

OHRAB Grant Program
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2016 OHRAB Grant Final Report

Digitizing & Improving Access to Cuyahoga County's Historic Property Appraisal Records

Cuyahoga County Archives' Historical Records Scanning Project

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Grant Amount: \$2,000

Goals of project:

Will improve both the County Archives' organization and access to these particular Cleveland historical real estate records in County Archives' collection through digital preservation to increase user audience and preservation of these important governmental records.

I. Records addressed by project

Title: Cuyahoga County: Cleveland Address Cards

Dates: 1930's-1950's (Majority of records are from the 1940's)

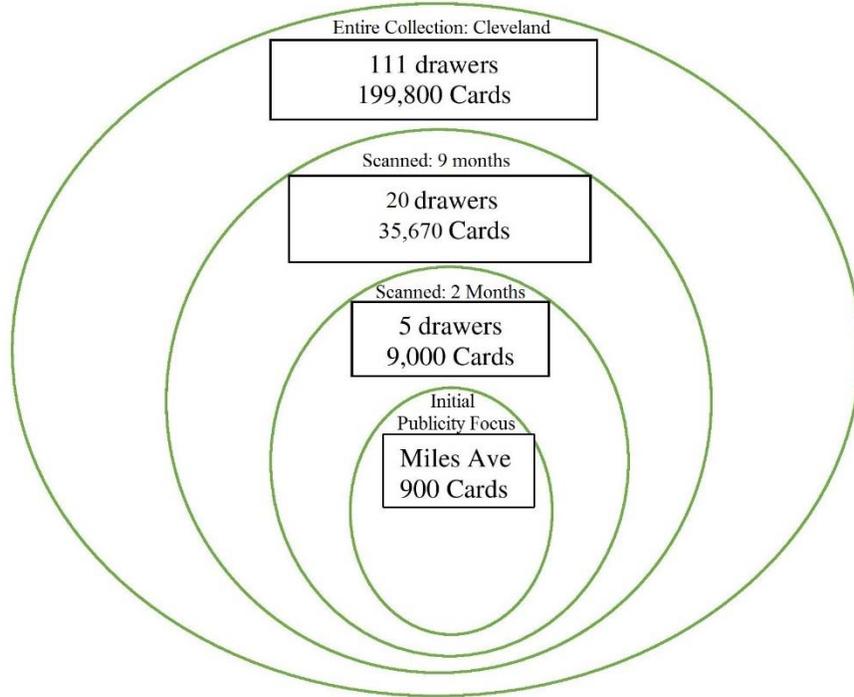
Scanned: 35,670 records

The Cleveland 1930's-1950's Cuyahoga County government real estate appraisal cards, are organized by address and arranged in nine columns of 111 unique stackable metal file drawers. The space occupied by these records is approximately 8.5 feet in length by 10 feet in height by 2.5 feet in depth. This equates to approximately 212.5 cubic feet currently on the second floor hallway of the Cuyahoga Archives building.

Using three Fijitsu ScanSnap scanners, the team involved in this project has scanned records thus far at the highest resolution (1200 dpi), in color, and as PDF searchable text files. The files are being backed up on two external hard drives until future funding can hopefully allow their inclusion online.

Overall the entire collection of Cleveland address cards is approximately 199,800 cards, currently contained within 111 pull-out file cabinet drawers. For the \$2,000 OHRAB grant funding portion of this overall project, approximately eighteen percent of the entire collection was scanned (35,670/199,800). This accounts for over 35,000 cards scanned over the course of nine months.

Within two months this summer an undergraduate student assisting with this project was able to scan approximately 9,000 cards. From those five drawers, this project volunteer selected 900 cards of real estate records specifically along Miles Avenue for her study area. She conducted her research with the County Archives to inform the community at large about this digitization project and the need for further funding support as part of a pilot project known as the Undergraduate Summer Research Award (USRA) through Cleveland State University.

