

Final Report
OHRAB Grant – 2013

Institution/Organization Name: The Historical Society of Mount Pleasant, Ohio
Project Title: Arrangement & Preservation of Genealogical Records
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Summary of Project Activities & Accomplishments:

The Historical Society of Mount Pleasant was thrilled to be selected as a recipient of the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board grant cycle for 2013. Until recently our historical society lacked an archivist and for more than ten years all processing and arrangement ground to a standstill. Items were accessioned and piled up on the research table or stacked in boxes on the floor, as seen here:



Accessioned material cramping the research table



Accessioned material cleared from the research table

Prior to delving into the genealogical records it was necessary to clear an adequate workspace – no small task, as you can see. While the current grant project did not include this material, we plan to next process and arrange all of this material during the winter of 2014.

After clearing a workspace the shelving was installed and boxes unpacked and the arrangement and rehousing was ready to begin.



New shelving and archival supplies ready for the grant project

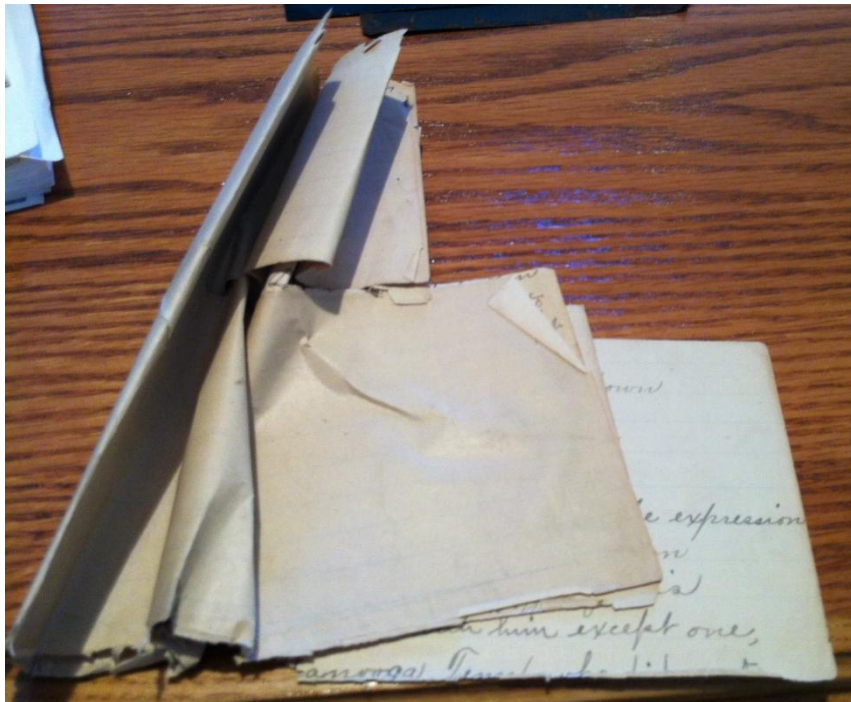
Before detailing the arrangement and rehousing process, we will endeavor to explain how the material was arranged prior to this project. All of the genealogical records were stored in several filing cabinets, all filled to overflowing and all showing their age. The records were arranged alphabetically by surname – All 'A' surnames in one file, all 'B' in another, etc. The contents of each folder lacked any arrangement, requiring researchers to sift through and handle sometimes hundreds of pages in order to locate a certain record. Those surnames for which there was a significant amount of information had their own folders. Any oversized books or binders were stored in a separate filing cabinet with no way to connect them to the other folders.

