

OHRAB Grant: MassMu Archival Preservation and Access Project

Final Report January 2013

This preservation and access project was an ambitious task that included digitization and rehousing of three major collections. Museum staff focused a lot of time and effort on completing the project. Because of limited volunteer and intern resources, we had only two project-focused volunteers dedicated to this project. This made our progress much slower than anticipated. Therefore, we got as far as we could with the time and resources we had available. The grant proposal for this endeavor was written during our collections storage renovation project. The collections we proposed in our grant application for scanning and rehousing were in temporary storage and not easily accessible at the time. Therefore, our estimates differed from the reality as staff began processing and inventorying.

All archival supplies were purchased from Gaylord. Of the city records processed, staff successfully photographed 19 ledgers, which are ready for upload to the Museum's website. Our progress with the city records was slowed somewhat as more records were discovered. The Massillon Museum will continue in our preservation efforts in the remaining Jacob Coxey collection and Massillon City Records collections, with projected completion in June 2013.

This preservation project was split into three collections:

Massillon City Records

Volunteer Mark Pitocco has spent 105 hours photographing 6,718 pages of city records from 19 ledgers to date. Because Pitocco started in August 2012, he did not complete all 27 ledgers as was originally planned. At the onset of this project, staff did not realize that many of the ledgers contained more than 500 pages, and several additional boxes of loose papers were discovered that fell under the scope of city records. This became a much more time-consuming effort than had been originally anticipated. Pitocco intends to complete digitization of the ledgers. Grant funds were used to purchase boxes and tissue paper for each ledger in the collection, and folders and document boxes for loose papers. The grant funds covered the purchase of new archival boxes for every city record ledger and paper in the Museum's care.

Robert Peet Skinner Scrapbooks

Intern Justin Haynes spent 120 hours photographing 1,235 pages of 8 scrapbooks. Grant funds were used to purchase boxes for each scrapbook, and document boxes for remaining loose

papers. This collection is completely digitized and rehoused. As a result, it was the feature of our quarterly newsletter in Fall 2012, and was the focus of an exhibit in December 2012. This collection is ready for upload to our website.

Jacob S. Coxey Papers

Due to lack of intern resources, archivist Mandy Pond and volunteers Lois McHugh and Liz Rinehart stepped in to assist with the project, spending more than 40 hours doing so and completing digitization of more than 100 photographs and 620 letters from the Coxey collection. An exhibit surrounding Coxey's March on Washington has been planned for Spring 2013. Additional interns have been charged with completing this project in anticipation of that exhibit. Digitization is projected to be completed by June 2013. Grant funds were used to house additional unprocessed documents in the Coxey collection. Staff realized that many of the unprocessed boxes of "Coxey materials" were actually family items that did not focus on Coxey's political involvement or protest march to Washington D.C. These items were therefore removed from the scope of project, shifting funds for their rehousing to the additional city ledgers that were discovered during the inventory.

Public Access

Part of the project's focus was making these records available to the public in the Velma B. Erwin Research Room and on the Museum's website. The entire website is currently being moved to a new hosting service and digital files from these collections will be posted on the website as part of the Museum's online collections. The website is expected to launch in February 2013 at massillonmuseum.org. The materials are available for research use in their physical and digital forms in the Velma B. Erwin Research Room by appointment. The inventories of these collections, with finding aids, will be posted on the website to encourage research use.

As the Massillon Museum staff wanted to share this project with the public in order to enhance access to these important collections, it was decided that an exhibit focusing on Robert Peet Skinner would pique the public's interest. Intern Justin Haynes of Miami University (Ohio), who digitized the Skinner collection, worked for one month to write text panels and labels to accompany photograph reproductions from Skinner's scrapbooks that pertained to the 1903 mission to Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia). This text has also been translated into finding aids which will become available on the Museum's website in February 2013. A small portion of the

grant funds were used to accomplish this exhibit. The physical exhibit will be posted as a virtual exhibit on our website as well.

Positive Outcomes:

Because these records were digitized, it was easy to accommodate noted Robert Peet Skinner scholar, Negussie Ayele of Columbus, Ohio, during his research visit in November 2012. He requested copies of two entire scrapbooks, which was easy to facilitate with the images already prepared as a result of this project, and allowed us to search through photographs without disturbing the originals.

Many requests for Coxe materials were received in 2012. An out-of-state doctoral candidate requested materials for his dissertation, and an out-of-state researcher developing K-12 resources about Jacob Coxe were just two of those who were helped through this project. The Massillon Museum is involved in a celebration and exhibit about the 75th anniversary of the Little Steel Strike and related New Deal programs initiated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt, who consulted with Jacob Coxe, who had developed ideas for similar programs in the 1890s as a result of similarly high unemployment rates in the U.S.

