

Institution/Organization Name Ohio University

Project Title The Columbus and Hocking Coal and Iron Company, Records Processing and Remediation

Project Director name, telephone number, and e-mail address

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Summary of Project Activities and Accomplishments

• **Titles, series titles, dates and cubic footage/number of images scanned, of records addressed by your project.**

The Columbus and Hocking Coal and Iron Company (CHCICO) collection was the object of this grant and processing project. In total there are 13 series in the collection including, Letter Books, Telegraph Notes and Correspondence, Ore Scale Books, Deed Books, Level Books (Engineers' Books), Store Books and Inventories, Cash Books and Accounts, Time Books, Rental Books, Shipment Records, Payroll Books and Slips, Ledgers, and Miscellaneous. Most of these series were based on series created when the collection was originally described. This collection thoroughly documents the everyday business operations of the Columbus and Hocking Coal and Iron Company and is especially important to local populations still dealing with the environmental and socio-economic issues caused by such companies.

This grant covered work for a large collection and allowed us to holistically approach preservation actions such as assessing condition, removing dirt and dust, foldering, and boxing contents, as well as then updating the collection description. In addition to the original material we were aware of, we also located a large amount of additional material consisting of ledgers not in boxes, and paper in boxes with no folders or arrangement.

At the beginning of the process, we had an estimate of 80 cubic feet for the collection. After reboxing and locating all parts of the collection which was housed in multiple locations in our storage area, we ended up with just under 110 cubic feet of physical material dating from 1878 to 1937. In all, every part of the collection was worked on in some capacity.

The full breakdown of the physical collection is as follows:

108.5 cubic feet of physical material in 78 legal manuscript boxes, 36 smaller flat boxes, 36 larger flat boxes, 105 ledgers not boxed. Approximately 5 cubic feet of material was deemed unsalvageable due to excessive mold and water damage.

• **Copies of catalog entries and other finding aids (these might include screen shots, links, and before and after photos), if applicable.**

Ohio University is anticipating ArchivesSpace adoption by the end of January 2024. When the grant was written, we were hoping for a fall 2023 adoption. As such, the finding aid was updated as material was reboxed and arranged intellectually into multiple spreadsheets. Each spreadsheet was then combined into one large ArchivesSpace compatible bulk upload Excel file. This file is ready to import when we

have ArchivesSpace installed. We tested the import via the ArchivesSpace sandbox. Below are two screenshots showing all the series and subseries, and then a more detailed view showing some of the updated file level description and materials intellectually arranged in chronological order.

Home / Resources / Columbus and Hocking Coal and Iron Company Collection / Edit	
<div> <div>Enable Reorder Mode</div> <div>Auto-Expand All</div> <div>Collapse Tree</div> <div>Add Child</div> <div>Load via Spreadsheet ?</div> <div>Rapid Data Entry</div> </div>	
Columbus and Hocking Coal and Iron Company Collection	Collection
➤ Series 1: Letter Books	Series
➤ Series 2: Telegraph Notes and Correspondence	Series
➤ Series 3: Ore Scale Books	Series
➤ Series 4: Deed Books	Series
➤ Series 5: Level Books (Engineers Books)	Series
➤ Series 6: Store Books and Inventories	Series
▼ Series 7: Cash Books and Accounts	Series
➤ Sub-series 7.1: Cash Books	Sub-Series
➤ Sub-series 7.2: Accounts and Balance Books	Sub-Series
➤ Series 8: Time Books	Series
➤ Series 10: Rental Books	Series
➤ Series 11: Shipment Records	Series
➤ Series 10: Payroll Books and Slips	Series
➤ Series 12: Ledgers	Series
➤ Series 13: Miscellaneous	Series

Figure 1: Series level description in ArchivesSpace

Rent ledger entries Buchtel, 1918 October; 1918 December; 1920 February	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 7
Rent ledger entries Buchtel, 1920 March - May	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 7
Rent ledger entries Buchtel, 1920 June - August	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 7
Rent ledger entries Buchtel, 1920 September - December	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 7
Rent, 1921-1925	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 96
Rent, 1922	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 95
Rent, 1924	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 95
▼ Series 11: Shipment Records	Series		
Baltimore and Telegraph Company shipments, 1883	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 38
Daily record of coal loaded, 1883-1887	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 91
Shipment book, 1884	File	Mixed Materials	Box: 14

