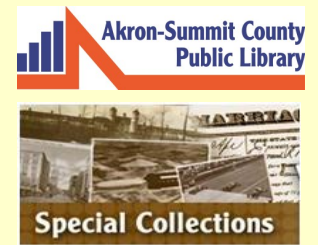


# Past Pursuits

A Newsletter of the Special Collections Division  
Akron-Summit County Public Library

Volume 17 Number 1 Spring 2018



*The Yorkshire was a “splendidly proportioned” model offered by the Aladdin Co. Image from Aladdin Homes, 1929, Building Technology Heritage Library, Internet Archive.*

## Early Twentieth Century Catalog Homes

*by Rebecca Larson-Troyer, Librarian*

If the words “assembly required” make you panicky, chances are you would not have been one of the tens of thousands of Americans who purchased their dream home in 30,000 pieces. Between 1908 and 1940, an estimated 100,000 homes were built in the United States pre-cut piece by pre-cut piece, purchased from mail-order catalogs through companies like Sears, Aladdin and Montgomery Ward. Researchers estimate about half of these homes were actually assembled by contractors rather than the homeowners themselves, but that still leaves a sizeable number of intrepid do-it-yourselfers willing to invest their time and money based on company claims that anyone with a basic understanding of construction could build a house from a kit.

Many households in the early 1900s received the Sears catalog, meaning Sears had a built-in customer base when it published its first Modern Homes catalog in 1908. Although not the first company to offer kit homes, Sears is most closely associated with the catalog home era, in part because three-quarters of the kit homes sold in the U.S. came from Sears, Roebuck and Co. With prices initially ranging from \$495 to over \$4,000, there were options to fit most budgets with numerous opportunities for customizations and upgrades. True to the times, bathrooms were not standard with some styles, as it would be several decades before indoor plumbing became the norm in rural America.

After choosing a site and selecting a style from the hundreds of floor plans available, customers waited a few weeks before receiving the pre-cut lumber, nails, paint, millwork and other building and finishing materials by train. Most standard homes, which filled two boxcars in their disassembled state, still had to be transported to the building site, meaning cities with close access to railroad lines were most likely to see kit homes spring up around town. The foundation, construction labor, plumbing, masonry, electrical (where applicable) and heating systems were all

### *In this issue*

Upcoming Genealogy Programs.....	3
Correction: Ten Years of Summit Memory....	4
On Display: CLPA Memorial Garden.....	5
Getting to Know...CLPA Honorees.....	6
New Books.....	7
Online Resources for Stark County.....	8
Akron Woman’s City Club Anniversary.....	9
Archival Collections from Places of Worship	10
Special Collections Class Schedule.....	11
Summit County OGS Events.....	11

separate costs. Still, the final price tag often reflected a significant savings over traditional home construction, owing to the mass produced – although not inferior – materials. Sears, as well as other kit home manufacturers, touted not only the affordability of their catalog homes, but also an exceptional commitment to quality. Aladdin Company of Michigan referred to their first kit homes as “knocked-down houses,” not a reference to their sturdiness but rather to the fact that the homes were “sawed out, put together, then systematically knocked down [...] to send out to purchasers.” In their [1908 annual catalog](#), Aladdin described the savings over traditional construction:

*We do all the work by automatic machinery, instead of by the slow and costly process of hand labor [...] We do all the cutting and fitting of this house with a perfect exactness—an exactness obtainable only by the use of the most modern and improved machinery—leaving for you only the driving of the nails in its erection, a quick, inexpensive and easy thing to do.*

Perhaps a bit of an oversimplification of the actual construction process, but the point was clear – speed and savings did not have to come at the cost of quality. Aladdin later adopted the “Built in a Day” and “Ready-Cut” names for their houses and offered a “Dollar-a-Knot” refund guarantee. Sears applied the “Honor Bilt” name to its products, with similar guarantees for quality.

While the individual customer was seeking a good value and an attractive modern home, America’s manufacturing firms were looking to address housing shortages for their workers. Akron was entering an industrial boom that would make it the fastest growing city in the country between 1910 and 1920. Communities like Firestone Park and Goodyear Heights, for example, were established as affordable housing for employees of two of Akron’s major rubber companies. While evidence doesn’t suggest that Goodyear turned to the mail-order companies for housing, records show that Firestone, which initially rejected a kit-home solution to housing development, eventually worked with Sears to provide materials for Firestone Park homes. Page four of the [1925 Honor Bilt Modern Homes Catalog](#) shows “a few of the 100 houses sold to a construction company at Akron, Ohio, by Sears, Roebuck and Co.” PBS’s [History Detectives](#) visited Akron in 2002 to investigate Sears’ role in one Firestone Park home in particular.

