Community Partnership

for the preservation of

Jewish History

in the Mahoning Valley

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Introduction

Congregation Rodef Sholom
Congregation Rodef Sholom

- Founded in 1867 as the first, and only, Reform Jewish Congregation in Youngstown

- Has consistently served as the only Reform Jewish Congregation in Youngstown

- The congregation built its current edifice in 1915 and has remained in the location without any interruption of service or mission
The Creation of the Project

- Searching for a way to engage the Congregation during the winter of 2019-2020
- Discovery of congregation’s historical materials tucked away when searching for something
- Evolution from congregation involvement into partnership and community involvement
Congregation Rodef Sholom’s Goals

- Highlight the value and impact of Congregation Rodef Sholom on the greater Jewish and secular communities

- Create a relevant and useful tool for the congregation and greater community

- Implement a process for collection growth and manipulation based on findings

- Involve partners within the community for enhanced care and depth of knowledge with regard to the collection
Partnerships
Planning & Outreach
Partnerships

AmeriCorps  
Ohio History Service Corps  
Congregation Rodef Sholom  
American Jewish Archives

Local History Member
Meetings started February 2020

Faculty & Students
Practicum in Applied History
Course Spring 2021 +
Center for Judaic & Holocaust Studies

Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor

Archives
State-wide connections & expertise
Planning & Outreach

- AmeriCorps x Rodef meetings to identify goals, priorities and needs of the organization to make the project a reality
- Developed a Collections Management Policy
- Increased exposure of the project/goals to the local community and greater historical community of Ohio to increase visibility and interest
  - Local press outlets
  - Interviews
  - American Jewish Libraries article
Making the Project a Reality

- Funding assistance was needed to create a proper environment for archival material, particularly aged and vulnerable records

- Sought expertise from American Jewish Archives, Youngstown State University and Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor on best practices and collections care

- Awarded Ohio Archives Grant from Ohio Historical Records Advisory Review Board to set up Archive room for improved storage and create a research space
Experiential Learning
Youngstown State University
Student Involvement

- Began with YSU History Program’s Practicum II course in January 2021
  - Inventoried art & framed collections and gained a general understanding of content of collection
  - Introduced to archival logistics by Martha Bishop
- Assisted in developing project plans and creating a grant budget
- Played a role in helping neighboring congregations develop their own inventory plan
Internship & Current Standing

- Internship spent working on archives, assisting other local congregations
  - Became familiar with archival materials
  - Creating a finding aid
  - Practical ways to organize
- Applying the archives to a thesis
  - Variety of sources
  - Able to tailor to my personal interests
- Independent study
  - National Register of Historic Places nomination
Progress Update

- Around 50% complete with organizing Rodef Sholom’s collection
- Completion of funded project phase by December 2021
Next Steps
Continuing & Strengthening Partnerships
Moving into the Future

- Enhancing partnerships with Youngstown State University
  - Future courses on the congregation, its members, and its impact on the greater Youngstown community
- Using items in the collection for future projects
  - Application for the National Register
- Access to additional grant and program funding
  - Partnership with YSU Holocaust and Judaic Studies program for visiting scholars
- Creating a replication guide for other organizations
- Ongoing partnership opportunities
  - Ohio History Service Corps
  - American Jewish Archives
  - Mahoning Valley Historical Society
Thank you

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