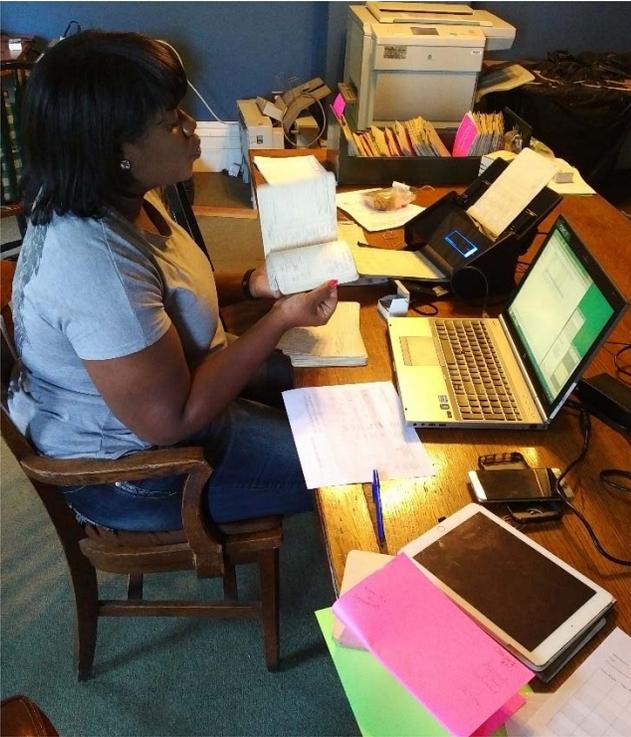


II. Photos

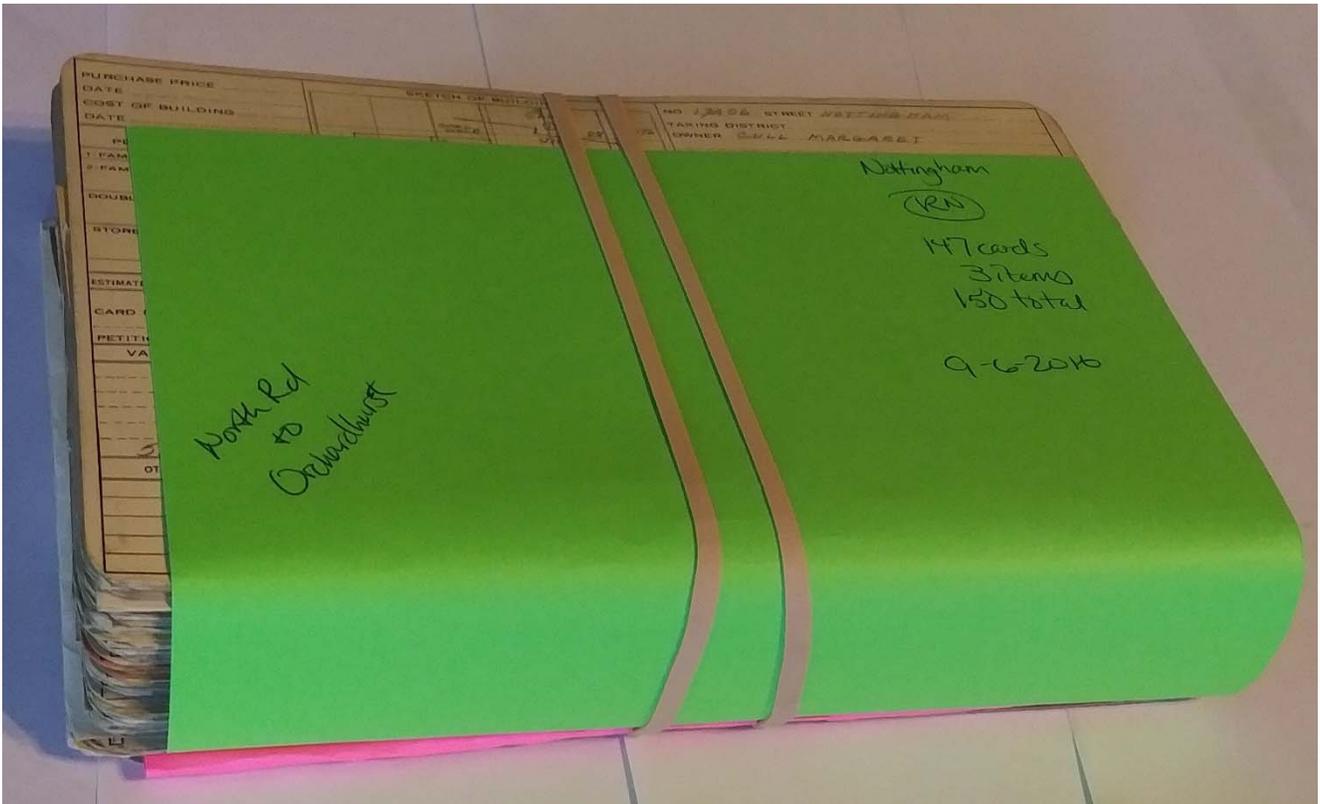


Cuyahoga County Archives, 2nd Floor 111 file drawers with Cleveland real estate appraisal cards within to be digitized.

