walk to the switches and throw them manually for all the trains on the Pennsylvania and New York Central.

This was a busy time since World War II had just begun and troop and equipment trains were going by regularly as well as regular freight and passenger trains.

Since that time, the Pennsylvania depot, the N.Y.C. freighthouse (on the east side of the N.Y.C.) the "car house" west of the tower are all gone. The tower is not used as such, since the switches are thrown from another state.



Donovan and Anna Lee Mayhorn

Images showing representative scanned documents from the Anna Lee Mayhorn Collection, who can be seen with her husband in the image on the lower right. The archival materials include hand-written notes, journals, letters, newspaper clippings, postcards, original photographs, and additional paper ephemera.