

OHRAB Final Project Report - January 2013

Institution/Organization Name: Clark County Historical Society

Project Title: Probate Record Rehousing Project 2012

Project Director: Natalie Fritz - 937-324-0657 - nataliemfritz@aol.com

Summary of Project Activities and Accomplishments:

This past year at the Clark County Historical Society we were excited to receive the grant funds to continue with the Probate Court Processing Project that we began in 2011. With the grant funds we received from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board, we were able to continue work on a large portion of the unprocessed Clark County Probate Court records that we have in our collection. We began the project during the last week of April using file folders from our standing archives supply and the 35 boxes left over from last year's grant. By the beginning of May we applied the \$1,364.00 we received in grant funds for supplies to purchase 75 boxes and 4,000 legal file folders.

After working on the project last year, our volunteers were familiar with the process and worked much faster from the beginning. We quickly realized that there were many more cases in this time span than there had been in the previously processed batch of cases. Whereas we were able to process the years from 1908-1923 in 2011, we only processed from 1923-1930 this time. The cases were not only more plentiful, but many of them were extremely large, taking multiple folders and often multiple people to process. Our record setting case took fifteen folders and five people almost an entire work day to process!

Based on previous experience with Probate Court records and the results of our 2011 processing project, we estimated how many cases we could process before the end of the year. In our grant request we pinpointed ten individuals (2 staff members at 40 hours apiece and 8 volunteers) who we expected to work on the project and projected everyone to spend 560 hours. Natalie ended up devoting less time than anticipated to the project because of her pregnancy and subsequent maternity leave. Mel, the other staff member on the project, more than made up the

time, working over 80 hours between supervising and processing and moving boxes. By the end of the project we had called into service a total of eleven volunteers and two staff members who devoted a grand total of 1,050 hours over 40 weeks. We averaged about 35 hours per week and had anywhere from one to five people working up to five hours per day. It seems that once again we majorly underestimated the ability of our wonderful volunteers!

From the end of April through the last week of January 2013, we estimate that we processed over 200 cubic feet of records. We used all 4,000 file folders and 105 boxes (of the 110 ordered, 35 from 2011) to process cases from 1923-1930, numbered 10,101-14,717. Although these cases are numbered sequentially, some were removed from public use prior to donation to the society such as lunacy cases and adoptions and some case packets are so large that they required multiple file folders. This accounts for a discrepancy between the actual number of folders used versus the number of cases.

We accomplished our main objective with this project to make the Clark County Probate Records more accessible to researchers. By removing the original cases from the tightly packed envelopes and flattening them, we protected the cases, preserving them for future researchers, and making them easier to read and copy. Processing also made the boxes much lighter which makes it easier for volunteers and employees to pull.

Since we don't have a designated processing area at the historical society, this project was done in our research library in full view of researchers, which led to lots of teaching moments. Our volunteers were happy to talk to visitors about what we were working on and explain to them the benefits of using probate records. Most researchers who utilize these records are conducting genealogical research, but through this process now realize that they carry a wider worth, highlighting our county *and* country, following the contours of history. Those that worked on the project now understand the treasures hidden in these records.

PROJECT HOURS

Staff

Natalie Fritz	20
Mel Glover	80

Volunteers

Pat Baker	40
Marguerite Brinkman	165
Marty Castle	80
John Hays	85
Marlene Hays	2.5
Flossie Hulszier	240
Bob Morris	2.5
Elaine Roller	75
Ruth Stiles	140
Bill Vatter	50
Virginia Warren	70

TOTAL 1,050

Fun Things We Found:

- A State of Ohio Vs case against a father and son who were charged with using dynamite to try to kill fish in the Mad River.
- The estate of Dr. Robert Rodgers, grandfather of comedian Jonathan Winters.
- One day a volunteer was sharing the details of a particularly juicy case regarding a man charged with running a house of ill-repute. Another volunteer at the table inquired about the name on the case...it turned out to be her grandfather who had died before she was born. (She HAD known about the case, so no family secrets were suddenly uncovered!)
- Another volunteer happened across the will for his great grandmother, whose first name he had never known.
- A guardianship case for a woman named Cinderella Foreman.
- An estate for a gentleman named Manly Goodfellow. The timing of this case was perfect...it was found the day before Natalie left for maternity leave. She kept her son-to-be's name secret from everyone until his birth, but she swore to everyone he would be named Manly Goodfellow!