This project became a large undertaking for the archives volunteers who worked on it. Having gone through this process, Museum staff will be better prepared to plan for future projects, and this will serve as a template as there are many other archival collections still in need of attention.

The Museum's system of evaluation for the project included the number of patrons who visit the website and facilities onsite to view these records. These numbers will be monitored over the next year.

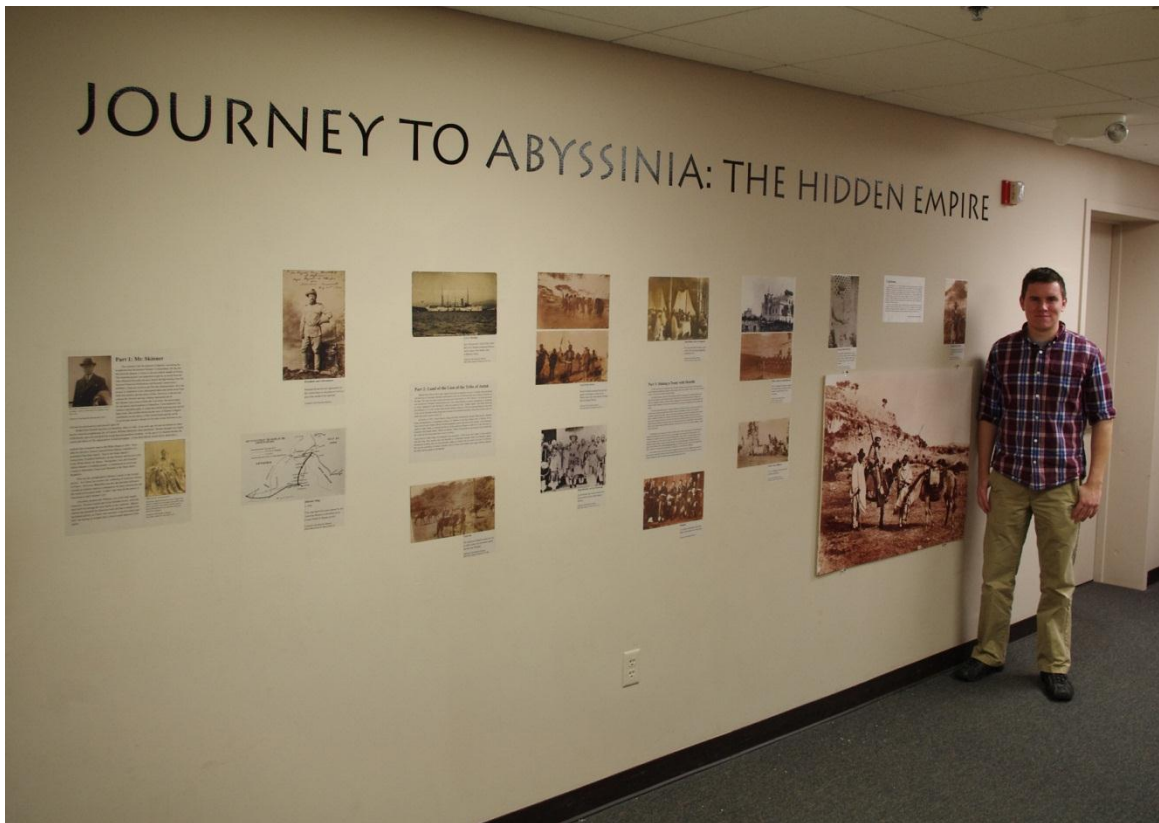
Copies of the newsletter article, annual report, and photographs of the project volunteers, researchers, and the collections before and after the project are included in this report below.



(Left) Archives intern Justin Haynes opens one of the many Skinner scrapbooks for photographing. The camera is mounted to a copy stand. He has the scrapbook supported so that the binding is not damaged during photography. (Right) Volunteer Mark Pitocco also uses the copy stand to digitize the city ledgers.



Robert Peet Skinner scholar, Negussie Ayele, examines Skinner's press scrapbooks from the 1903 mission to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), November 2012.



Intern Justin Haynes poses with the completed exhibit about Robert Peet Skinner's mission to Abyssinia.



City records on open shelving before (two photos) and the city records in their new OHRAB-funded boxes, labeled and ready to be put into the collections storage area.