Basic Information
Languages
Dates
Extents

Save
Add Event
Publish All
Unpublish All
Export
Merge
Transfer
More
Suppress
Delete

Columbus and Hocking Coal and Iron Company Collection
Resource

Figure 2: File level description in ArchivesSpace

• **Narrative of self-assessment about how the project met the objectives submitted in your application.**

Original objective: Updated finding aid published to Mahn Center ArchivesSpace

As described in the previous section, we are able to upload the inventory list of the collection to ArchivesSpace once ArchivesSpace is implemented at Ohio University.

Original objective: Physical processing complete with material in folders labeled with titles and dates, boxed with updated box labels.

This has been mostly completed. It was determined that some of the ledgers are in good enough condition to be left loose on the shelves. These are stacked no more than three high. Individual items (105 ledgers) that were not boxed still need to be given formal call number tags and added to the finding aid. All material that was foldered and added to boxes has been labeled with titles and dates, and the boxes have updated box labels with new box numbers.

Original objective: Instagram posts documenting project (at least 3)

We posted five Instagram posts which utilized the collection and documented the project:

1. [December 8, 2023](#) – Announcing the blog post about the collection. Images feature Sam, student Archives Assistant and the work space, a mine store inventory book, and an advertising card. 44 likes as of mid January 2024.



Figure 3: 2023 December 8 Instagram post

2. [December 4, 2023](#) - A #MarbledMonday post featuring an item from the CHCICo collection. 23 likes as of mid January 2024.
3. [November 20, 2023](#) - A #MarbledMonday post featuring an item from the CHCICo collection. 19 likes as of mid January 2024.
4. [September 26, 2023](#) - Focused on how we remove nails from papers in the collection and finding a metal sample in the business correspondence. 47 likes as of mid January 2024.



Figure 4: 2023 September 26 Instagram post.

5. [September 22, 2023](#) - Highlighting the Level Books in the collection. 32 likes as of mid January 2024.

Original objective: Blog post documenting project (at least 1)

We posted one blog post by Samuel Coletta-Bates, the student Archives Assistant who worked all of fall semester on the project. He averaged 5-10 hours a week working on brushing dust and dirt from papers and foldering papers. His post is titled, ["Reflections on Processing the Columbus & Hocking Coal & Iron Co. Collection"](#)

Original objective: Images of "unsalvageable" materials added to control folder

Many images of the items deemed "unsalvageable" have been added to the digital control folder for the collection to document their condition and why they were deemed as such.



Figure 5: An example of "unsalvageable" material. This is a roll of papers that could not be unrolled and was too damaged to save.

Original objective: Identify materials suitable and interesting that could be used for class instruction or tours.

Much of the material is in very rough condition, with water, mold, and insect damage noticeable. Many of the ledgers are ok in the center of the book block but the spine or covers are missing or very damaged. Considerations for making the material available to researchers will need to take this into account. If possible, researchers may want to visit our off-site location and view materials under a fume hood, or they are recommended to wear gloves and masks when viewing or working with the materials. This said, some of the papers that might work well for class instruction or tours include detailed drawings and maps found in the Level Books, elaborate letterhead from the

commercial correspondence, and store inventory books which provide a clear view of the wares available for miners and their families to purchase at the company stores.

Another consideration is to use items from the collection to demonstrate the damage that can be done by water and insects to paper.

