

## OHRAB Mid-Project Report August 2011

**Institution/Organization Name:** Clark County Historical Society

**Project Title:** Probate Record Rehousing Project

**Project Director:**

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### **Summary of Project Activities and Accomplishments:**

Few county historical societies are lucky enough to hold original probate records. In most cases, county records are microfilmed and kept at the local courthouse and originals are discarded. Since the 1980s, the Clark County Historical Society has been the repository for the original copies of thousands these important county records dating from the founding of Clark County in 1818. These originals, which include receipts and other unmicrofilmed materials, are often vital resources to genealogical researchers. Over the past 30 years, volunteers, interns, and staff members have processed the records as time and money allows, but the task of processing approximately 15,000 remaining unprocessed records had recently fallen to the wayside. We were happy to receive funding from OHRAB to continue work on a large portion of the remaining unprocessed records in our collection.

We received grant funds in the amount of \$1520.00 on April 25 and started the project on Wednesday, April 27, 2011. During the first few weeks of the project, we utilized a store of supplies from Hollinger that we had previously ordered as part of our regular yearly supplies and simply kept track of the amount of materials used so that they could be replenished after receiving the full order of grant funded materials. The full order of 135 boxes and 4,000 white, full-tabbed, legal-sized file folders, purchased using the awarded grant funds, arrived at the end of June.

Over the past several months, we have called a number of volunteers, interns and staff members into service on the project, which entails removing documents from their compact envelopes, removing the front of the envelope (to retain the information), and flattening the contents in newly labeled legal-sized file folders. At this point we have ten volunteers, three interns and three staff members who have spent a great deal of time processing. On any given day between Tuesday and Saturday, there could be between one and six people working on the records from up to 5 hours a day. Our biggest day of the week is Wednesday when we have six plucky volunteers who all gather around one table to have weekly "processing parties" where they enjoy chatting about the fun and interesting information that they find within the probate records.

Since the end of April, we have processed cases numbered 5,480-8,500 and have used 2,700 file folders and 65 boxes. The cases are numbered sequentially, however adoption and lunacy cases were removed by the court prior to their donation to the historical society. This means that there are a large number of cases missing that are not part of this project, which accounts for our number of actual files used versus number of cases processed. Processing the cases preserves them properly and makes the boxes significantly lighter and easier to access.

We are all very happy to be able to make these records more accessible for future generations, but I don't believe any of us realized how fun the project could be!