

OHRAB Grant Mid-Project Report

August 31, 2018

Organization: The University of Akron, University Libraries, Archival Services

Project Title: Processing the Opie Evans Papers

Project Director: S. Victor Fleischer

Telephone: 330-972-6253

E-mail: svfleis@uakron.edu

Summary of Activities and Accomplishments:

The purpose of this project is to process the Opie Evans Papers by sorting, arranging, preserving, and describing the collection so that it can be used by students, faculty, and other researchers. The Opie Evans Papers is a diverse collection of photographs, documents, printed items, and artifacts relating to the life and occupations of Opie Evans (1906-2000), a local African-American photographer, publisher, and businessman. There are also sound and video recordings that are not being processed in this phase.

Processing began May 8, 2018 and has been conducted by the Special Projects Processing Archivist, Theodore Mallison. Nicole Merzweiler, the former Special Projects Processing Archivist listed in the grant application, resigned her position in mid-April, so we had to search for a new Special Projects Archivist to work on this and other projects. Theodore Mallison was hired on May 1, 2018 and has been working on this project. He has a Master of Arts in Arts Administration from The University of Akron and a Bachelor of Arts in Education (History and Social Studies Concentration) from Kent State University. He is the former Curator at the Summit County Historical Society in Akron, where he gained valuable experience in curating the organization's artifacts collection and processing and preserving their archival materials. As of August 21, 2018, Mr. Mallison has completed the processing of the photographs, documents, printed items, and artifacts from the Evans Papers.

The initial survey of the collection revealed that most of the boxes were very disorganized. There was no discernible original order to the collection, and it became very clear early on that an artificial arrangement would need to be imposed. Boxes and contents were very dirty, and there was evidence of water damage and vermin infestation. Much of the contents appeared to have been dumped into the boxes with no regard for organization. Papers were bent, crumpled, and torn. Photographic prints were very curled, indicating long-term storage in fluctuating temperatures. One box containing materials related to *the Akronite* newspaper was somewhat organized and seemed to represent something of an "original order" that might have been used while Evans was publishing the paper.

The first week of processing was spent conducting a first sort of the collection. This involved sorting the materials into broad categories such as correspondence, writings, news clippings, photographs, etc. *The Akronite* newspapers and associated materials that had been kept together were set aside.

At this point, potential series and sub-series began to be plotted out. Also, materials were weeded out that would not be archived and should be discarded or shredded, such as medical bills, receipts, junk mail, catalogs, illegible notes, and unused greeting cards.

During the second sort, the Processing Archivist spent time refining the series and organizing these into temporary folders and boxes. Deciding on series was somewhat difficult because it was clear that Opie Evans had kept records that related to his various occupations and pastimes, although he had not kept anything in clear order. Thus, it was tempting to try and arrange the collection by “functions of the creator” as it seemed the most likely way that Evans would have arranged his papers while he was alive. However, this arrangement would make it very difficult to determine a permanent location for his photographs, since Evans took photographs in almost every area of his life. It was determined that arrangement by type was the most logical method. Therefore, the series that finally emerged were Correspondence, Personal Papers, Writings, Printed Material, Artifacts, and Photographic Material.

Still, this left the problem of what to do with the *Akronite* materials, which had obviously been kept together by Evans intentionally. There were also other materials relating to other areas of Evans’ life such as broadcasting, side businesses, and charitable work that seemed to have greater research value kept together. It was determined that a Subject Files series would be helpful to keep these special materials together.

The Processing Archivist then began putting things into alphabetical and chronological order within each series and sub-series and began the process of humidifying and flattening the curled photos. Since the flattening of the photos was a protracted process, the Processing Archivist also used this time to complete the final permanent foldering and rehousing of the other series, including labeling folders. Documents and printed material were foldered into buffered archival folders and rehoused in archival boxes. Work also began on writing the finding aid.

To flatten the photographs, a humidification chamber was used to relax them. Then, the photographs were pressed under heavy weight, sandwiched between blotter paper and polyester web, as recommended by conservators, in order to flatten them out. As this was being done, they were also being sorted into stacks by subject, as narrowly as possible. Most of the photos were not identified by Evans, but many local buildings and public figures in the photographs were identifiable by Archives staff.

By the time all the photographs had been flattened and sorted by subject, the rehousing and labeling of the other series was complete and a draft finding aid was completed minus the photographs. Then the photographic prints, slides, and negatives were foldered in unbuffered archival folders and rehoused in archival boxes and these locations were added to the finding aid, which has been submitted recently to the department head and project manager, Victor Fleischer, for review and feedback.

In the coming months the department head will review the draft finding aid, note any necessary changes or adjustments, and return to the Processing Archivist. The Processing Archivist will then address the comments of the department head by adjusting and finalizing the finding aid. Once completed, the Processing Archivist will then post a PDF version of the finding aid in The University of Akron Archival Services' Digital Repository at <http://cdm15960.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15960coll3> and enter the finding aid into the OhioLINK EAD Finding Aid Repository. He will also provide a link from the short description on the archives' website at https://www.uakron.edu/libraries/archives/collections/collections.dot?search_query=evans and will send the final finding aid to the University Libraries' Cataloging Department to be cataloged. A member of the Cataloging staff will then catalog the collection at the collection level in the University Libraries' catalog, which will also include a link to the finding aid. The remainder of this work should only take two to three months, and therefore, we should have no problem completing this entire project before the December deadline.

