

OHRAB Grant: MassMu Archival Preservation and Access Project
Interim Report August 2012

The MassMu Archival Preservation and Access Project is moving along at a steady pace.

Our original application request was for \$2,800 to facilitate supplies and a paid intern; we accepted partial funding and wrote a letter to that effect on April 2, 2012. We received our check for \$970 on May 4, 2012 and it was approved by our Board of Directors on May 23 to expend in accordance with the grant requirements by unanimous vote.

Our timeline was originally April through October, but due to a large exhibit and lack of initial intern response, the project was delayed until June; the deadline for completion is now December. Progress is being made in all three of our subject areas: documents of Robert Peet Skinner, Jacob Coxey, and Massillon City Records.

The original idea was to have one intern to oversee the entire project. Due to school and work schedules, many interns could not commit enough hours to make that a reality. We decided instead to assign one intern per subject area. A call for interns was published in our quarterly newsletter, on Facebook, and on our website in May 2012. We received applications from Justin Haynes, a student at Miami University studying international relations, who was interested in photographing and preserving the scrapbooks from Robert Peet Skinner, and from Kara Johnston, a recent Kent State graduate, who accepted the task of scanning the Jacob Coxey papers. Unfortunately shortly after Kara began, she accepted another internship and quit her post here. Justin will be picking up where she left off, completing his internship in December.

In August, an additional volunteer was added. Mark Pitocco, a local photographer, will be in charge of photographing the 19th- and 20th-century city records (police and fire departments logs, and city council minutes). He has already digitized 500 pages in his few short weeks here.

Our first phase of the project included digitization of the contents. This allows for easier transcription using different tools like Photoshop to zoom in, lighten, and alter the digital image to enhance legibility. The Skinner scrapbooks are now completely digitized and the files are backed up every night on the external hard drive purchased with OHRAB grant funds (2TB drive for \$120 purchased from NewEgg.com in June 2012).

Boxes were ordered from Gaylord (\$183.92) to house the Skinner and Coxe materials. Half of the Skinner collection is now housed in archival boxes, the remaining half to be put in the labeled archival boxes by the end of August. 808 pages of five different scrapbooks have been photographed.

Since beginning this project, the archivist has received two research requests for Jacob Coxe materials. Ben Alexander of Pennsylvania is using our information to explain Coxe's ideas regarding social programs within a historic context for use in classrooms.

As the archivist was rehousing materials in the new storage facility, she discovered a large quantity of newspapers relating to Jacob Coxe, which have since been added to this project scope for scanning and online access. Of the Jacob Coxe materials, 123 letters have been scanned since the project's inception.



Archives intern Justin Haynes opens one of the many Skinner scrapbooks for photographing. The light helped him to take better images. The camera is mounted to a copy stand. He has the scrapbook supported so that the binding is not damaged during photography.