8-1986

Archival Chronicle: Vol 5 No 2

Bowling Green State University. Center for Archival Collections

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From the Director...

The Local History Conference held in April was again very successful. Over 135 registrants attended sessions about community and family history, historic preservation, material culture, and black history. Dr. John W. Blassingame, author of *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* and plenary speaker, provided considerable insight to researching the history of slave families. Also of note was Dr. Andrew Ludanyi's presentation about Toledo's Birmingham District. Program plans currently are being made for next year's conference. Should you have suggestions please forward them to Paul Yon, Director, CAC.

Diane Gagel, Local Records Archivist and employee of the Ohio Historical Society, is resigning her position here at the CAC effective 30 June. For the last two years she has provided the necessary expertise required for successfully administering the local records program. Through her efforts the Local Records Collection has been computerized, which significantly will improve reference service. The CAC staff wishes her the best of luck at the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library.

Local Government Records

Naturalization Records

When researchers are seeking information about immigrants to the United States, one important record group is the naturalization papers. Before using these, however, researchers should be aware of the types of naturalization records that exist and where they can be found in Ohio as well as in other states. Naturalization records can consist of four series: the Declarations of Intention, Petitions, Depositions, and the Final Papers (often called the Oaths of Allegiance). The existence of these records today as well as the type of information found in them will depend on the date of the original naturalization.

The Declaration of Intent was the first step in the citizenship process. This involved renouncing allegiance to a former sovereign and declaring the intent to become an American citizen. Prior to 1906 this record usually included the applicant's name, country of birth or allegiance, date of application, and applicant's signature. Some early records also gave date of arrival and port of entry. After 1906 the records became more detailed and included the name, age, occupation, personal description, date and place of birth, citizenship, present address, foreign address, name of vessel and port of embarkation, U.S. port and arrival date, and the applicant's signature.

The Petition was the formal application for citizenship. This record generally was not used in the 19th Century. This application contains the applicant's name; residence; occupation; date and place of birth; citizenship information; personal description; date of emigration; ports of embarkation and arrival; marital status; names, dates and places of birth and residences of children; date U.S. residence began; time of residence in state; and any name changes. This record also may contain copies of the Declaration of Intention and the Certificate of Arrival.

Depositions are the sworn statements of applicants' witnesses as to the character and residency of the applicant. Witnesses may have been neighbors or relatives. The Final Papers represent the actual grant of the citizenship privileges. The new citizen received a copy of his papers and a duplicate was kept in the court record. Some counties kept all the above mentioned records in one book called Petition and Record Book.

Often, early naturalizations were kept in the minute books of the court granting the naturalization. In Ohio prior to 1850 naturalizations are usually found in the Clerk of Courts Journal. These records generally contain the new citizen's name and possibly the country of origin. Around 1850 the Probate Court assumed responsibility for naturalizations. During the first years naturalizations were kept in the Probate Journal with little information about the applicants. Later the Probate Court began to keep separate records of naturalization.

Joseph Parks cutting wheat with a horse-drawn mower
Tiffin, Ohio (Circa 1910)
Photographed by Matilda Staib Parks
In 1906 the naturalizations became considerably more detailed and were again recorded in the Clerk of Courts of
Crawford County. The Church of the Good Shepherd (North Baltimore, Ohio) 1890-1896; Record books (1890-1896), minutes (1897-1952), Women's Missionary/Ladies Aid Society
minutes (1915-1944).

St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Norwalk, Ohio) 1832-1934, Record books (1821-1934), minutes (1877-1907), Ladies Aid/Mary-Marthas Society minutes (1879-1900), financial records (1855-1871).

Fortnightly Club Records, (Sandusky, Ohio) 1896-1895. Women's literary club minutes, yearbooks, histories.


Westmoreland County Freedom Township

Township Trustees Minute Books, 1821-1923.


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Center for Archival Collections Staff

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Employees of the Ohio Historical Society Whose Offices are at the CAC

Diana D. Moran, Regional Historic Preservation Coordinator

Visitation Hours at the C.A.C.

Please note that from August 15 to September 6, 1986 the CAC only will be open: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Beginning September 7, 1986, the CAC will return to its regular schedule: Sunday 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.; Monday 8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.; and Tuesday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

These hours are subject to change in accordance with the schedule of the Jerome Library. Please call ahead to verify these hours before you visit.