The folders themselves were also a problem. The folders were tested with an Abbey pH pen and all showed signs of acidity. Many of the folders were suffering from damage due to constant handling, overfilling and being in overcrowded filing cabinets. Most the folders exhibited rips and tears and many were barely able to hold their contents. Damage to the folders likewise resulted in damage to the contents inside. Several

documents were discovered torn and crumpled at the bottom of a folder, as shown in the following photographs:



Typical damage to the original folders



A handwritten eulogy from 1875 found crumpled and heavily damaged at the bottom of a folder

To begin our project, each folder was removed from the filing cabinet in alphabetical order. The contents were examined, page by page, and arranged alphabetically by surname. Each surname received its own folder (or multiple folders, depending on the amount of information) and was arranged alphabetically in a new acid-free archival box. For those surnames for which very little information existed, a "Miscellaneous" folder was included and each miscellaneous surname was arranged alphabetically within this folder. Given the thousands of pages found within this collection it was impossible to do item-level processing for the finding aid. However, an effort was made to compile a general list of what was available for each surname.

All original correspondence and fragile documents were placed in polyester document folders for added preservation and protection. All newsprint or highly acidic paper was interleaved with Permalife Bond Paper so as to protect from acid migration. Any damaged documents found were set aside until the end of the project. The archivist provided Filmoplast and Absorene to mend and clean damaged items and all documents were reintegrated into the collection.

All boxes were numbered, labeled and placed in order on the shelving. The Genealogical Records Collection resulted in 39 boxes and four oversized folders. The archivist had estimated a higher number of boxes needed based on the contents of the four filing cabinets. It was not realized until the project was underway that interspersed among the genealogical records in the filing cabinets were administrative records and other archival records not germane to the genealogy collection, thereby resulting in several unused boxes. With the permission of the OHRAB, the archivist also arranged and rehoused the Cemetery Records Collection to use the majority of the leftover boxes. This collection contains a wealth of genealogical records for all burials in the greater Mount Pleasant area.

Observations:

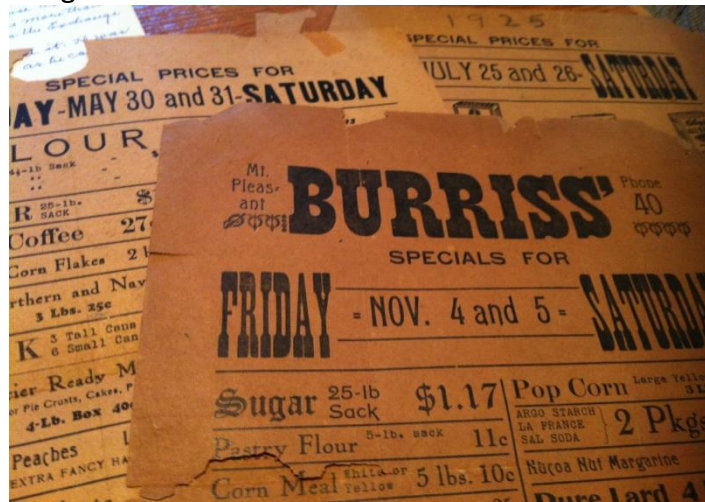
An early observation from our work with this collection was that the Historical Society placed an emphasis very early on regarding the collection of genealogical material. When the Historical Society was formed just after WWII, many of the grandchildren of the earliest Mount Pleasant settlers were still living in town. There was still a direct connection to those who had lived in town in the years leading up to and following the Civil War. Attics and closets were still filled with family artifacts and heirlooms. eBay had yet to attract individuals to sell precious papers and photographs to someone half a world away. By getting such an early start the Historical Society secured the papers, letters and photographs from these families as well as family histories and vital dates.

We were also struck with how varied the collection was in terms of the material represented. In addition to all of the obituaries and family trees we had expected to find, we also found dozens of 19th century letters, booklets and documents as well as photographs, broadsides and even an original ca. 1850s ledger filled with genealogical