Clark County Historical Society – Probate Housing Project Final Report

Purchases/Receive Inventory

File Edit Go To Window Help

Close New List Save Copy Delete Row Serial No Note Journal Event Layout Reports Attach Help

Vendor ID:

Purchase

Remit to: The Hollinger Corporation
9401 Northeast Drive
P.O. Box 8360
Fredericksburg, VA 22404

Ship to:
117 South Fountain Avenue
Address Line 2:
Springfield OH 45502
Country:

Date:

Invoice No.:

☐ Drop ship
☐ Waiting on bill
[View related transactions](#)

PAID IN FULL

Customer SO No. Customer invoice No. Terms Ship via A/P account

Apply to Purchase Order: 0.00 Apply to Purchases: **1,521.08**

Quantity	Item	U/M	Description	GL Account	Unit Price	Amount	Job
			Legal Folders	62100	0.00	966.00	
			Store Boxes	62100	0.00	397.50	
			Shipping	62100	0.00	157.58	

Other payments and credits: 1,521.08 1,521.08 Invoice total

Amount paid at purchase: 0.00 Net due

Vendor balance on May 11, 2012

Note: Shipping was generously covered by the Clark County Genealogical Society

COPY

THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
800 E. 17TH AVENUE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43211-2474
614-297-2408

To: Clark County Historical Society
Vendor ID: 11231
4/4/2012

086727

INVOICE NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	DISCOUNT	NET AMOUNT
3/16/12	3/16/2012	OHRAB Regrant Program	\$1,364.00	\$0.00	\$1,364.00
		Totals:	\$1,364.00	\$0.00	\$1,364.00
					42080

RECEIVED
MAY 03 2012
BY: _____



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE HUNTINGTON NATIONAL BANK
THIS CHECK MUST BE CASHED WITHIN 60 DAYS
25-2/440

CHECK DATE

CHECK NO.

