

OHRAB Final Project Report - January 2017

Institution/Organization Name: Clark County Historical Society

Project Title: Springfield News-Sun Processing Project

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Summary of Project Activities and Accomplishments:

In 2012, Springfield's local newspaper, the *Springfield News-Sun*, began talking with Virginia Weygandt, the Director of Collections at the Clark County Historical Society, about making sure their vast collection would find a home locally. The paper was in talks to sell their building and the worry was that if they moved from their building and their collection moved to Dayton, local researchers and newspaper staff wouldn't easily have access. Luckily, an agreement was reached to make the historical society the new home of the collection and in June 2013 we received the holdings of the *Springfield News-Sun*, which included nearly 2,000 reels of microfilm from 1894-2014 and 165 record boxes of materials from the newspaper's "clippings morgue," which contains thousands of original articles, photographs, complete special newspaper sections, scrapbooks, and more.

Since the collection moved to the Historical Society four years ago, we had had little manpower or funding to work on processing the collection. We receive regular requests from the newspaper and other researchers, and we frequently needed to access the collection for our own use for outreach, regular newspaper photo submissions, and exhibits. Even when the "morgue" clipping files were at the Springfield News-Sun offices, they never had an inventory, so for years after we got the collections, whenever we would need to access the files, we would go to where the boxes were stored and cross our fingers that we might find what we needed. In 2015 we started compiling a box inventory using an Access database and began slowly working through processing the 36 records center boxes of subject files using our own funds. The project stalled because with the size

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of the collection we were simply going through files too quickly and could not afford to continue pulling from our regular supply budget.

We were very grateful to receive funding from the OHRAB regrant program in 2016 year to allow us to purchase 3,000 file folders to finish processing the subject files, the remaining 22 out of 36 boxes within the collection. After receiving notification of funding in mid-March, Natalie Fritz, our Curator of Library and Archives, started bringing up the subject file boxes from the basement storage area so that we could continue with compiling a database inventory of the files. Once an inventory list for each box was completed, we printed the database spreadsheets for that box so that those processing could make notes about the file contents on the printout. With the help of four spring semester Wittenberg students, who were with us to complete their service learning graduation requirement, and four other regular volunteers, we had a complete box list inventory for all of the subject boxes in late June. The completed subject file database now contains 4,254 subject file names. We exported the subject file names to a three column PDF that is available on the collections page of our website at:

<http://collections.heritagecenter.us/images/upload/SpringfieldNewsSunSubjectFileIndex.pdf>

In the future, with the help of student volunteers we may continue to update the database with the notes about the contents of each processed file, but that step is of low priority since the complete inventory list is available online and we have also included paper copies of each box list with the processor's notes in each box.

In April, a regular volunteer, a retired gentleman named Jim Hearlihy, started working on processing the files every Thursday and Friday for 2-3 hours. The four Wittenberg community service students with us from the spring semester were able to devote more of their hours to working on processing towards the end of April. With their help, we were able to move forward more quickly with the project. When they finished their required hours in early May, we were

already through 28 of the 36 boxes that we need to process. Jim continued processing at his 4-6 hours a week pace and completed work on the last of the subject files boxes within the first week of September 2016. At that point, we realized that we had over 900 file folders left and four months left in 2016 to start focusing on over 70 boxes worth of files on people, so we switched gears and began tackling that portion of the collection.

The biggest difference between the subject files in the *Springfield News-Sun* collection and the people files is that the people files contain thousands of non-local figures including actors, actresses, musicians, sports figures, political figures, and other newsworthy subjects. Luckily, each file has a typed label that lists the name of the person and what they are known for. This made it much easier to sort local figures from non-local figures. We had determined that to make them more accessible, we would keep the local figure boxes up on the third floor with the rest of the processed subject files and store the non-local figures in the collection's original location in the Heritage Center's basement. To begin the sorting process, Natalie began bringing up 8-10 people boxes at a time and about 10 of our volunteers, including five new Wittenberg fall semester students, began the methodical process of sorting people between local and non-local boxes. Once local boxes were completed, several other volunteers began typing inventory lists into the database. Sorting was completed by mid-November and we are continuing to type the inventory. There are already more than 6,500 local people files in the database and we were able to process the first four boxes of local people files utilizing the over 900 file folders we had left from the grant. In total, the 3,000 files folders allowed us to process 40 boxes, or 40 cubic feet of records. The partial people list:

<http://collections.heritagecenter.us/images/upload/SNSPeopleFilesAMC.pdf>

In our grant request we anticipated that Natalie would spend fifty hours on the project, our regular volunteers four hundred and our Wittenberg Community Service students sixty hours.

Natalie spent about the anticipated amount of time, our nine Wittenberg students devoted 119 hours

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and our regular volunteers contributed 326.25 hours, with Jim Hearlihy alone devoting over 161 hours. The total hours contributed by staff and volunteers was 495.25, which represents a \$10,508.35 cost match, with volunteer hours calculated at \$21.40/hr and staff hours at \$25.00/hr.

We accomplished our main objective with this project to better care for and make more accessible the collections of the *Springfield News-Sun*. By removing and unfolding the clippings, photos, and other ephemera from the original acidic manila file folders, we protected the files, preserving them for future researchers. Processing also brought to our attention wonderful photographs that we have been able to share with the public online and in the *Springfield News-Sun* where we publish weekly “Looking Back” photos on Mondays and a “Then and Now” photos on Thursdays.

Since we don’t have a designated processing area at the historical society, this project was done in our research library in full view of researchers, which led to lots of teaching moments. Our volunteers were happy to talk to visitors about the value of the collection and show them some of the neat things we’ve found. We believe that this collection is of vital importance to our community and are so happy to have been able to work to make it far more accessible.

PROJECT HOURS

Staff

Natalie Fritz 50

Volunteers

Pat Baker 4.5

Josh Benton 3

Amanda Brewer 4

Marguerite Brinkman 31

Holly Carmel, Wittenberg 14

Marty Castle 3.75

Kathleen Day 4

Jackie Folck 2

Brittany Garcia, Wittenberg 20

Jaymi Green, Wittenberg 5

Julie Hale 25

John Hays 17

Jim Hearlihy 161.5

Flossie Hulsizer 2

Lauren Instenes, Wittenberg 14.5

RaeAnn Jent 13.5

Madison Krstich, Wittenberg 10

Irene Newton 7

Cory Ross, Wittenberg 17.5

Sierra Sanchez, Wittenberg 17

Cindy Saturley 18

Alex Scheumann, Wittenberg 15

Ruth Stiles 18

Virginia Warren 12

Justin White, Wittenberg 6

445.25

TOTAL 495.25

Cost Match \$10,508.35

Fun Things We Found:

- Transcripts of local WIZE radio show about local history – A volunteer typed a content list for the subject covered in the transcripts, available here:
<http://collections.heritagecenter.us/images/upload/WIZELocalHistoryTranscripts.pdf>
- Several folders FULL of dozens Springfield aerials and downtown scenes; the folders were not marked in a descriptive way to indicate their contents and we might never have stumbled upon them. A researcher who has spent years looking for different local aerial views happened to be here the day we ran across the aerials and he was so excited!
- A file of photocopied and organized combatant clippings from WWI was at the very end of the boxes in a legal sized envelope that we nearly missed because it had no markings. These have proven to be very helpful in preparing our own WWI centennial exhibit in 2017.
- Jim Hearlihy, our volunteer who has put in the most hours, has been delighted to find photos of his old schools and places of work.

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Finished Boxes – Third Floor Library Shelves