Warren County Historical Society
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WCHS Digital Archive Project, January 2012- December 2014

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   As of January 2013, the Warren County Historical Society (WCHS) Digital Archive Project is one-third complete. The first year saw the design and early stages of the project, and also the recruiting and training of volunteers. We are currently meeting our project objectives and will continue on this course for the remainder of the project.

   The purpose of this project is to preserve, conserve, scan and digitally photograph the paper and photograph archive of WCHS, with the aim of providing the public an online index or catalogue of the archive. There was a great deal of preliminary groundwork required before the scanning and cataloguing could begin. After a public call for volunteers brought us 15 new weekly volunteers, we began training each volunteer to work on a sub-project that utilizes their individual skills and interests. These sub-projects include:

- Examining existing family and local history collections to determine if preservation and/or digitizing is needed

- Cataloguing Bible records

- Indexing and digitizing maps

- Indexing our Microfilm collection

- Indexing our vast Shaker archive collection

- Digitizing photographs from our newly accessioned newspaper archive of *The Western Star*

- Scanning and entering our photograph collection into Past Perfect

- Creating an historic tour map of Lebanon using WCHS's photograph and library collections

- Scanning and cataloging original diaries, journals and record books

- Digitizing original letters, land grants, certificates and other primary source documents located in our archives

- Processing and digitizing our National Normal University Collection

These sub-projects address various collections in our archive that are in need of preservation, cataloguing and/or scanning. The National Normal University Project, headed by volunteers Hope and Paul Schneider, focuses on indexing and scanning our extensive collection of photographs, ledgers, programs and other documents related to this former Lebanon college. Volunteer John Davey is leading the effort to scan all of the headshots that came with our recently acquired archive collection of *The Western Star* newspaper. Several volunteers are collaborating to scan and catalogue our collection of Warren County places and events photographs. Jeannie Dorn has been working on an index of our Shaker resources for almost a full year, and is expected to finish this year. An index of our microfilm collection was completed last spring, and will be available online in the near future. These projects, although still in progress, are already making it easier for researchers to use our resources.

During the first year, much progress can be reported in accomplishing our project objectives. All of us at WCHS have a much better comprehension of the resources located in our archive. The physical condition of many collections were assessed, and steps for preservation are under way. We are better able to communicate our collections to the public through the use of our website, social media outlets and press opportunities, and as a result we have seen an increase in researchers visiting and contacting our research library. Over 5,600 files (documents and photographs) were scanned by volunteers within the last year. These files are now securely backed up, with copies housed off-site for security purposes.

Several volunteers are dedicated to indexing various collections, which will result in online indexes and catalogs posted on our website. Another benefit from this project involves the discovery of several rare documents and resources in our collection. This allows WCHS to provide community volunteers with the opportunity to serve and educate the public, while preserving our County's past, and is beneficial and rewarding to WCHS, the volunteers and the community alike.

Expenditures

- January 26, 2012- Hollinger Archive Supplies- $422.03

- March 26, 2012- HP Scanner- $480.26

- March 26, 2012- Dell Laptop- $1,225

- April 27, 2012- Computer- $957.99

- May 5, 2012- Dell Laptop- $637.10

- May 10. 2012- Past Perfect Software- $399

- November 18, 2012- Past Perfect Contract- $259

   Total= $3422.39

Employee Salary (cash match only)- $42,000- 2 full-time staff members hired for the project in 2012