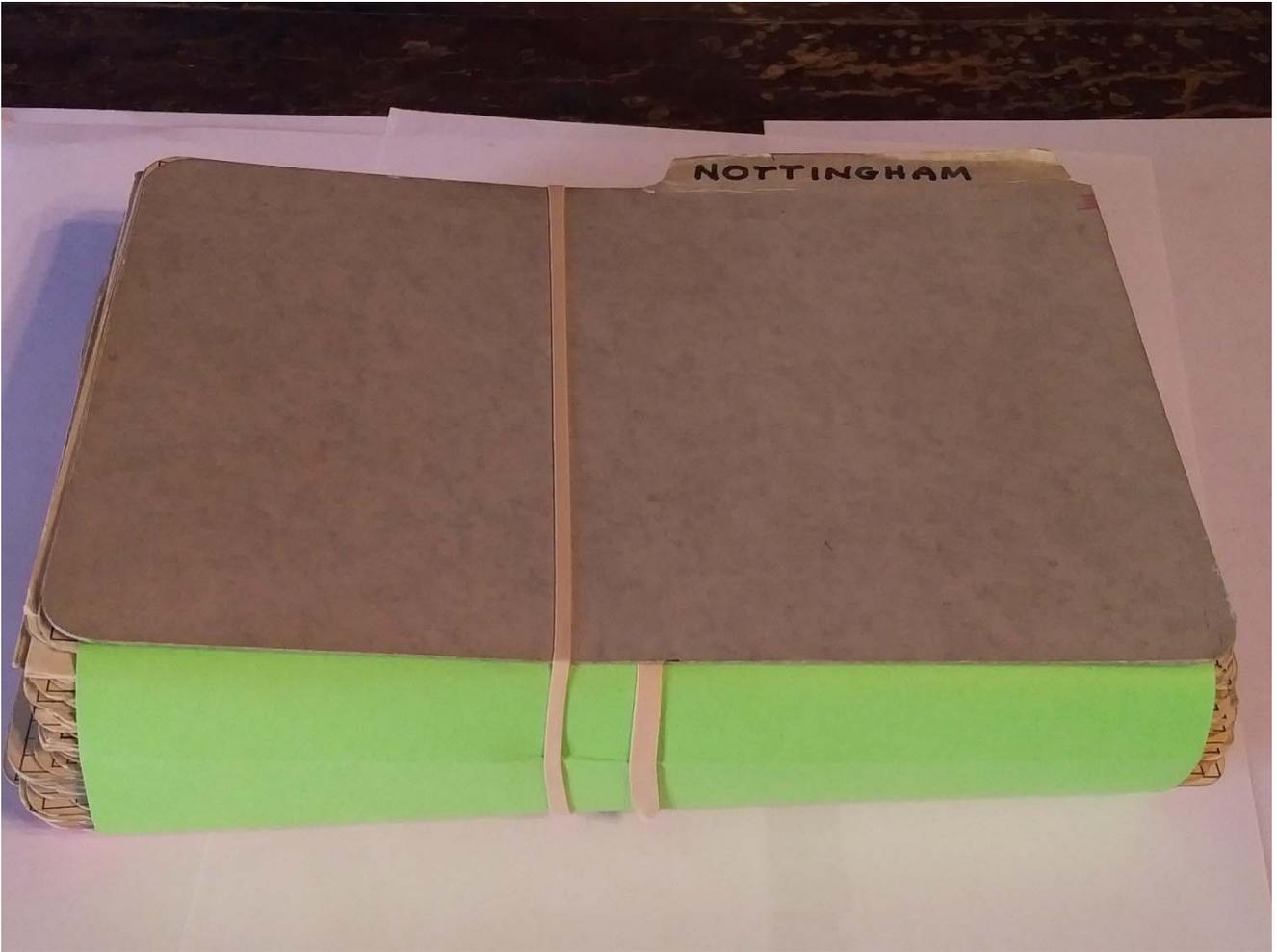




Hand counting the number of records within each street grouping and putting cards in sequential order by address number before starting to scan.