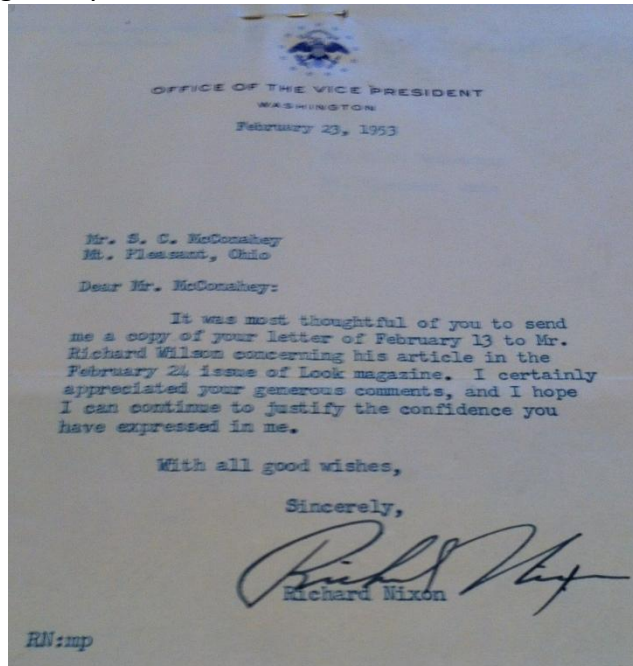
information pertaining to a local family. We were also especially surprised to see how many family bible records were in the collection for some of our early Mount Pleasant families.

Some of the pieces we thought were especially interesting include:

- Account of a trip to Mount Pleasant from 1862 – 1863
- Account of a Mount Pleasant resident’s service in World War I
- Original US citizenship document – 1807
- Advertising broadsides from the Burriss store – 1925 – 1929



- Women’s Christian Temperance Union Pledge Card – 1901
- Letter signed by then Vice President Richard Nixon – 1953



- Sample of the wedding dress worn by Ann Taylor – 1789
- Jonathan Taylor Updegraff congressional diary – 1879 – 1882

Hours & Volunteer Assistance:

The archivist logged 60 hours working on this project, which included clearing workspace, constructing shelving, arrangement, rehousing, and cleaning, preservation and repair work on several documents. The archivist was ably assisted by historical society volunteer, Pam Dunn. Pam is an enthusiastic genealogist who counts several of the earliest Mount Pleasant settlers as her ancestors. Pam proved especially helpful in sorting through the large original files to establish relationships and lines between Mount Pleasant families. Pam volunteered for the project in August and assisted through completion, logging approximately 25 hours.



Pam Dunn sorting documents for rehousing

Publicity:

A brief article regarding this project is being prepared to be sent to the local newspaper, *The Herald Star*. The project will likewise be detailed in the January 2014 issue of the historical society's biannual newsletter, *The Town Crier*. Finally, the project will be publicized on the historical society's Facebook account.

Budget:

Supplies	Grant Funds	Cash Match	TOTAL
Archival Supplies – Hollinger Metal Edge*	\$743.20 ¹	N/A	\$743.20
Shelving*	\$210.80 ²	\$3.16	\$213.96
TOTAL	\$954.00	\$3.16	\$957.16
Hours	Grant Funds	Cash Match	TOTAL
Jon-Erik Gilot (\$18.54 x 60 hours)	N/A	\$1,112.40 ³	\$1,112.40
Pam Dunn (\$18.54 x 25 Hours)	N/A	\$463.50 ⁴	\$463.50
TOTAL	N/A	\$1,575.90	\$1,575.90
GRAND TOTAL	\$954.00	\$1,579.06	\$2,533.06

*Receipts included in the attached receipts.PDF file

¹ From the date of our grant application some of the prices at Hollinger Metal Edge were lowered, thus bringing us in approximately \$10.00 less than our original budget estimate

² We failed to realize the tax on the shelving for our budget estimate. The additional \$10.00 here covers the \$10.00 we had left from our archival supplies estimate. The additional tax on the shelving was paid for from historical society funds

³ The archivist spent an additional 8 hours on this project above and beyond the estimate provided in the grant application

⁴ The archivist was not anticipating any help on this project when we submitted the grant application. From August – November 2013 Pam Dunn assisted as an additional volunteer. Her hours have been added here as an additional match on behalf of the historical society, bringing our match to nearly \$600.00 more than had been estimated in our grant application.