Archival Services already has done some publicity to announce the grant. An announcement was created and submitted to the Society of Ohio Archivists and will appear in their upcoming Fall 2018 newsletter. In addition, an announcement was put in The University of Akron's e-mail blast called E-Mail Digest, which goes out to thousands of employees, alumni, and friends of the university (please see attachments for examples of publicity). Additional publicity will be done after the processing of the collection is finished to announce that the project is completed and that the collection is available to the public.

University of Akron Archives Receives Three Grants

Archival Services of University Libraries at The University of Akron recently received three grants. The largest, a \$37,310 grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation, will be used to reformat and digitize 14 nitrate motion picture films from The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Collection that document the construction and operation of the dirigibles *U.S.S. Akron* and *U.S.S. Macon*, two of the most significant airships in lighter-than-air history. The archives also received a \$4,680 grant from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board to process and preserve the papers of Opie Evans, a local African-American photographer who documented the history of Akron's Black community. The third grant, in partnership with Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens, includes \$14,957 from the Ohio Humanities Council to produce a documentary titled "Lost Voices of the Great War: Summit County in the First World War," which documents Akron and Summit County's contributions to World War I. The partners hope to air the documentary on PBS around Veteran's Day. A free film screening will take place on October 30th at 7pm in the Auditorium of the Akron-Summit County Public Library in downtown Akron. For more information about the film and other events and exhibits in Summit County commemorating the 100th anniversary of World War I, please visit www.SummitWWI.org.



August 30, 2018 [Submit News](#) | [Submission Guidelines](#) | [Archives](#)

TODAY'S HEADLINES

- ▶ [Faculty and student teams complete intense I-Corps Teams program](#)
- ▶ [Blue and Gold Days meet Five-Star Fridays](#)
- ▶ [New outdoor furniture brightens landscape across campus](#)
- ▶ [Archival Services receives grants](#)
- ▶ [Business Analytics Innovation Summit — register by Sept. 3](#)
- ▶ [Entrepreneurship is a topic on 'Zips Unlimited' this Saturday](#)
- ▶ [Black Alumni Tailgate and Reunion to be held Sept. 8](#)
- ▶ [Auditions scheduled for 'Big Love'](#)
- ▶ [Repeated Items](#)

TODAY'S NEWS

Faculty and student teams complete intense I-Corps Teams program

Two teams of faculty, students and a community mentor completed the National Science Foundation's I-Corps Teams program, a more intense follow-on program to UA's I-Corps Site. These participating teams each spoke to at least 100 customers as part of a seven-week quest to more precisely define a business model and path to market for a new UA technology.

The outdoor furniture is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and part of a larger effort led by the Downtown Akron Partnership. The design and installations are being done by Hazel Tree Interiors, the same firm that has placed similar furniture throughout downtown Akron over the last two years.



That the furniture echoes the style of what is in place downtown is a deliberate choice, says **Kyle Kutuchief**, Akron program director of the Knight Foundation.

“We want to strengthen the connection between the University and downtown Akron,” explains Kutuchief. “University Avenue is a key connector, from Bierce Library right down to Lock 3 on Main Street.

“We want University of Akron students to view downtown as theirs — a place to have a cup of coffee, socialize with friends, send emails, have a meal,” continues Kutuchief. “We’re sending the signal to everyone that this is public space. So, come and enjoy.”

On campus, the outdoor seating is seen as a welcome addition.

“We will be watching to see how the new furniture is used, and adjust the placement accordingly over time,” says **Stephen Myers**, interim chief planning and facilities officer. “The furniture is fun and we hope everyone enjoys it. It’s metal, so we’ll be storing it over the winter and bringing it back out in the spring. We expect it to last for years.”

Archival Services receives grants

Archival Services of University Libraries recently received three grants. They are:

- National Film Preservation Foundation (\$37,310) — to reformat and digitize 14 nitrate motion picture films from The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Collection that document the construction and operation of the dirigibles U.S.S. Akron and U.S.S. Macon, two of the most significant airships in lighter-than-air history.
- Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board (\$4,680) — to process and preserve the papers of the late **Opie Evans**, a local African-American photographer who documented the history of Akron's black community.
- Ohio Humanities Council (\$14,957) — in partnership with Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens, to produce a documentary titled "Lost Voices of the Great War: Summit County in World War I," which documents Akron and Summit County's contributions to the First World War. The partners hope to air the documentary on PBS around Veterans Day.

A free film screening will take place on Oct. 30 at 7 p.m. in the Akron-Summit County Public Library Auditorium, 60 South High St., in downtown Akron. For more information about the film and other events and exhibits in Summit County commemorating the 100th anniversary of World War I, please visit [Summit County and the Great War](#) online.

Business Analytics Innovation Summit — register by Sept. 3

The University of Akron
College of Business Administration
**Business Analytics
Innovation Summit**

**Data Analytics in Your
Business DNA**

September 13 | Quaker Station
7:00am-1:00pm | The University of Akron

Visit uakron.edu/cba/BAIS for more info

GOODYEAR

talend | expedient | BlueChip | ORACLE | Microsoft