Let’s Try This Again: Revamping Oral History At Warren County

Jen Haney Conover & Jenifer Baker
Warren County Records Center and Archives
Background

Lebanon, Ohio
Records Center established in 2001
Staff of 7
Mission: to serve the public through the protection and access to public records that document the activities and functions of Warren County government
25,000 cubic ft records storage and climate controlled storage room
Prior to 2013

- Kind of a webpage
- No inventory of basic records
- No social media
- Patrons could call, make web requests or walk in

Website: 2008
Source: [Wayback Machine](https://web.archive.org) – Internet Archive
Redefining our public access and outreach

2013:
- Updated Records Center website
- Began overhaul of inventory and indexing of records

2015:
- Hired an intern to assist with the writing a social media policy
- Launch of Facebook, Wordpress
- Intern also put together Educational outreach program with lesson plans
- Exhibit on our old Infirmary Building
Fast Forward to 2017

- Started to do research
- Imitation is the best form of flattery
- Put out feelers for oral histories with staff after looking at Licking County’s County Home Oral History Project
- Created/borrowed best practices and policies
- Oral History Release Form
- Told Jenifer go be awesome
CB: Warren County emergency police was set up basically for a, like a training program for people that might be interested in law enforcement. In doing so, they set up, Kennard set up a program and my dad got into it first. And then I followed him into it. And uh, it was basically uh—like I say, Warren County at that time was a poor county. They didn’t have no money, they didn’t have nothing. So, they took us in and basically trained us to be a deputy sheriff. And then uh—when Roy Wallace come in—he uh said that uh, started a training program for special deputies. And that was where you had the same power, arrest power, and all powers to—as a regular deputy, but you only got paid one dollar a year. It is still got some of my checks for a dollar a year.

(Laughter)

CB: And uh, Les Speeth—I still got one from Wes, Les Speeth uh—of course he was the Treasurer here for years. And uh, I got one signed by him for a dollar a year. And most of the guys just kept them anyway, yeah that’s all there was to it. And then when Roy took that over, he started programs of more intensified training. And they not only did police work, but we did a lot of emergency police did a lot of good for the community. Uh, we—when I—let’s see, would’ve been nineteen thirty-one—yeah—sixty or sixty-one, uh, when I joined was at the Maineville fire department and life squad, then I joined the emergency police. But they did—what I really got interested was that, dad had a big barn over on too of Columbia Road—um Brandon Road—‘m sorry—Grandin Road. When he sold the place over to Kings Island, he moved over on top of Grandin Road which was still in the Kings school district, which Luanna was the last one of the Bastons to graduate from, of the original family. Now my brothers and sisters, they had kids that graduated from Kings too. So, I went in the barn one day and that—I was coming home from work or something—God, there was a whole bunch of people at dad’s house so I went in there, and here was about fifteen or twenty guys in there. Men, grown men. They were having the time of their lives. They had toys scattered everywhere. They were there fixing the toys at Christmas time. We would donate them, I mean. I would—I went to Hamilton-Maineville School and got a list of needy families and which they took in Morrow at that time. So—and took in Harlan Township—so, I took anything east of—no, I should say south of—Little Miami. And I took the school districts there, dad took in Deerfield and he took in Mason and part of Turbocreek. So, the county was split up between all those guys, and it was your place to go get the needy families. So I went to the school and told them what we was doing, and she gave me a whole (indiscernible) and some good stuff. And so Christmas time come, we played Santa Claus. Which I thought was great, yeah! (Laughter)

TR: That sounds great!
Oral Histories
Post COVID

• Use apps such as
  • Zoom
  • WebEx
  • GoToMeeting
  • Google Duo/Hangouts
  • Microsoft Teams

• Social Distancing, masks and an old fashioned recording device
Thank you!

Jenifer Baker, MA  
Deputy Archivist  
Warren County Records Center and Archives  
406 Justice Drive, Room 052, Lebanon, OH  
45036  
Phone: (513) 695-1815

Jen Haney Conover, MA  
Records Manager/Archivist  
Warren County Records Center and Archives  
406 Justice Drive, Room 052, Lebanon, OH  
45036  
Phone: (513) 695-1868