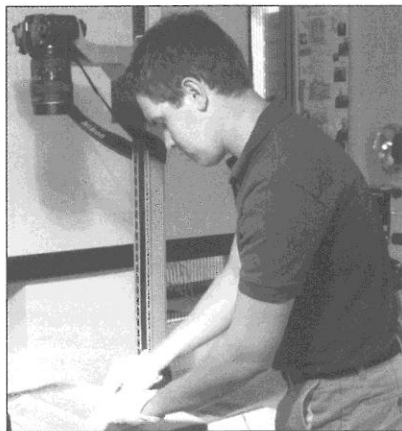
The Skinner scrapbooks housed in their original wooden crates (before).



The Skinner scrapbooks in their new boxes on the collections storage archive shelves (after).

ARCHIVES INTERNSHIPS

Intern Justin Haynes of Miami University scans the Robert Peet Skinner scrapbooks that detail the diplomat's adventures in Greece, Turkey, and Abyssinia. AMP



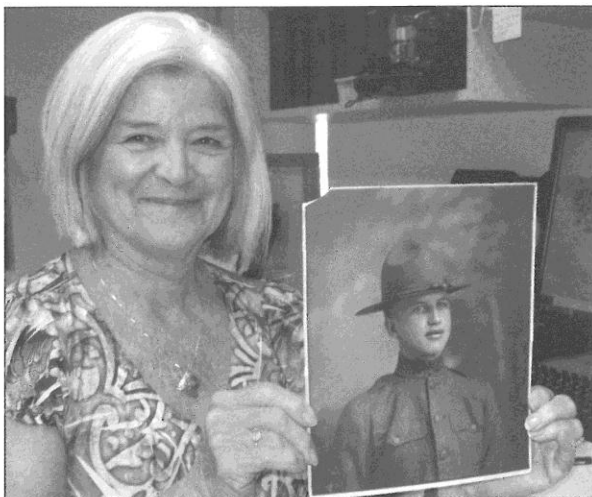
Archivist Mandy Pond is looking for Spring 2013 interns (January through May) to assist in scanning, organizing, and rehousing several archival collections. If you are interested, please send a resume and a letter of intent to Mandy Pond apond@massillonmuseum.org.

Photography Collection Scanning

The Massillon Museum preserves more than 60,000 photographs in its collection. Archivist Mandy Pond is seeking an intern to help digitize photographs, including negatives, slides, photo prints, and glass plate negatives. Experience in using Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Word, and digital cameras are preferred, but training is available.

Blueprints

A partially-inventoried collection of blueprints requires more work and research. This will involve calling historical societies and making inquiries on behalf of the Museum. This position is a perfect fit for anyone who enjoys architecture of the 1950s to the 1980s. Experience in using Microsoft Word is beneficial, but training is available. AMP



THE VELMA B. ERWIN RESEARCH ROOM

Pat McKee conducted research in the Velma B. Erwin Research Room in August, seeking family history, specifically information about Reinhardt Ausmus, an early aviator who built a plane in Massillon's Arlington Hotel in 1912. McKee, the pilot's great-niece, is holding a photograph from her personal collection, from which she made copies for the Massillon Museum archives. AMP

INTERN SPOTLIGHT: JUSTIN HAYNES

News photo
"Ambassador to Greece arrives on the S.S. Leviathan. The Honorable R.P. Skinner," c. 1926.

Collection of the Massillon Museum
(BC 2520.1)

GETTING TO KNOW MR. SKINNER



In 1903, President Roosevelt chose Robert Peet Skinner, a 37-year-old Massillonian to lead the expedition to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). The objective was to establish the lasting economic relationship between the United States and Ethiopia that exists to this day. The grueling journey traversed deserts on horseback and dealt with people who still believed the world was flat.

This summer I had the pleasure of digitally converting the scrapbooks that documented Skinner's extraordinary life that led him from the deserts of Africa to the sun-soaked islands of Greece. This scanning project was supported in part by an award from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board, through funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission's (NHPRC) National Archives and Records Administration.

At first, I thought my project was going to be easy; all I had to do was take a picture and put it on a computer—how hard could that be? I was very wrong. Every page seemed to have its own personality, from the way the pictures were placed to the number of newspaper clippings there were. Each shot had to be taken with care. Every document was a page of history. As you can imagine, this process was slow; it was slower than usual, thanks to Skinner himself. If Dos Equis had been around during his time, Mr. Skinner would have been named the most interesting man in the world! He traveled across a desert in a suit; created a trade agreement with King Menelik, a direct descendant of King Solomon; and even played golf during a naval battle! It is impossible to write down all of this man's accomplishments in such a small space.

Now the project is completed—every photograph taken and stored, saved from malicious mildew and the stains of time. However, it did not end without Mr. Skinner's leaving a lasting impression on me. He was a man of faith and conviction. He cared deeply for his family and hometown. He was the kind of man who could have a conversation with anyone. His life wasn't about being the perfect man, it was about being the best he could be. I imagine him as a curious perfectionist, wanting only what was good and right. He didn't set out to make history; he wanted to experience it. Mr. Skinner lived life to the fullest.

