

Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board
Final Grant Report
January 31, 2014

Organization: Wyandot County Historical Society
Institution: Wyandot County Museum
Location: Upper Sandusky, Ohio
Project: Archival Storage of the Society's Photographic Collection
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Background and Report of Grant Activities from June through December 2013:

During the last few years, the Wyandot County Museum's has undertaken several small projects designed to enhance the Wyandot County Historical Society's ability to protect and preserve their three-dimensional artifact and archival document and photographic collections. This has included creating a "room within a room" storage area in the Attic and permanent shelving in this area. Following the completion of these projects, the Society has been successful in receiving grants to process and store its varied collections in archival boxes. The previous year (2012), the Society was able to process a large collection of early Wyandot County school documents through a grant from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board (OHRAB). This year, the Society received a grant from OHRAB to process and archivally store the Society's photographic collection consisting of a myriad array of styles (cabinet cards, carte-de-vistas, prints, snapshots, stereopticon cards, real photograph postcards, ambrotypes, tintypes and daguerreotypes as well as numerous slides, glass negatives and print negatives).

Prior to the start of this project, most of the unprocessed images had been placed in over-stuffed file folders in two old file cabinets in the Museum Office on in acidic boxes sitting on shelves in the Attic or closets. The Museum Curator began to identify the locations of these caches of images and place them in one central processing area while awaiting the outcome of the grant proposal.

Upon receiving notification that the Wyandot County Historical Society successfully received a grant award from OHRAB to process the collection, the Curator began to develop categories to sort the photographs into. Following receipt of the grant check, an order was placed with Gaylord to purchase the supplies requested in the grant submission. The Curator was authorized four hours a week during the summer and autumn seasons to work on this project. He was assisted by various volunteers who sorted the photographs into categories and began to place those images into acid-free file folders. These folders would eventually be placed into acid-free document storage boxes which were identified with labels of the particular category included.

Using the previous year's project as an example, each file folder was labeled with the accession number for each photograph that had one. For those images which had yet to be accessioned or were recently donated, a unique accession number was assigned to the image and recorded on a master database for the photograph collection. Over 900 images have been fully processed during this project, including scanning into a digital archive. Roughly 500 additional images have been placed in file folders and boxes while waiting to be scanned by volunteers.

Two dozen ambrotypes and daguerreotypes plus eight large cabinet card albums were inventoried and placed in archival boxes as part of the project. Eventually, the cabinet cards, carte-de-vistas, and tintypes in these albums will be scanned and added to the digital archive as well as the images in the photographic albums currently on display in the Museum. Nearly 300 slides and several dozen negatives have been placed in specially purchased archival envelopes and boxes until they can be scanned into the digital archive.

Nearly two dozen document boxes were filled during this project, with more images being transferred from regular manila file folders into acid-free folders and added to additional boxes. Temporary post-it labels were placed on the boxes to keep track of the various categories such as individuals, transportation, agriculture, businesses, education, religion, and public buildings during the project. Once the boxes were full, permanent labels were affixed and inventory lists prepared for each box. After these last steps, the full boxes were moved onto dedicated archival shelving in the Attic Storage Area alongside boxes from the schoolhouse documents project and document boxes full of military and Civil War documents.

Three boxes were completely filled with stereopticon cards, consisting primarily of late nineteenth century views of Europe. During the course of this project the Society received several donations of family photographs and local images which are being processed with the existing collection. A map cabinet was acquired by the Society to store oversize photographs, prints, lithographs, and documents such as land grants.

As a follow-up to continue this project into the future, the Wyandot County Historical Society successfully applied for a grant through the Wyandot County Community Foundation for funds to purchase a slide/negative scanner, a flat-bed scanner, and a wand scanner. These new scanners will allow staff and volunteers to process unusual pieces in the photographic collection such as oversize or framed images not easily processed on the currently borrowed flat-bed scanner. The goal is to have a digital image of every piece in the photographic/image collection. This will enable researchers and staff quicker access to images for education or exhibition without further damage or handling of the original photographs until necessary. A rather large digital archive of the scanned images is being amassed on the Museum's computer and separate flash drives. It is hoped that an upgraded website will allow the Society to share parts of this archive with the public in the future.

This project will serve as a template for the ongoing efforts to preserve the Society's photographic collection. As more images are located or donated, they will be processed according to the procedure developed here. Many more images are awaiting transfer from their current folders in old file cabinets into non-acidic folders and archival document boxes. The new scanners will aid in creating digital images of these images. One unintended bonus of this project was the identification of several images due to placing them in separate categories. Some unidentified images were the same or nearly identical to labeled photographs processed during the project.

The Wyandot County Historical Society is once again grateful for the authorization of this grant from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board and the Ohio Historical Society. It is through partnerships like this that the Society is able to continue to fulfill its mission to "protect and preserve" Wyandot County's history and ensure the long-term preservation of the Society's collections.



View of one box of images as they were discovered stored in a corner of the Attic at the Wyandot County Museum and one of the overstuffed file folders holding unidentified photographs in an old file cabinet in the Museum Office. Each of the photographs, cabinet cards, etc. were placed into individual acid-free file folders during this project



Scanned image of one of the photographs from the Society's collection showing the Landversicht Grocery in Upper Sandusky, Ohio circa 1910 and a digital image of one of the real photograph postcards showing the Wharton School in Wharton, Ohio during the early 1900s. All of the photographs processed during this project were scanned into a digital database for use by Museum staff, volunteers, and researchers.



Image of photographs from the collection separated and placed into individual acid-free file folders which were identified with unique, individual accession numbers and then placed into acid-free archival document boxes like the ones to the right. During the project, document boxes were tagged with temporary post-it labels identifying the various categories to ensure the image files were placed into the proper boxes.