

# 21 March 1997

## From OHRAB

Minutes of the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board Meeting, 21 March 1997, The Toldeo Museum of Art, Toledo

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Board members present: Gary Ness, George Parkinson, Barbara Floyd, Alice Cornell, Dennis Harrison, James Oda , Carol Tomer

Board members not present: Roland Baumann, Jonathan Dembo, Lynn Jacobs, Michael Lucas

Staff present: Matthew Benz

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State Coordinator Gary Ness called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m., and welcomed the board. Ness then proposed postponing the adoption of the January meeting minutes to allow time for late board members to arrive.

Ness addressed the current budgetary outlook for state funding of the Ohio Historical Society and its effects on the Ohio Government Information Locator Service (OGILS). Ness expected the full house to vote on the budget as soon as today (21 March). Regarding OGILS, Ness stated that he had not yet seen support by the members of the house: he has seen little evidence that the subcommittees are willing to give additional money to underwrite initiatives such as OGILS. The board discussed the possibility of contacting important house sub committee members regarding OGILS, and stressing the importance of such initiatives as resources for education and as additional access to public records. The difficulty in finding advocacy for OHS programs at the state level was also discussed. Ness noted that while programs with a local appeal - i.e. area historical sites- have readily identifiable support, it is harder to gauge the support of programs such as OGILS that have statewide applications.

Assistant Coordinator George Parkinson led the discussion about the recent meeting between the state network representatives and staff. OHRAB board member Barbara Floyd also attended the meeting. Parkinson said that the meeting was constructive, with a variety of issues discussed, chief among them organizational plans to get OGILS funded and updated. The group also discussed the possibility of holding regularly scheduled meetings, as well as staying with the current plan, looking toward updating it in the future.

The board's attention returned to the issue of funding for the OGILS initiative, with Ness again stressing that the present situation does not look good for additional funds.

Next on the agenda, Parkinson reported on the recent Council of State Historical Records Coordinators meeting held in Washington DC 31 January through 1 February. After providing some background information on COSHRC, Parkinson informed the board that criticism over the new NHPRC plan was a topic of interest at the meeting. The plan's implementation has been delayed to allow for further input and discussion.

As it stands now, the NHPRC plan calls for four objectives instead of the previous seventeen. These four objectives reflect the first priorities of the NHPRC:

1. Grants for state collaborative efforts to meet needs - for the funding of surveys, etc..

2. Grants for improvement in Documentary Fields - for the funding of such areas as research and development, tools and training, technical documents.
3. Preservation and Access - funding for the promotion and preservation of collections.
4. Documentary Publications

This revised plan passed the NHPRC board with a vote of 7 to 6. The historical community issued a petition urging the commission to reconsider the new plan, and while the NHPRC has left the door open for revision, there have been no promises made to do so. The Commissioners will discuss the plan at their June meeting.

Barbara Floyd asked if OHRAB should draft a letter in support of the revised NHPRC plan; Dennis Harrison added that such a letter should include comment on the fact that it is senseless for the archival and historical communities to fight each other in these times of low funding. Our resources would be better spent working together to get more funding, not on fighting over what little funding there is. Floyd made a motion to issue the letter, Harrison seconded. The motion passed.

Parkinson then read into the minutes the proposed revised NHPRC mission statement:

NHPRC Mission Statement: The NHPRC exists to carry out its statutory mission to ensure understanding of our nation's past by promoting, nationwide, the identification, preservation, and dissemination of essential historical documentation.

The board then discussed the possibility of contacting the Ohio delegation to the U.S. Congress about the above issues. It was decided to send a copy of the letter of support to the each of the representatives.

OHS staff member Matthew Benz next updated the board on the progress of the Historical Records Repository Survey, sponsored in Ohio by OHRAB and the Society of Ohio Archivists. In early March, J.D. Britton head of the Society's Local History Office, turned over the returned surveys to Benz for processing. Britton coordinated the survey mailing, and the board recognizes and thanks him and his staff for all their work and effort in making the survey a success.

Benz reported that he had contacted Vicky Walch, coordinator of the national survey, to ask for an extension of the deadline, during which time the board will contact the various organizations that have yet to respond to the survey in an effort to have as complete a statewide response as possible. Walch has agreed to extend the deadline to 25 April.

In the meantime, Camille Maurer and staff of the OHS Data Processing Department are to begin the data entry segment of the survey. Funds granted by the NHPRC underwrote some of these costs. The board extends its thanks and appreciation to Camille and her staff for their hard work and assistance with this project.

The board continued with discussion on the survey, and asked to be briefed on the data results at the next meeting.

Ness led discussion of the Ohio Bicentennial Commission. The Commission's Executive Committee, under the guidance of Executive Director Steve George, has met three times thus far. While the Commission at large is still being seated, Steve George has been gathering ideas, as the board learned when he met with OHRAB at its 5 December 1996 meeting. Two financial gifts have been presented to the Commission: approximately \$80,000 from the State Loan Commission to provide scholarships for students seeking Masters degrees in areas related to Ohio History, and \$100,000 from the Longenberger Company to be used for the expansion of state historical markers.

Parkinson updated the board on the Access Through Automation project. Parkinson reiterated how the automation plan for the Archives Library fulfills The Ohio 2003 Plan's call for improved access through new technology, as well as the automation of access to public records. A committee-made up of staff from the Ohio Historical Society, the Cincinnati Historical Society, and the Western Reserve Historical Society- has made its recommendation. A final decision is pending.

The board then discussed the Homefront and Battlefront regrant. The regrant, as written, has been withdrawn from consideration. The board considered possible next steps. The members decided to investigate what sort of projects are receiving NHPRC approval and funding with the intention of using a successful grant application as a model for a new grant effort. It was agreed that the board should reconvene at a future date to discuss ideas for a new proposal.

The board discussed revision of The 2003 Plan. It was decided that -in keeping with the board's policy thus far- any changes made reflect changes made to the NHPRC plan. As the federal plan is held up until June, the board agreed to wait until the outcome of the NHPRC's decision. Ness brought up the idea of attaching an addendum to the letter of support for the NHPRC plan addressing the difficulty states have in planning grant proposals while the federal plan remains in limbo. Parkinson stated that the NHPRC is committed to implementing the plan later in 1998. Board member Carol Tomer suggested moving forward as much as possible, and fine tuning The Ohio 2003 Plan when the NHPRC plan is finalized.

Under New Business, Ness discussed proposed plans by the U.S. Mint to issue a commemorative coin honoring Thomas Edison. One of the possible benefactors under this plan is the Thomas Edison Birthplace in Milan, Ohio. Ness also mentioned that the Mint is looking into issuing a series of quarters honoring states. The board agreed that such an idea is in keeping with the Bicentennial plans. It was suggested that the board could pursue fundraising to support such a program. At this time, however, there is some degree of resistance in Washington to the U.S. Mint spending the money to produce these coins.

Parkinson informed the board that NAGARA (National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators) would like to hold its 1999 meeting in Columbus. The board agreed to endorse this meeting, and passed a resolution of welcome and encouragement.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m. Following a lunch in the museum café, the board members were free to explore the museum on self-guided tours. At 3:00 p.m., they reconvened for a reception to recognize the recent completion of the Toledo Museum of Art's archives and records management program. The project was made possible through the cooperation of OHRAB and was funded by a \$53,392 grant from the NHPRC. Julie McMaster, the museum's Archivist, hosted the reception, where the board met with museum staff and invited local guests.

George Parkinson

Deputy Coordinator

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