Words barely do Mr. Skinner's legacy justice. That is why I am working with Mandy Pond and others to create an exhibit which will bring Mr. Skinner's story and legacy to life in the Massillon Museum. This new project will be filled with pictures and artifacts. I want it to be a tangible experience for everyone to enjoy. Mr. Skinner's story is one that needs to be told; if anything, I want everyone who visits this future exhibit to leave with the inspiration that even a child of Massillon can make an impact on the global stage. JH

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COLLECTIONS, ARCHIVES, AND RESEARCH

letters, city ledgers, or photographs. Your name will appear on the outside of the box acknowledging your contribution. In addition, your name will be listed on the Preservation Honor Roll on our website and in our newsletters. (Levels: \$10 one box or \$25 three boxes)

Velma B. Erwin Research Room, Archives, and Library Update

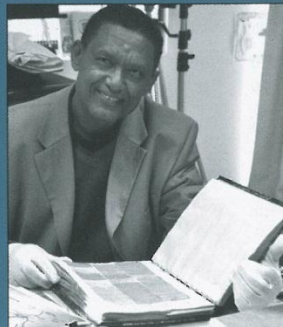
In 2012, the Velma B. Erwin Research Room hosted many researchers. Pat McKee researched her uncle Reinhardt Ausmus, an early aviator in Massillon; Negussie Ayele, noted Robert Peet Skinner scholar, pored over hundreds of press clippings and photographs from Skinner's personal collection; Kent State University Department of Psychology Emeritus Professor F. Robert Treichler researched the potteries of Massillon for his upcoming book; the Charles McInnis family, relatives of William T. Mathews, viewed a recently acquired Mathews painting and scrapbook; and many other researchers inquired via telephone, email, and Facebook.

Robert Lang and Peter Collante, of the Washington, D.C. area, visited Massillon in February to help Director Nicholas Coon conduct research on a painting of Abraham Lincoln by artist William T. Mathews (1821-1905). Lang and Collante are organizing an exhibition of artifacts related to Presidents Lincoln and Washington and General Ulysses S. Grant to premiere sometime in 2013.

We received a grant to scan the three major archives. Supported in part by an award from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board, through funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), National Archives and Records Administration, this project

will be fully posted on our website in 2013 with all of these archives available to the public. The Jacob S. Coxey papers and photos tell the story of the first protest march on Washington D.C., which originated in Massillon; Robert Peet Skinner's collection of scrapbooks and photos detail this Massillonian's diplomatic career in Greece, Turkey, France, and Ethiopia. Ledgers detailing the various departments of the City of Massillon in the late 1800s and early 1900s including police officers, firefighters, city council, and the city jail.

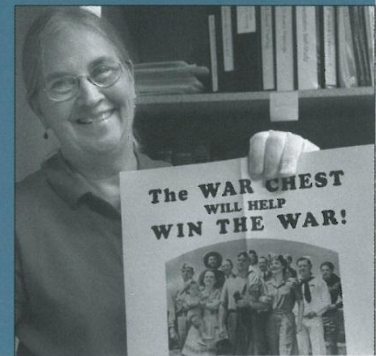
Over 3,000 non-circulating books are housed in the Museum's library. Dr. Tammy Kay Bixler-Zalesinsky oversaw the massive project of assigning a Dewey Decimal number for each book, and supervised several volunteers who input the books into Past Perfect, the Museum's electronic collections database. There are still hundreds of books to be processed and organized on shelves this year in the research and storage areas. Archivist Mandy Pond and many interns and volunteers continue to scan photographs, archives, and document items



LEFT: Negussie Ayele researched documents relating to Massillonian Robert Peet Skinner in the Velma B. Erwin Research Room.

donated to the collection. This year, hundreds of glass plate negatives from local photographers were scanned; several were posted to our Facebook page. Early home movie films transferred to DVD can be found on the Museum's YouTube channel. We hope to continue our digitization efforts during the coming year and share the results on our website.

New acquisitions to the library and archives include Bishop Jean Baptiste Massillon sermons printed in 1760, Jacob S. Coxey photographs from his campaign for Mayor of Massillon in the 1930s, a land document printed on sheepskin and signed by James Madison (gift of Ann and Gregory Kreider), scrapbooks from the United Way of Greater Stark County from the 1930s to the present (gift of the United Way), and archival items documenting the history of the Massillon Club and the YWCA, both organizations having closed their doors this year.



Massillon Museum Annual Report 2012, published January 2013.