

OHIO HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes: April 26, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Fred Previts (ex officio), Ron Davidson, Russ Pollitt, Margaret Roulett, Tina Ratcliff, Cindy Hofner, Robin Heise, Liz Plummer (ex officio), Meghan Hays, Stephen Badenhop, Tami Kelly, Michelle Sweetser

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Burt Logan (ex officio), Virginia Dressler

OHS STAFF PRESENT: Theresa Hopewood, Todd Kleismit

GUESTS: Amy Brickey

I. Welcome

Davidson called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. and introductions were made.

II. Consent Agenda

- a. January 25, 2019 Minutes: Ratcliff motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Hofner. Minutes approved.
- b. Ohio Electronic Records Committee Report
- c. Ohio County Archivists and Records Managers Association Report
- d. OHRAB Re grants Committee Report

III. Strategic Discussion

- a. Ohio History Connection Update: Todd Kleismit reported that the Ohio History Connection opened a new sports exhibit at the Ohio History Center. The NFL will also be announcing a sixth round draft pick tomorrow live from the History Center. There will also be a free football camp for area youths tomorrow. Kleismit also thanked everyone who attended the annual Statehood Day event. Senate Bill 30, that creates the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, was signed into law by Governor DeWine this week. Megan Wood of the Ohio History Connection has been invited to serve on the commission that will be chaired by Secretary of State Frank LaRose. The commission will begin meeting in May. The 19th amendment passed in Ohio in June of 1919 and passed nationally in August 1920. Kleismit shared that the State History Day contest is tomorrow. He also mentioned that the state budget was introduced in March and proposed an increase to the Ohio History Connection's education and historical collections line that supports museums around the state. The House of Representatives is making amendments and will pass its version around May 8th when it will be sent to the Senate. The Governor will sign the budget on June 30th to take effect July 1st.

Ratcliff asked about the status of the World Heritage sites. Kleismit responded that work continues on the nomination of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, including sites in Newark, Chillicothe and Warren County. He added that they are still a couple of years away from getting on the list and are looking to get resolution for the golf course in Newark. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks was authorized to be the next U.S. site to move forward in the process and Kleismit believes that the sites could be inscribed by 2022.

- b. Membership Update: Davidson shared there are two vacancies left. The board is waiting to fill the one gubernatorial vacancy next year in order to have the gubernatorial appointments on a different rotation schedule. There is also a vacancy for an additional organizational representative. Hays and Pollitt have been reappointed and Hofner is eligible for reappointment by the Ohio Council of County Officials.
- c. OHRAB Budget: Previts shared that the History Day Award checks would be sent out soon to the recipients. All regrant money was distributed to applicants who submitted their paperwork. The board is ahead of budget for the travel and meeting expenses. Roulette and Plummer are working on the electronic records brochure that has been budgeted.
- d. Manumission Records Project Presentation: Amy Brickey, Intern for the Greene County Records Center and Archives, and Heise discussed the project Brickey worked on in 2018 as an OHRAB Archives Fellow. Heise said that the goal of the project was to gain an understanding of where manumission and freedom papers could be located, learn about what other records might exist for African American genealogy research and follow the journey of African Americans being viewed as property to people. Heise stated that the idea for this project began in November 2015 when former OHRAB member Pari Swift invited county archivists and records managers to a grant brainstorming meeting. Meeting in January 2016, representatives from ten counties and members of OHRAB discussed possible grant project ideas focusing on underrepresented constituencies, such as manumission records, industrial school records and incarceration records. Meeting attendees decided to focus on manumission records and in 2017 submitted a grant application to the NHPRC to locate and digitize these records. The project was not funded and one of the concerns cited by reviewers was not knowing how many records exist. Following this, in 2018 OHRAB received funding to implement an Archival Fellowship program and the inaugural project was to identify manumission records in eleven counties in western and southwestern Ohio.

Brickey then described her search for records as one of the OHRAB fellowship recipients. During her fellowship Brickey visited probate courts, records & archives centers, county auditor offices, county recorder offices, local historical societies and genealogical societies, and county libraries. She started in Greene County for the first two weeks and found 125 names in the Clerk of Courts Emancipation Records and another 59 in deed records. Brickey mentioned that the descriptions of the people were very interesting. Montgomery County was the last county she visited and she did research in the Montgomery County Records Center and Archives which has two floors of records.

Brickey then demonstrated the story map she created to share the information she had collected. She mentioned that she found the results of the Greene and Logan county maps the most interesting. Heise shared that while at the 2018 National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators conference she attended a session on the Maryland State Archives on finding slave records. The Maryland State Archives used census data to supplement data found in manumission records and Heise asked Brickey to look at this information for Ohio. Brickey then reviewed the 1850 and 1860 censuses for the eleven counties surveyed during the fellowship project, recording the names and birth locations of black and mulatto individuals. This information could then be compared to the manumission records. Brickey then showed the story maps she created for her census research.