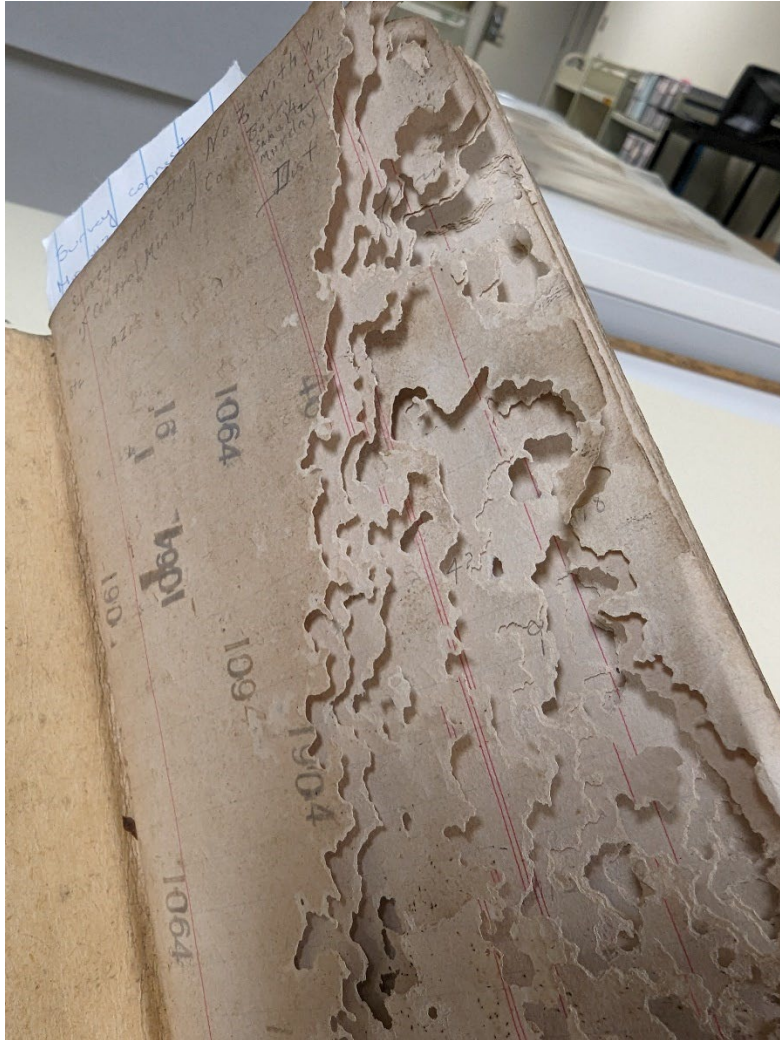


Figure 6: Book with insect damage.

