



## OHRAB ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2024

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### **OHRAB Announces the Recipient of the 2024 OHRAB Achievement Award**

The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board (OHRAB) is proud to announce that the recipient of the 2024 OHRAB Achievement Award is the **Union County Records Center & Archives**.

In 2019, the Union County Records Center & Archives began its Union County Common Pleas Court and Clerk of Courts File Access, Preservation, and Digitization Project. The project encompassed all the Union County Common Pleas Court case files from 1820 to 1900. The files begin with the creation of Union County in 1820 and document events of significant historical, genealogical, and legal importance to the people of Union County. The case files answer the “who, when, where, and why” questions so many researchers have about their families and their land.

Despite the importance of the files, they were disorganized. In 1860, Union County started to organize the files by case number. But prior to that, the files were organized by disposition date or judgement date, not by name. This made the files almost impossible to locate. The files were also stored in acidic packets that were slowly eating away at the paper inside them. The records suffered from limited access and inadequate preservation.

The Union County Records Center & Archives began its project with the goal to improve access to the Common Pleas Court files and to preserve them. The files were indexed by name, case type, file date, judgement, and judgement date. The information for each file was cross-checked by other court records, such as court journals or dockets, to make sure the index was comprehensive and complete. Once the index was complete, volunteers unfolded, flattened, and organized the more than 15,000 case files and placed them in acid-free files. Union County then collaborated with the Latter-day Saints to digitize the records. The images were uploaded along with the index to the website of the Union County Records Center & Archives.  
(<https://www.unioncountyohio.gov/Clerk-of-Courts-49169>)

With this project, the Union County Records Center & Archives succeeded in improving access to the Common Pleas court files and preserving them for the future. They serve as an example of what a small institution with limited resources can do with hard work, persistence, and the ability to collaborate. OHRAB congratulates the Union County Records Center & Archives for their accomplishments and wishes them continued success in their efforts to preserve the history of Ohio!

The Ohio Historical Advisory Board (OHRAB) is the central body for historical records planning in the state. The Board is funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Board members represent Ohio’s public and private archives, records offices, and research institutions. For more information on OHRAB and its Ohio Archives Grant Program, visit <https://ohrab.org/>.