Nottingham is a street that was organized in the North Road to Orchard Hurst file drawer. There are 147 cards and 3 items contained in this bundle as of September 6, 2016 when each real estate appraisal card in this drawer was counted by RN (initials to keep track of which staff/volunteer with this project helped with specific streets and on what date the cards were inventoried, organized, scanned, re-stapled).



Nottingham. Example of how the newly bundled cards look upon completion of being scanned. After re-stapling the appraisal cards, as needed, back together the finished bundle is ready to alphabetically be correctly filed among the other streets in the North Road to Orchard Hurst drawer.



North to Orchard Hurst drawer (approximately 1,800 cards) has been scanned, cards re-organized alphabetically by street name as well as numerically by address.

III. Project Narrative Assessment

Once the project staff and volunteers began scanning in May 2016 it became clear that the initial count of approximately 550 appraisal cards per drawer represented far fewer than the actual number of items that needed to be digitized. Rather, each drawer in this Cleveland address appraisal cards collection averages closer to 1,800 unique items.

	Original Estimate (Prior to commencement of funded project)	Actual Numbers (Based upon unique count and inventory of each item by drawer now that project has commenced)
Contents of each file cabinet drawer	550 items	1,800 items
Total records that would thus be need to scan entire Cleveland address appraisal cards' collection from 1930's-1950's	(550 items per drawer x 111 drawers) = 61,050 items	(1,800 items per drawer x 111 drawers) = 199,800 items

There is a substantial difference between the original estimate of 61,050 cards and the revised assessment of 199,800 cards, with the difference being 138,750 items. This new number is three times greater than the entire scope of the project as outlined in the original grant proposal submitted February 2016. It takes approximately nine business days, or seventy-two hours, to prep all of the cards in a drawer, scan the documents, and then re-staple and re-file all of the records back into the appropriate drawer. In short, to complete the process as outlined above for all 111 drawers, at the rate of nine days devoted to each drawer, it would take an estimated 999 days or over two years to reach the project's original goal of scanning all 111 drawers if three people are able to maintain work on this project on a full-time basis.

During the nine months of this grant period, the team involved in this project was able to scan 35,670 records. This entire process includes prep (removing drawer from cabinet, ensuring all addresses within the street are in proper sequential order from low to high, removing staples and papers clips), scan, save locally and back-up to external hard-drive, and re-file the cards (after re-stapling and wrapping in new rubber band and bundle by streets completed).

This encompassed twenty of the overall desired one hundred and eleven total file cabinets total in the Cleveland collection being scanned. May to August 2016 included scanning of address appraisal cards full time (35 to 40 hours per person, 105 to 120 hours collectively each week) by three individuals at the Cuyahoga County Archives. During this time properties on streets that begin with the letters A, B, C, M, N, and O for properties within Cleveland, Ohio were scanned and properly re-filed into appropriate drawers.

