Preservation: Tintypes

Some photographs found in cases today are neither daguerreotypes nor ambrotypes; they are tintypes. Sometimes called ferrotypes or melainotypes, tintypes are positive photographic images on a support made of a thin sheet of lacquered iron — there is actually no tin in a tintype.

Tintypes first appeared about 1854 and were made well into the twentieth century. They were extremely popular because they were inexpensive. After 1860 when multiple-lens cameras were developed, four images could be produced at one sitting for a cost of $.25 or twelve images for $.50. Civil War photographers followed the military camps around, producing thousands of portraits as mementos. Often sold simply in paper mats, tintypes held up better in the mail than any other photographic medium of the time, but they never achieved the "social status" of the more expensive processes. They were frequently "disguised" in daguerreotype cases for home display. Tintypes were not introduced in Europe until the late 1870's where they were regarded as an American novelty. Outdoor scenes and tintypes of celebrities are collector's items since people of importance rarely had tintypes made.

Easily identified because of their iron support, tintypes show relatively poor image quality, being low in contrast. They also were colored by hand, and, like daguerreotypes and ambrotypes where no negative is involved, the image is reversed left-to-right as in a mirror. Tintypes placed in cases can be distinguished from ambrotypes by holding a small magnet against the glass. It will stick to the tintype but not to the ambrotype.

Again, the best preservation for tintypes is to keep them in a cool dry environment, as moisture will cause them to rust.

Correction: In our last Archival Chronicle, we identified ambrotypes as "negative" images. Rather, they are reversed left-to-right.
From the Director...

The CAC is pleased to announce the date for the fourth annual Conference on Local History as April 7, 1988. The plenary speaker will be Ms. Willa Baum, Director of the Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Ms. Baum, who wrote one of the first books on oral history, Oral History for the Local Historical Society, has continued to publish widely on the subject and actively promotes the use of oral history in documenting our heritage. We also are pleased that Dr. Les Fishel, Jr., Director of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, will be commenting on the importance and practice of local history. The sessions will involve the themes of oral history and historic preservation as panelists will describe current projects which we are sure you will find innovative and educational. Panelists will include Dr. Edmund J. Dantzig, Jr., and Dr. Bernard Sternsher, both members of the History Department at Bowling Green State University, who will be discussing the use of oral history in their research projects; Kenneth R. Poit of the Lake Michigan Maritime Museum, who will be discussing the interpretation of local and regional history through underwater archaeology; and Robin Haynes, American Culture Program, Bowling Green State University, who will be discussing historic preservation and rural architecture.

Be sure to mark your calendars to attend this conference on April 7th. More details will appear in the next Chronicle and registration forms will be available from the CAC after the first of the year.

Announcements, Events, Etc...

The CAC would like to remind readers that a few copies of the second edition of the Guide to Newspaper Holdings at the Center for Archival Collections are still available. The new edition has been issued in a three-ring binder, loose-leaf format to allow for easy updating. The cost of the new edition is $12.50, which includes the cost of updates. Order yours today by sending your name and address with a check made payable to the CAC to: Center for Archival Collections, 5th Floor, Jerome Library, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0175. Attention: Marilyn Levinson.

New Acquisitions


Quadrennial Enumerations at the CAC

A significant public record which some researchers may overlook is the Quadrennial Enumeration. These records consist of a census of males over twenty-one years of age residing in a given county and were used to determine voting districts. As the name suggests, they were taken every four years from 1803 to 1911, and record the individual's address, race, occupation and freeholder status. Prior to 1863, enumerations recorded only adult white males, although some of the earlier lists also included white youth.

Researchers now can use these lists for a number of purposes. For instance, genealogists find them helpful in tracing a family's or individual's movement between federal census years, and demographers use them to obtain a view of the economic and social conditions in a given area. Quadrennial Enumerations emanate from the office of the County Auditor or the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas. They are arranged within volumes or files by township and then alphabetically by inhabitant's name. Not all townships are represented for every county listed. Where a span of dates is indicated, the records exist for every fourth year therein. Quadrennial Enumerations at the CAC are in either microfilm or original form.

Quadrennial Enumerations available by county:

- Allen County, 1883-1887
- Defiance County, 1907
- Hancock County, 1887
- Hardin County, 1887-1907
- Ottawa County, 1887, 1871, 1899-1907
- Sandusky County, 1823-1879, 1903
- Seneca County, 1883-1903
- Van Wert County, 1887
- Wood County, 1842-1860, 1895-1899
- Wyandot County, 1887-1907

The Archaeological Chronicle is published three times a year in March, August, and December by the Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

The mission of the Center for Archival Collections is to acquire, preserve, and make accessible documentary materials in four broad categories: Northeast Ohio, University Archives, Joan Bodea, and Special Collections.

Readers are invited to submit information about events and publications of historical or genealogical researchers in northwest Ohio. Information for each issue should be received by the editor at least two weeks prior to the publication date. For more information, contact the Center for Archival Collections, 5th Floor Jerome Library, MGSU, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0415. Attention: Lee McClard, Reference Archivist.
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Public Access Hours at the CAC

Regular hours at the CAC: 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.

From December 14, 1987 to January 24, 1988, the CAC will be open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. The CAC will be closed December 24 and 25, 1987 and January 1 and 18, 1988.