Hofner asked about the lack of participation from Northwest Ohio counties in the 2017 grant application and asked where the records were found and how were they identified as manumission records or pertaining to African Americans. Heise responded that in the case with Greene County, the records were separated out of Common Pleas Court records. Hofner asked Brickey if she would be available to do a similar presentation for the Clerks of Court Association sometime between June 11 and June 14 and Hofner and Brickey will further discuss the possibility. Pollitt also expressed interest in Heise and Brickey presenting for the African American Genealogical Society of Cleveland.

- e. Committee and Organizational Updates: Ratcliff shared that the Awards Committee awarded the OHRAB History Day award in the senior division to the website *Jesse Owens and America's Discrimination*. She said there were three really good submissions in the junior division and the committee chose *Collinwood's Call to Action: The Collinwood School Fire Tragedy and Its*

Impact on Fire Safety as the winner. Ratcliff added that the announcement for the Achievement Awards nominations will be going out in September.

Davidson reported that the Regrant Committee distributed \$15,321 to eight different institutions. There was one applicant that did not receive funding and the committee provided the institution with suggestions if they wanted to reapply in the future. Davidson said that a second opportunity will be announced and Hays asked if it could go out in May. Davidson replied that it could be announced in mid-May with a deadline of June 15. The awards could be announced at the end of June.

Davidson shared that there was a State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) town hall presented by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) a month ago. The town hall discussed a new grant program for SHRABs which offers strategic planning and programming grants of up to \$12,000. These grants are to help the SHRABs get organized. He also reported that the NHPRC is emphasizing underserved communities and minority based projects. Davidson shared a map of all of the regrants given by OHRAB which showed that Northeast and Southwest Ohio have received the most, followed by Central Ohio. Northwest and Southeast Ohio have received the least. Davidson would like to know why the board has been receiving fewer applications, in particular from Northwest and Southeast Ohio. Previats suggested working with the Ohio Local History Alliance regional coordinators for Northwest and Southeast Ohio to promote the regrants at the spring regional meetings. Roulett suggested encouraging specific organizations to apply. Hays added that a template for a form letter could be created and could be sent as a pilot program to some specific counties. Ratcliff suggested nominating an institution and helping them prepare their application. Plummer said that OHRAB does not have a targeted email list and Davidson mentioned sending the link to the grant video by email.

Plummer asked Hofner about reaching different levels of local governments. Hofner replied that townships are separate entities from the counties and she will reach out to them. Davidson mentioned that the regrant committee will be revising the application instructions and Badenhop added that applicants need to be specific about their records. Hays suggested surveying those who did not apply to see what the obstacles could be. Plummer asked how long it typically takes to complete a grant application and Hays responded more than a couple of hours. Plummer asked about reducing the narrative to one page. Hays suggested asking for possible grant ideas in November and Davidson replied that the NHPRC currently reviews preliminary applications for its grants. Pollitt suggested that the board could have conversations about possible grant ideas at any point during the year.

Roulett asked about having a scoring rubric. Pollitt suggested talking to Angela O’Neal at the Columbus Metropolitan Library. He and Plummer also suggested speaking at board and chapter meetings instead of just conferences. Hays also suggested a webinar about the grants.

ACTION ITEM: Hays will compile and send to the regrant committee the tasks to prepare for the 2020 regrants.

[Adjourned for lunch at Noon.]

IV. New Business

Davidson shared that the board’s application to the NHPRC for funding in 2020 is due in June. Previts distributed copies of the proposed budget and a summary of the projects. Roulett asked if there are any major changes and Previts replied that the board is seeking to start a couple of new programs with the Citizen Archivist Award and the professional development scholarships and will also be requesting funding to offer the archival fellowships again. Ratcliff mentioned the stipend that the Citizen Archivist Award recipient will receive and board members discussed how the stipend could be used by the recipient for continuing education or by the recipient’s institution. Sweetser asked about giving the volunteer a nominal award and Badenhop suggested that if the person is volunteering at a genealogical society, the money could be designated to that society.

The board then discussed the professional development scholarships, expanding the list of possible conferences that are eligible and revising the eligibility requirements.

Davidson stated that the board’s strategic plan runs through December 31, 2020 and one of the action items is to use OHRAB’s website and social media accounts to publicize records preservation and access projects. Board members discussed using the website and Facebook page first before exploring other options. Davidson also mentioned that the board needs to address the objective of educating on the dangers of ignoring the long-term problem of electronic records preservation.

V. Closing

Badenhop motioned to adjourn, seconded by Hays, all in favor. The next meeting will be held Friday, August 23rd at the Ohio History Center in the 3rd floor Cardinal Classroom from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.