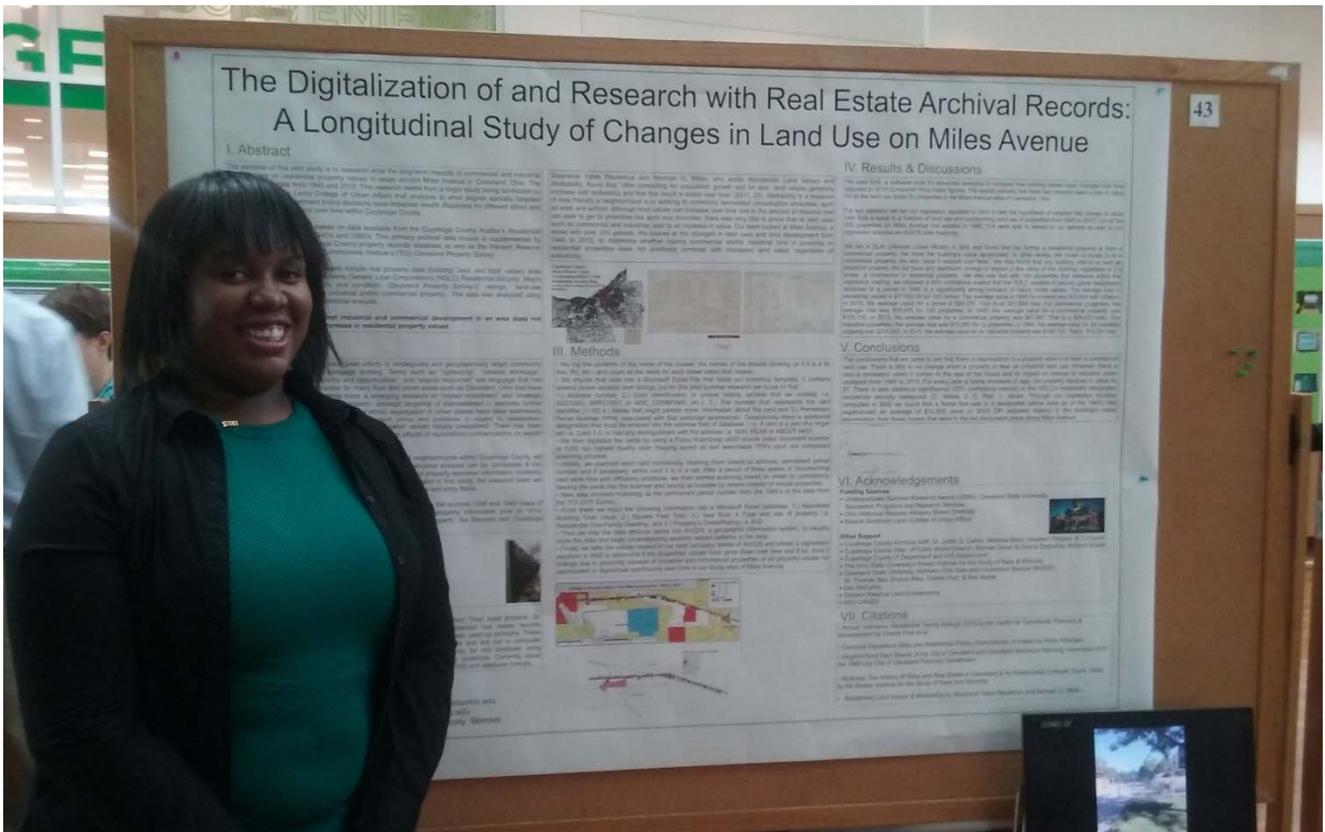
From September to December 2016 two of the volunteers involved in this project had to return to full-time employment and school and thus reduced their hours able to help scan from 30-40 hours each (60-80 combined) down to 5-10 hours a week (10-20 combined). Thus the pace at which the records are able to be scanned became more heavily reliant upon a full-time County Archives staff member from September to December 2016. During this time additional streets that begin with the letters D, E, and P were completed.

In total from April to December 2016 the following Cleveland Street address appraisal property cards were completed: A, B, C, D, E, M, N, O, P.