086727

4/4/2012

86727

CHECK AMOUNT

PAY

One thousand three hundred sixty four and 00/100 Dollars

\$**1,364.00

TO THE
ORDER
OF

Clark County Historical Society
PO Box 2157
Springfield, OH 45501-2157

Jeffrey K. Ward

MP

⑈086727⑈ ⑆044000024⑆ 01891681459⑈

Order placed 5/10/12

Security Features Included

Details on Back

Clark County Historical Society – Probate Housing Project Final Report



Unprocessed Case Files



Processed Case Files



Unprocessed Box



Processed Box



Finished Boxes – Second Floor

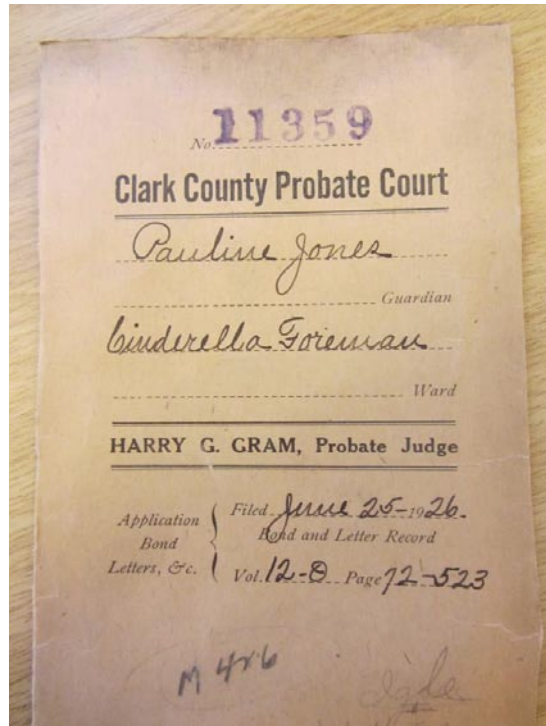




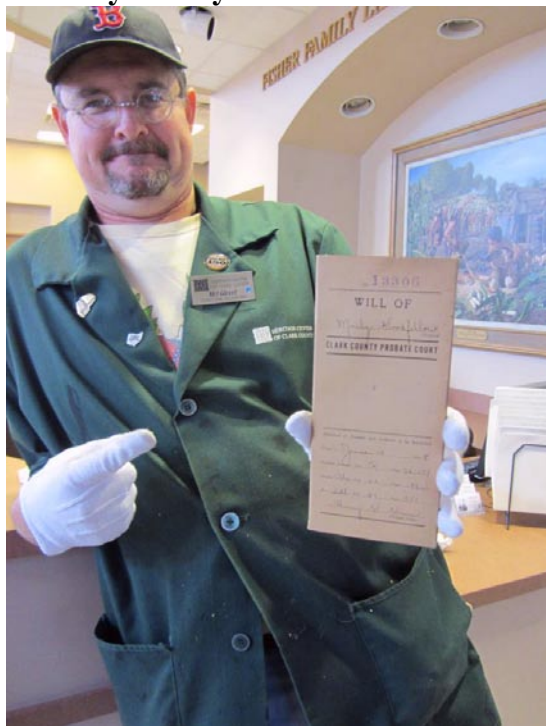
One of the many VERY large cases we found...5 people tackled it together!



Part of our Wednesday Processing Crew working on the giant case seen above.



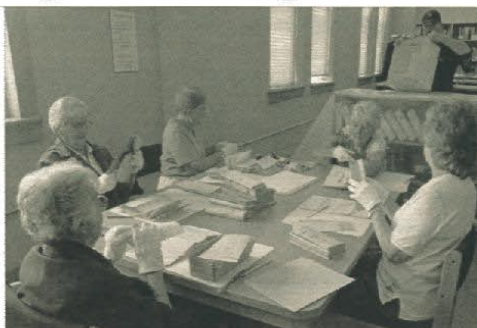
Cinderella: One of many interesting names found amongst the cases!
Mental Note: Don't let my three year old know that this name is an option!



Manly Goodfellow: What mother wouldn't want their daughter to marry that man?

History is Always Unfolding at the Heritage Center!

Last year we were fortunate to receive a grant from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board to process about 5,000 Probate Court records. Our wonderful volunteers in the library put in over 900 hours on the project and uncovered (and unfolded) lots of interesting things. In May Natalie Fritz presented about the success of the project at the annual Ohio Archivists conference. This year we received funding to continue and have already started working on the next batch of records. NOTE: We are happy to take on more volunteers for this project!



Ruth Stiles, Marguerite Brinkman, Flossie Hulsizer, Marty Castle, and Virginia Warren are seen here working together to tackle one single monstrous case.

Recognizing and Recalling Our History....



We recently started a new tradition: "What Is It Wednesday." Each week we post a photo of an artifact on our Facebook and Twitter pages to see if it can be identified. This artifact was shared a few weeks ago: a wooden water pipe from the downtown Springfield area. Prior to 1882, the city water system consisted of springs, wells, and cisterns looked after by the City Marshall whose duty it was to make sure that no one "defiled the public water supply." The system used cast iron pipes within the city, but the old reservoir with its wooden piping system remained in service for the downtown. The first municipal water plant and the city's first standpipe (costing \$88,500) were built in 1881. That standpipe was where the water tower stands today on Main St. above the Speedway and Dominos.

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Kasey Eichensehr ext. 234
Curator
Faith Freeman ext. 232
Community Relations Administrator
Natalie Fritz ext. 234
Curatorial Assistant
Mel Glover ext. 234
Curatorial Technician
Tom Payne
Maintenance
Anna Roberts ext. 221
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Bill Schwartz ext. 242
Development Coordinator
Roger Sherrock ext. 225
Chief Executive Officer
Virginia Weygandt ext. 224
Director of Collections

CHRONICLES OF CLARK COUNTY

Clark County
Historical
Society
Summer 2012
Vol. 42, No. 2



Summer 2012

COLLECTION'S CORNER

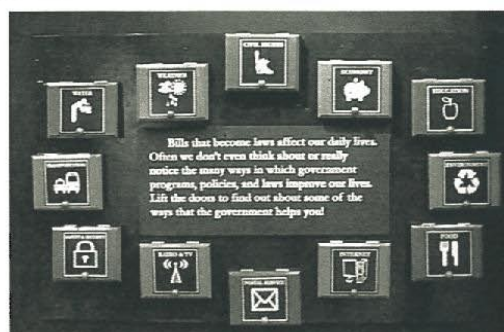
Virginia Weygandt-Director of Collections ~ Kasey Eichenschur-Curator ~ Natalie Fritz-Curatorial Assistant ~ Mel Glover-Curatorial Tech.

