

**Rocky River Public Library and Cowan Pottery Museum
Records Database Project
Final Report
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Project Summary

Rocky River Public Library (RRPL) and the Cowan Pottery Museum obtained a grant from the Ohio Records Advisory Board to purchase Past Perfect Museum Software to allow us to catalog our archival holdings in a digital database for better inventorying and recordkeeping and to eventually increase public awareness of and access to these archives.

Upon receiving the grant of \$870.00, we purchased Past Perfect V.5. (This means that the total grant amount was used at the onset of the project; matching funds in the form of staff time are ongoing for the duration of the project.) Before cataloguing materials could begin, Lauren Hansgen spent time working with the Past Perfect system to understand how to use it and how to best apply it to RRPL's needs. PastPerfect was customized for our use as much as possible and Hansgen drafted written procedures for archives cataloguing. These have developed into a set of instructions for data entry into Past Perfect as well as general guidelines for Cowan Pottery Museum's archival and objects cataloguing procedures.

CPM's archival holdings include: the Cowan Family Archive (historical records donated by the Cowan family), *Cowan Pottery and the Cleveland School* Archive (materials and photographs from the creation of this seminal text donated by its authors), and general Cowan Pottery archives that include artist files, museum records, historical Cowan files, and papers donated by Cowan scholars. In addition, CPM recently received a donation of 107 historic Cowan Pottery Studios photographs (1912-present, approx. 15 cubic feet). RRPL's archival holdings include: files and photographs pertaining to the Library's own history, files and photographs pertaining to the history of Rocky River, and the "Vertical File" (records related to Rocky River history categorized by subject matter) (1928-present, approx. 20 cubic feet). In addition to identifying specific archival holdings in our collection we identified their type according to generally accepted archival definitions/hierarchies:

- Donald Calkins Manuscript Collection
- Cowan Family Manuscript Collection
- Bassett/Naumann Manuscript Collection

- Cowan Pottery Museum Archival Collection
- Rocky River Public Library Archival Collection
- Rocky River Public Library Historical Assembled Collection
- Waylande Gregory Manuscript Collection

During this grant period, cataloguing on the Cowan Pottery Museum archives was completed (Calkins, Cowan Family, Bassett/Naumann, General). Archives cataloguing will be a long process that will need occasional maintenance every year, and attention is currently focused on the Rocky River Public Library archival and historic collections. We are also thrilled to report that, in part because of our improved cataloguing system achieved through our OHRAB grant, that Cowan Pottery Museum recently accepted the donation of the Waylande Gregory Archive from the Gregory Estate. This collection of photographs, papers, clippings, correspondence, and other ephemera represents the richest compilation of primary resources on the artist. Waylande Gregory (1905-1971) was one of Cowan Pottery's most important and prolific artists and went on to build a national reputation as a sculptor. Lauren Hansgen is actively working on sorting and assessing these items, and will be entering the archives into Past Perfect to promote access and use of the material by scholars and researchers.

In September 2014 Lauren Hansgen submitted budget requests for the Cowan Pottery Museum and history projects that included a request for the media package add-on for Past Perfect that will allow us to add images to records and further the accessibility of the archives to the public. This request was granted and the Library budget allowed purchase of this upgrade when the budget began in January. Our initial grant award from OHRAB has enabled the Library to allow for additional expenses for this project.

The project has been beneficial by serving to acclimate the Curator/Historian (who assumed the post in January 2014) to the archival holdings. Cataloguing the individual materials has given Hansgen the opportunity to review these items to understand what information is available to researchers, or what will aid her in answering research questions. The grant for the database further served to attract the donor of the Waylande Gregory Archive (there was another institution in addition to RRPL that had expressed interest and was being considered) and we excited for the possibility of future archival acquisitions. The database is still an internal tool, and the next major phase of this project will address public accessibility, particularly access to digital records via our website in addition to physical access to collections.

The archival cataloguing project initiated by this grant from OHRAB represents exponential progress in collections management for Cowan Pottery Museum and Rocky River Public Library.