



17 August 2011

OHRAB Re-grant Interim Report

Martha Offerdahl began her internship April 9th, working on the indexing phase of the project while we waited for the arrival of the funding check. The scanner and rehousing supplies were ordered April 12, 2011, with the scanner arriving on April 14th. Costs were under budget, leaving \$9.35 which was used to print test photographs from a sample of the scans. Press releases were sent to our local media outlets and a short article about MVHS receiving the grant was also run in our own newsletter and on our website. An announcement to that effect was also placed on the archives listserv.

After a short orientation to the new equipment and software we were up and running. The first week brought some changes to the work flow as discoveries were made regarding the new scanner and the condition of the negatives. Box 1 has proven to be a challenge as many of the views are aerials. The new scanner picks up on the darker edges of the negatives, and in some cases the shadow of the airplane struts, changing the contrast in the scan. As a result, most of the negatives in Box 1 have had to be scanned twice – once as a whole negative and then again in sections with the airplane struts and edges of the negative cropped out to get the best contrast for the image. This has resulted in a dramatic slowdown of the work flow.

Thanks in part to a posting on the archives listserv, we have also begun embedding information directly into the image through Adobe Photoshop Elements. Appropriate tags and copyright information is also being included. Adding this element has increased the amount of time spent with each negative but the long-term benefits justify the change.

A second intern spent the summer with us before returning to Miami University for the fall semester. Caroline Spiese was able to invest 73.75 hours into the project, completing Box 7 which consisted of 222 items totaling 244 scans. She also completed 113 out of 293 items from Box 6 totaling 117 scans, with rehousing, scanning, indexing and embedding information steps finished for these items.

Martha has completed 48.5 hours on the project, completing 132 items out of 394 from Box 1 for a total of 240 scans. She has to complete the embedding for these items as that step was introduced after the scans were completed. Martha actually begins her official internship for class credit this fall. At this time 1,306 items have been added to the master index for the collection.

An additional 22 items from Box 5 have also been completed through all steps. These items represent a researcher's request for theatre related views as they document the demolition of the Park Theatre in downtown Youngstown and the neighboring Hotel Vanier Grill demolition.

On a side note: the acquisition of the new scanning equipment has allowed the Mahoning Valley Historical Society to complete a loan project as well. A local collector generously allowed MVHS to borrow a large collection of glass plate negatives representing the work of Youngstown photographer John D. Megown who was operating as a professional photographer from 1908-1920. MVHS has a collection of original glass plate negatives and prints from Megown's estate and we were eager to add to our understanding of the man, and our community as seen through his camera lens. The glass plate negatives date from 1896-1920 and include families, local landmarks, local events, William Jennings Bryan's visit to the valley in 1908 as well as other subjects. With ever shrinking budgets aimed at preservation, MVHS was finally able to make high resolution scans of the original negatives and return the originals to the lender in a more timely fashion using the new equipment this grant provided for.

Thanks to the new equipment, we are better able to provide options to preservation of originals when donation of the originals themselves is not possible.

Respectfully Submitted:

Pamela L. Speis

MVHS Archivist