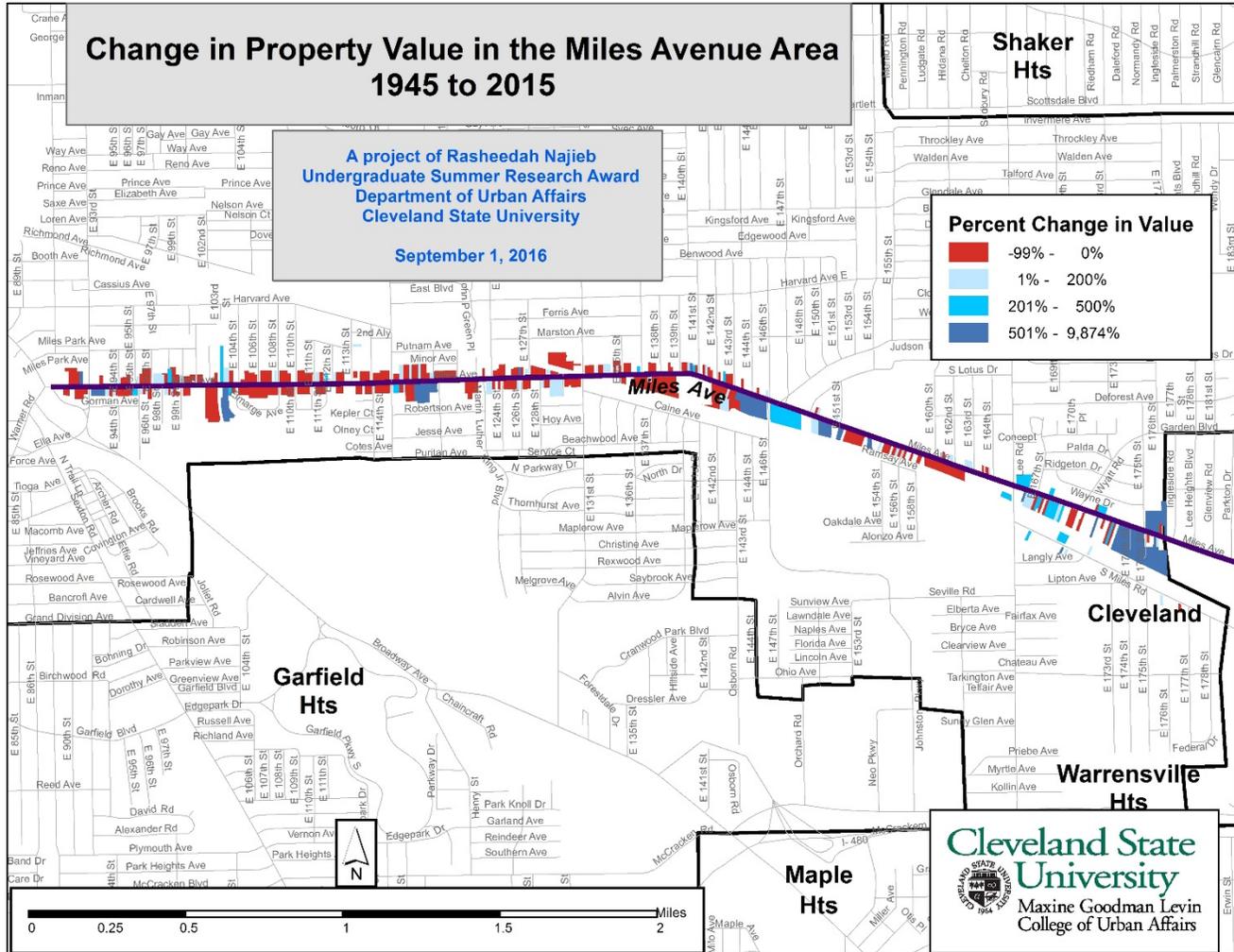
Thus the next phase of this project will entail scanning F-L and Q-Z over the course of 2017. However, the upcoming move of the County Archives to a new location might put this digitization project on hold if records become not easily accessible by volunteers and County Archives' staff in the interim until new facility is ready and storage boxes are unpacked.

IV. Project publicity

The project to date has been advertised via two online newsletters at Cleveland State University as well as flyers posted and distributed at local historical societies and genealogical societies by volunteers. The project was also advertised via a student research presentation at Cleveland State University as well as her poster being displayed at the Cuyahoga County Archives for the public to view and understand the project.



The 2016 Undergraduate Research Poster Session, open freely to anyone in the community, took place on September 1, 2016 from 10 am to 2 pm in the Student Center Atrium at Cleveland State University. Students, faculty, and staff were invited to attend the poster session, which provided the opportunity to discuss this digitization project in greater detail with the public. The session included a total of 59 posters from five CSU colleges. (See attached for further details on publicity).



V. Summary of Expenditures

The entire grant of \$2,000 was allocated as budgeted for in original application for contracted services. (See attached invoice).

Through the memorandum of understanding signed between Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga County, CSU provided contracted scanning services for Cuyahoga County Archives. The \$2,000 contracted services for a historic preservation consultant stipend was paid out following invoicing from Cleveland State University December 2016.