

Clark County Historical Society
Project: Oral History Website Development Project

OHRAB Interim Report

31 August 2022

Summary:

Our Website Development Project is a sequel project to our 2019 OHRAB grant-funded project to digitize our collection of oral history interviews that date from 1986 to 2002. Now that these records have been digitized and thanks to OHRAB's grant funding, we are now building an online video archive on our website. Guests—researchers and public alike—will be able to search through descriptions and PDF transcripts for keywords that will point them to videos that would be of interest and/or of use to them.

Progress Report:

Torch Labs, our web developer, has done the bulk of the work with Jane Fischer, Director of Development, and Natalie Fritz, Archivist, in support. The first step we took was to purchase a plugin, SearchWP, that enabled Wordpress to trawl through PDFs. This plugin was crucial for our final product. Each interview has an individual description, but these descriptions are broad and not all inclusive. To accurately populate a search result page, we needed the transcripts to be searchable in their PDF format (see Figure 1 below). With this plugin, even if someone was *not*

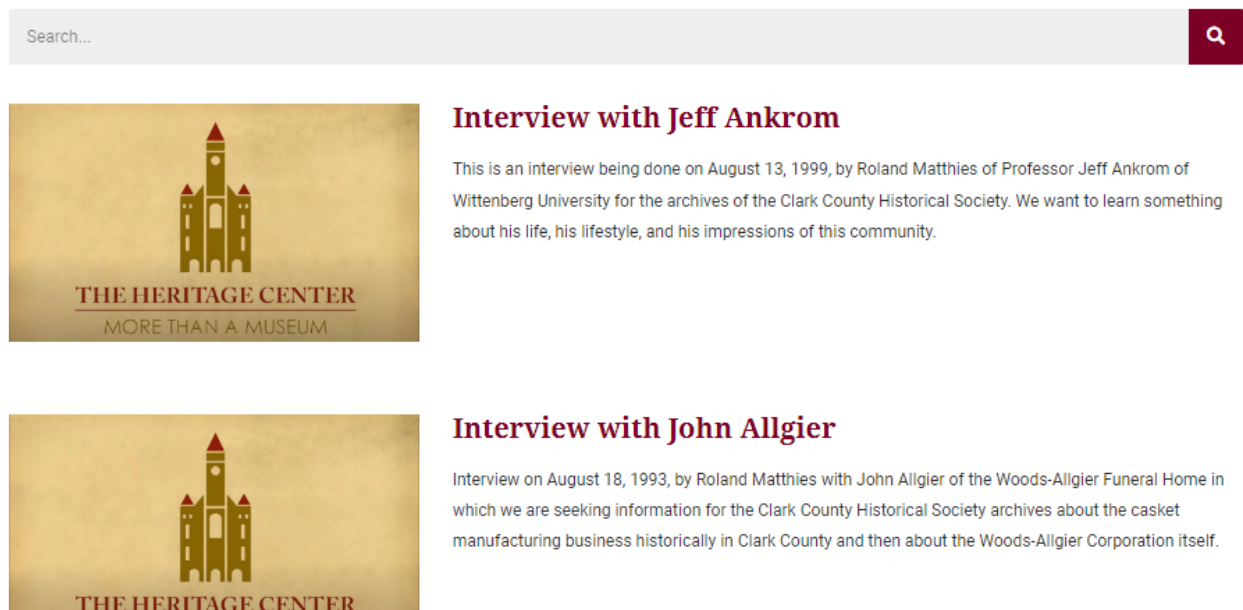


Figure 1. An example of the Oral History search function. If someone wanted to see all the interviews conducted by Roland Matthies, then this is an example of what would pop up. (Since these oral history interviews were not filmed, each video is audio only and has the same thumbnail image.)

specifically interviewed for their involvement in Rotary, for example, but happened to mention their Rotary membership in their interview, that video will now pop up in a search for Rotary. Torrch set up SearchWP and ran tests of the plugin.

Torrch then created a new custom post type for the Wordpress plugin we use to edit our website content (Elementor), created a Video Archive template, and created a test record using sample data (see Figure 2). The data used for their test record was provided by Natalie and Jane, but Thomas Yeater, a Wittenberg student and volunteer, deserves the credit for building a comprehensive index of our Oral History Collection. The sample record below uses Thomas' work. The video itself is hosted on YouTube but embedded into our website. Viewers will be able to watch on our website or, if they prefer, continue to YouTube to watch, like, and subscribe to our channel. We have included a button that will open a PDF of the transcript in a new browser tab, since our YouTube videos only have auto-generated closed captioning and can be inaccurate.



Interview with John Allgier

Interviewer: Matthies, Roland

Date: 08/18/1993

Length: 19.0

Interview Topics: Casket manufacturing, local funeral homes, Springfield Metallic Casket, Woods-Allgier Funeral Home

[Transcript](#)

Interview on August 18, 1993, by Roland Matthies with John Allgier of the Woods-Allgier Funeral Home in which we are seeking information for the Clark County Historical Society archives about the casket manufacturing business historically in Clark County and then about the Woods-Allgier Corporation itself.

Figure 2. An example of the type of individual record that can be pulled using our website.

So far, we estimate that we are roughly 50% of the way through the project. Jane and Torrch are working in batches: Jane uploads transcripts to Google Drive for Torrch with another document that links those transcripts to their respective interviews on YouTube. To date, 90 out of 120 interviews have had online records created by Torrch's team. The project looks on track for an end of the year completion date. After Torrch has completed data entry, Torrch and CCHS staff will review the interview records and do some QA before launching the video archive publicly.

To date, Torrch and CCHS staff have spent roughly 35 hours to date on this project. We will be invoiced for this project upon its completion, so no grant or matching funds have been expensed yet. We have not yet publicized this project as we'd like to have a finished project ready for guests to interact with and explore. Once the project is launched, we're hoping to advertise on our social media platforms, the local paper, and a local newsletter.