



## OHRAB CITIZEN ARCHIVIST AWARDS 2025

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The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board (OHRAB) is proud to announce that **Jon Emler of the Licking County Records and Archives** is the recipient of the **2025 OHRAB Citizen Archivist Award**.

The OHRAB Citizen Archivist Award honors volunteers in Ohio's archives who work long hours, unpaid and often unacknowledged, answering reference requests, processing collections, and indexing historic records. This award recognizes those in Ohio archives who best exemplify the dedication and hard work volunteers--our citizen archivists--contribute to Ohio's archives each day.

Jon Emler began volunteering with the Licking County Records and Archives in 2019. His first project was transcribing Children's Home Registers. These registers are all that is left to document the children who called the Children's Home "home." Transcribing the five volumes of registers and researching the history of the Children's Home became Jon's passion. Jon grew up in the Children's Home himself. He wanted to give voice to all the children who may have otherwise been forgotten. In his own time, he researched how children in need were housed prior to the creation of the Children's Home and located basic information on these children, such as when they were admitted, their age, and where they were from. He researched the children who died at the Children's Home and was influential in the creation of a monument dedicated to them on what is believed to be their burial location. A veteran himself, Jon researched and identified each child who went on to join the military, so their service could be recognized. With these and other efforts, Jon has been instrumental in documenting what life was like in the Children's Home and keeping its history alive.

Since completing the transcription of the Children's Home Registers, Jon has transcribed infirmary records, tuberculosis cards, and mental illness records. Jon has been driven to give voice to those who have suffered, working diligently to ensure that future generations will not forget each individual and their story.

Jon has made his volunteer work a priority in his life and has always gone out of his way to be kind, considerate, and compassionate to his fellow volunteers and staff of the archive. Reference Librarian and Archivist Abigail Torre says, "Jon keeps our candy dish full in the office, telling us that 'it's just a nice thing to do,' brings us fresh basil, garlic, and tomatoes from his garden to share with us, and has stopped by outside of volunteer hours just to bring by articles he thinks we would find interesting. The days Jon is in our office are days we look forward to."

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Please join OHRAB in celebrating the accomplishments of Jon Emler and his contribution to the history of Ohio. We applaud the dedication, talent, and love that he and his fellow volunteers bring to Ohio's archives each day.

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, visit <https://ohrab.org/>.

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