The first day of fall has already come and gone; summer disappeared in a puff of dry grass and there is a nip in the air. Come refresh yourself with an inspiring stroll through our exhibition galleries. Marvel again, or maybe for the first time, at the creativeness, ingenuity, and determination of the people who made this city and county great. Have a wonderful fall! ~ Virginia Weygandt, Director of Collections

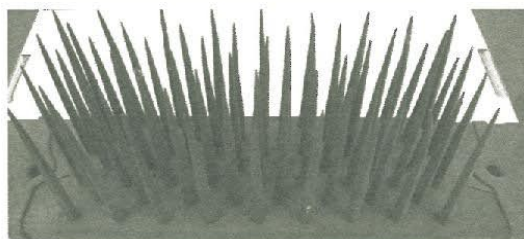


Working on the Probate Court records.
Clockwise from top: Marty Castle, Flossie
Hulsizer, Ruth Stiles, Virginia Warren, and
Marguerite Brinkman

Our Probate Court Record Processing Project is moving forward quickly! Since April our library volunteers and staff members have already finished processing over 2,000 records! We're finding all sorts of interesting stories in the cases (wills, estate settlements, guardianship records) and expect to finish about 4,000 cases by the end of our grant funded period in December. It's not too late to join in the fun and help us process, so call 937-324-0657 if you are interested!



In November 2010 we debuted a new political exhibit on the 2nd floor: *From Clark County to Washington D.C.: Service in the Nation's Capitol*. With a big election upon us this year, we invite you to browse the exhibit to learn about local government representatives who served us in Washington, voting rights and how they've changed, the election process, how government functions and helps us in our daily lives, and about how YOU can be involved and informed!



Is this a grizzly tool of destruction? Or something more benign? There are lots of creepy things lurking in the historical society collections, which we will be showcasing during the month of October in a new exhibit: *13 from the Vault: Stuff that Scares the Staff*. We've chosen some of the items that scare us the most and want to share the stuff of nightmares with all of you!

Over the past two years we've had fun in the archives processing thousands of the county's Probate Court records. With the help of many volunteers, these records have gone from damaging cramped quarters to their flattered state in acid free folders in nice new boxes. In 2012 volunteers worked on about 5,000 cases, bringing our total for 2011-2012 to over 10,000. This project was funded through two grants from the Ohio Historic Records and Archives Board (OHRAB). This year they rewarded us for our efforts by presenting us with a 2012 Achievement Award and \$250, which will be presented at the February 6 Winter Volunteer Meeting. We want to extend a great big thank you to our wonderful volunteers who gave their time to this ambitious project! We hope they all had a great time unfolding our history and preserving it for future generations! ~ Natalie



Probate Court Project Volunteers 2011-2012

Pat Baker	Amber Lopez
Sandy Bialik	Linda Moeller
Judy Bowman	Bob Morris
Amanda Brewer	Elaine Roller
Marguerite Brinkman	George Simon
Marty Castle	Ruth Stiles
John Hays	Bill Vatter
Marlene Hays	Virginia Warren
Flossie Hulsizer	



Guess who loves us?

The National Endowment for the Humanities loves us! Last spring we applied for one of their Preservation Assistance Grants, which are meant to help historical institutions take better care of their collections. We're doing a good job caring for and handling our artifacts, but storage has always been a problem – there never seems to be enough space, and there are definitely never enough of the acid-free, museum-quality (i.e. expensive) boxes that we use to organize our artifacts and protect them from damage. We told the NEH all about our collections, and they decided that our artifacts are so significant – not only to our local history but to national history – that we deserve an extra \$3,310 to buy special boxes and storage materials for them.

Not only will these boxes keep artifacts safe from humidity, dust, and acidic gasses (you wouldn't believe how much acidic gas is out there, *everywhere*), but they'll help us make the most of the storage space we have available. All we have to do on our end is get the artifacts in three of our storage spaces neatly tagged, boxed, and labeled by June 1, 2014. We can do it – but if any of our volunteers want to join in, we won't say no. There will be some special training involved, but after that you get to touch the cool stuff! ~ Kasey



Come see the exhibit *A Look Back at Clark County's African American History* in February. It looks at local businesses, churches, sports and military figures, musicians, organizations, and more!



Mel Glover has recently been commissioned to serve as Adjutant of the Army of the Ohio Federal Civil War Reenacting Battalion. He says that a \$3.00 will get you a cup of coffee, but it's still pretty neat! (At left, Mel with his wife, Annette, at A Night at the Museum, 2011).



Natalie Fritz, her husband John, and their daughter Paige (former "Intern") are happy to welcome our newest "Intern", Elliott James Fritz, born October 24. Keep an eye out for the little guy around the Heritage Center!