

**Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board
Interim Grant Report
August 2012**

Organization: Wyandot County Historical Society
Institution: Wyandot County Museum
Location: Upper Sandusky, Ohio
Project: Archival Storage of One-Room Schoolhouse Documents
Project Director: Ronald I. Marvin, Jr., Curator
Telephone: 419-294-3857
E-mail: curator@wyandothistory.org

Background and Report of Grant Activities from June through August 2012:

While rearranging the Wyandot County Museum's Attic Storage Area in October 2011 (in preparation for a storage shelf construction project) the Wyandot County Museum's Curator discovered a tattered, manila envelope containing roughly one hundred folded and rubber banded documents pertaining to Wyandot County's one-room schoolhouses. Many of the papers were expenditure reports or rosters of students dating between 1855 and 1908. It was decided that the papers, especially the student names combined with those of their parents, would be of great interest to local historians and genealogists, therefore, the papers should be properly preserved and stored. Two smaller groups of "Reward of Merit" certificates and graduation programs were added bringing the total number of documents to roughly two hundred pieces. Additional school documents will be processed and added to this collection as they are donated or rediscovered in the vertical files.

Upon receiving notice that the Wyandot County Historical Society had received a grant from OHRAB to process this collection, the Curator began to sort out the documents and unfold the papers in preparation for scanning. Each item was assigned an individual number as part of the accessioning process prior to being scanned and placed in archival folders. The Society has never undertaken an archival project like this before; however, the goal is to store all of the documents and photographs in archival materials, thus this project will serve as a reference and guide for future projects.

Since scanning began in June, over seventy documents in the collection have been completely scanned. Many of the early schoolhouse expenditure documents are much larger than the scanner bed, necessitating two to four scans per item. Because of the fragile nature of most pieces, this has been a slow process. Each scan has been assigned the same number as the original document with additional designations (front top, front bottom, reverse top, reverse bottom) for the multiple scanned papers. The Curator has been allocated four hours a week to complete this project and has been steadily working on it during a very busy summer at the Wyandot County Museum.

As of August 25, 2012, the Curator had transcribed the names from over one hundred of the documents resulting in a database of nearly nine hundred names so far. Many of these names are students who appear in consecutive years. Several of the documents were written or filled in with pencil or light ink which has faded over time making it difficult to read and accurately transcribe all of the names. The Curator has utilized additional resources such as early county history books and historic family biographies to determine the correct or accepted spellings of

many of the illegible names. Unfortunately, due to paper damage or completely faded ink, there are additional names which cannot be determined.

This has been an interesting project and much has been learned about the costs of operating a school during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in Wyandot County. While it was believed that these documents encompassed the whole area of Wyandot County, it was quickly discovered by the Curator that they pertain primarily to the area of Eden Township. Recently, the Curator learned that the Wyandot County Genealogy Society was given several boxes of similar schoolhouse documents by the Historical Society a few years ago, which were placed in storage. Perhaps these materials may eventually be returned to the Museum in the future. If not, then it is hoped that this project may serve as a template for processing the other school documents, thus adding additional valuable information for family researchers and genealogists.

The Curator expects to complete the project by the end date of September 30, 2012. At that time, the scanned images and databases will be available for researchers to use. While it is believed that the digital images will remove the need to handle the fragile papers, this project will allow the original documents to be easily retrieved by Museum staff for closer examination if needed.