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Bowling Green State University, Center for Archival Collections

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Local Government Records Serve Citizens

Since 1959, the Ohio Historical Society has been serving as the archives administrator for the State of Ohio and its political subdivisions with the goal of preserving the historically valuable records created by the governing units of the state. As a complement to this archival responsibility, the local records program of the State Archives provides advice and assistance on records management to local governments (counties, municipalities, townships, and school districts) upon request.

The local records specialists aid local governmental agencies in establishing and conducting comprehensive records management and archives programs. They advise in the inventory and appraisal of government records to help identify historically important records. Local records specialists also act as liaisons between local officials and the network archival centers, such as the CAC, in determining cooperatively the best plan for the preservation of local government records.

Implementation of the comprehensive records program insures that time and money are not wasted in maintaining unnecessary records, while at the same time, the rights and heritage of Ohioans are properly preserved. Many records which currently overflow the attics and basements of township halls, municipal buildings, and county courthouses are of historical value, while others have little value after serving their administrative, fiscal, or legal functions. Thus, the local records program assists local officials in rescuing the historic records for the lasting benefit of Ohio citizens, while allowing for the legal disposal of other records.

The current emphasis of the program is to contact township and municipal governments in order to help locate and preserve historically valuable public records. In addition, the CAC is planning to microfilm more local government records. The Center encourages researchers to use these government records at the CAC and to take an active interest in the preservation of those public records of historical value. If you have any questions or comments relating to local government records, please feel free to contact Victor Wagher at the CAC.

Preservation: Ambrotypes

Not all cased images are daguerreotypes. Another cased photographic process is the ambrotype, which was in use from 1855 to about 1865. An ambrotype is a negative image on glass. Thanks to a dark backing (black velvet, paper, or varnish), the image appears positive, but does not reflect a mirror-like shine like a daguerreotype. Sometimes dark red or purple glass was used. Often the image was hand-tinted, to make it more life-like. The fragile ambrotypes were then protected in daguerreotype cases, already widely available and popular. Ambrotypes largely replaced daguerreotypes as the preferred portrait medium, reaching their greatest popularity in the late 1850’s.

To restore an ambrotype, one can simply place new black paper behind the image. This step can make a great improvement in the quality of the image. New cover glass on top of the daguerreotype or ambrotype will protect it further. Store these — and all photographs — in a cool, dry environment.

If you would like more information about early photographic processes, the staff recommends James M. Reilly’s book, Care and Identification of 19th Century Photographic Prints.

From the Conservation Lab:

After careful examination of our conservation lab pricing policy, we have found it necessary to implement a $15.00 minimum charge, plus the cost of materials used in each document conservation process.
Rare Books Highlight New Acquisitions

Imagination, v. 1, no. 2, November, 1937. This early fanzine contains "Foolosophy & Scientifactics," one of Ray Bradbury's earliest appearances in print, as well as an advance announcement of his earliest published story. This is an exceptionally important addition to the Ray Bradbury Collection, since it is one of the very few of his early writings not included in the original collection.

Purdy, James, 63: Dream Palace. New York: William-Frederick Press, 1956. First edition of this early novel, one of the most famous authors from northwest Ohio. Purdy has signed this copy (in two places) and has inscribed the following on the title page: "Dame Edith Sitwell was so impressed by this short novel she became its greatest enthusiast, along with John Cowper Powys, Angus Wilson, and Carl Van Vechten. James Purdy." The CAC is well on the way to having a complete collection of Purdy's works including several signed presentation copies and many in the original dust jackets.


Diana Moran, Historic Preservation Coordinator for Northwest Ohio, resigned effective 1 June to accept a position with the University of Michigan. During her tenure with the Ohio Historical Society/CAC, she was deeply involved in numerous Historic Preservation projects throughout the region and significantly contributed to the Ohio Historical Society's awareness. Her enthusiasm will be sorely missed, and on behalf of the CAC staff, we wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors. It is anticipated that the position will be filled by 1 September. In the interim, please address all relevant inquiries to Richard Frankwijk, Preservation Officer. The Ohio Historical Society, 1985 Velma Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211.

The Third Annual Conference on Local History was held on 2 April. It was a success, with over 125 registrants hearing presentations about Ft. Meigs, the Ordinance of 1787, Oral History, Public History, and Railroad History. Plans currently are being made for the Spring 1988 Conference. Should you have suggestions, please forward them to Paul Yon at the Center.

From the Director...
Center for Archival Collections Staff

Paul D. Yon, Director
Ann M. Bowers, Assistant Director/University Archivist
Susan Frost, Secretary
Regina K. Lemaster, Conservator
Marilyn I. Levinson, Curator of Manuscripts
Nancy G. Steen, Rare Books Librarian
Frederick N. Honneffer, Records Manager
Lee N. McLaird, Reference Archivist/Newsletter Editor

Employees of the Ohio Historical Society

Victor S. Wagher, Local Government Records Specialist
(Position Open), Regional Historic Preservation Coordinator

Public Access Hours at the CAC

The CAC will be open May 4, 1987 through August 21, 1987:
Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Fridays 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Starting August 24, 1987, the CAC will be open Sunday 4:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.
Monday 8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., and Tuesday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
The CAC will be closed Labor Day and November 11.