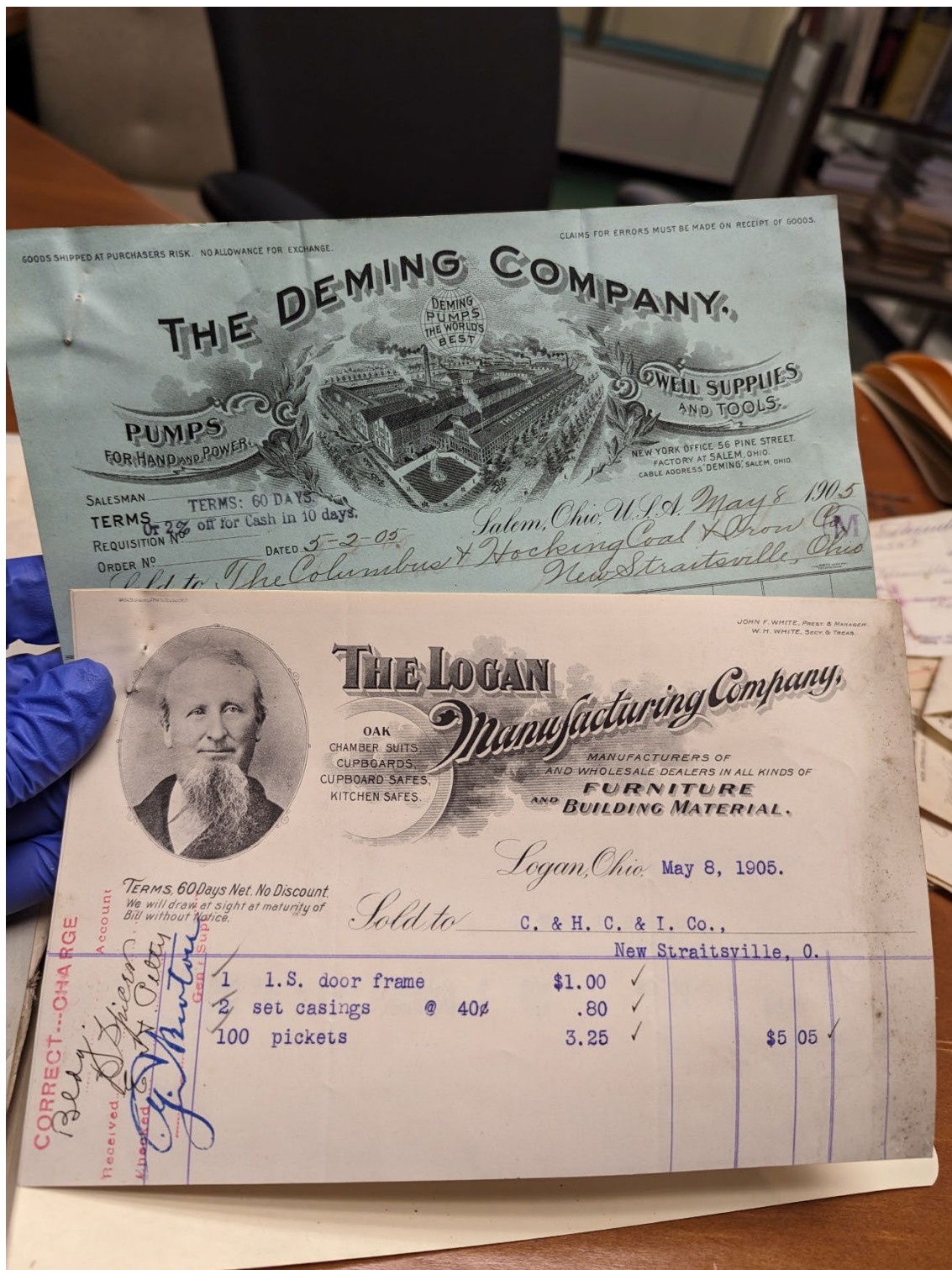


Figure 7: Elaborate letterhead on invoices and business correspondence



Figure 8: An excerpt from one of the Level Books depicting a very clear and well-drawn map of a coal mining area.

An evaluation of the project's impact (such as increased researcher demand for the records or actions the organization will take to sustain the results of the project).

There are many more projects to be done about mines in Southeast Ohio, and this project was one of the larger physical processing projects related to the mines. This CHCIco project is one of many projects the collection has already been a part of, and hopefully will be a part of many more to come. The immediate impact of this project has been on the staff at the Ohio University Libraries in that the collection has been a part of conversations around a digital collection that features coal mining and thinking about how we can connect different types of documentation about the same mines or towns through subject headings and further description. This project is also inspiring us to look at other mine related collections for future processing and description projects.

For the manuscripts archivist this has been an important project to gain physical control over a large collection that was in multiple places and not easily accessible. With more knowledge about the collection and the locations of its items, she will be better able to serve teachers, students, and researchers.

Share how your institution will build upon the success of the project through additional initiatives. For example, if you received a grant for an initial digitization project and with the experience from that project your institution will now be digitizing a second collection.

We are very excited to build upon the success of this project. Right now, that looks like a better inventory of other mining related collections and adding descriptions about them into ArchivesSpace once it arrives. Archives Assistant Samuel Coletta-Bates will continue this work during the Spring 2024 semester. In 2023, Ohio University Libraries was awarded a State Library of Ohio metadata mini-grant to update subject headings and descriptions of items in the [Frank Buhla collection](#). This collection features hundreds of images of mines and mine town communities. This work will continue through the spring of 2024 and updated descriptions will be added to the Digital Public Library of America.

Quotes from local press coverage and also copies of articles cited.
None.