So are there other mail-order homes in the area? Very likely. In fact, according to an online [chronology](#) of Sears history, the first Modern Homes sales office was opened in Akron in 1919. The *Akron Beacon Journal* featured advertisements for Sears, Aladdin and Montgomery Ward’s Wardway Homes, mostly in the 1910s and ‘20s. Sears marketed its “easier-than-rent” payment options, and building and loan companies offered to help customers finance their catalog dream homes. It stands to reason that a number of sales were made in the area, though records were not kept as to where homes were constructed. The market for kit homes surged in the 1920s before sagging during the Great Depression as new home construction slowed, fewer new mortgages were issued and real estate values dropped. Mortgage relief initiatives allowed customers to refinance to lower rates and longer terms on existing mortgages, many of which were originally financed through the home companies, cutting into the profitability of selling homes from a catalog. By 1940, most catalog home divisions had ceased operations, though a few carried on several more decades. The answer to the housing shortage that followed World War I was predominately tract and modular homes, modern and efficient at the time, but regarded today with less affection and nostalgia than a catalog home.

**Before You Build - Get All These Facts and Save \$500 to \$2,000**

Mr. Hayford knows—  
 “In April, 1927, I purchased a ‘Barrington Honor Bilt’ Home. After completion I found it cost me only \$6,200.00. According to local practice and financing this same house would cost me almost \$12,000.00.  
 I have been in construction work most of my life, for the last thirteen years connected with one of the largest institutions in the country in the construction and maintenance department.  
 Your financing plan is the most liberal I have known and your dealing with customers highly commendable.” T. C. Hayford.

The “Barrington” English Type  
 6 ROOMS and BATH  
 Monthly Payments as Low as \$50

The “San Jose” Spanish Style  
 5 ROOMS and BATH  
 Easy Payments as Low as \$45

41,200 “HONOR BILT” Homes Now in Use  
 SAVINGS of this kind are the result of careful architectural planning, expert estimating and using most modern machinery in three of the world’s largest factories, where all lumber and interior trim, the best that money can buy, are cut to fit at a saving of 40 per cent of your carpenter work. The material is shipped marked the same as skyscraper beams ready to be fitted together according to a simple plan anyone can follow.

*Ads for Sears’ “Honor Bilt” homes appeared in several issues of the Akron Beacon Journal, including this ad from June 26, 1928. At that time, Sears’ local home sales office was in the Akron Savings & Loan Building.*



### The MAYFAIR - - *An Ideal Home Good to Look At - Pleasant to Live In*

*A later home model from 1947 offered by the Lewis Manufacturing Co., Bay City, Michigan. Image from the Building Technology Heritage Library, Internet Archive.*

Information abounds for researching the history of catalog homes, demonstrating a deep interest in this era in American homebuilding. In addition to reproduced and digitized catalogs, company histories, blogs, social media groups and kit-home expert websites are readily available online. Efforts to document mail-order houses throughout the country, many of which are now approaching century-home status, have revealed that Ohio has the most documented homes, though most have been identified in the Cincinnati area. There are likely numerous undocumented catalog homes in Ohio, though, including in Akron and Summit County.

For those suspecting their house is a catalog home, experts agree the first step is to verify that the construction date falls, in most cases, between 1908 and 1940. Researching your [house history](#) through deeds and grantor records, as well as locating building permits, might yield some additional clues. Attempt to match the home's style and floorplan to catalogs and advertisements, paying close attention to measurements and square footage, which should be exact. Investigate millwork for shipping labels and

lumber for numbers, often found in exposed areas under stairs, in attics or in crawlspaces and basements. Because Sears was the most prolific company for mail-order homes, a good place to start is the [Sears Archives](#), as well as reproduced catalogs available at the [Library](#) and [online](#). The next time you are building a ready-to-assemble, Swedish-named bookcase, take a moment to consider the fearlessness of ordering and awaiting two train cars of materials and a 750-page instruction manual.

### How to Erect a Ready-Cut Home

*Read These Instructions Very Carefully Before Starting Any Work*

## Upcoming Genealogy Programs

Special Collections is getting ready for a busy spring and summer featuring three events to help you with your genealogical research. Join us for these FREE programs! Check for [program flyers](#) on our website. Registration requested. Please contact us at 330-643-9030 or [speccollections@akronlibrary.org](mailto:speccollections@akronlibrary.org).

### Naturalization Records and Jewish Genealogy with Kenneth Bravo

Saturday, May 5, 10:30 am-1 pm  
Main Library, Meeting Room 2AB

Kenneth Bravo is a frequent lecturer on several genealogical topics. He is currently president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and past president of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Cleveland, as well as a member of the Ohio Genealogical Society and the Association of Professional Genealogists.

10:30 am: Locating and Using Your Ancestor's Post-1906 Naturalization Record  
11:45 am: The Nuts and Bolts of Jewish Genealogy





**Online Resources for Genealogy and Local History with Carla Cegielski**  
Saturday, June 23, 10:30 am-1 pm

Carla Cegielski is a frequent speaker at genealogical societies, libraries and conferences. She is a full-time family history researcher specializing in Ohio, Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia research, and has provided professional research services to attorneys, historians, genealogists, and hobbyists since 2007. She is past president of both of the Great Lakes Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists and the Lake County (Ohio) Genealogical Society.

10:30 am: Digital Ohio: Buckeye Gems  
11:45 am: Treasures of the Internet Archive



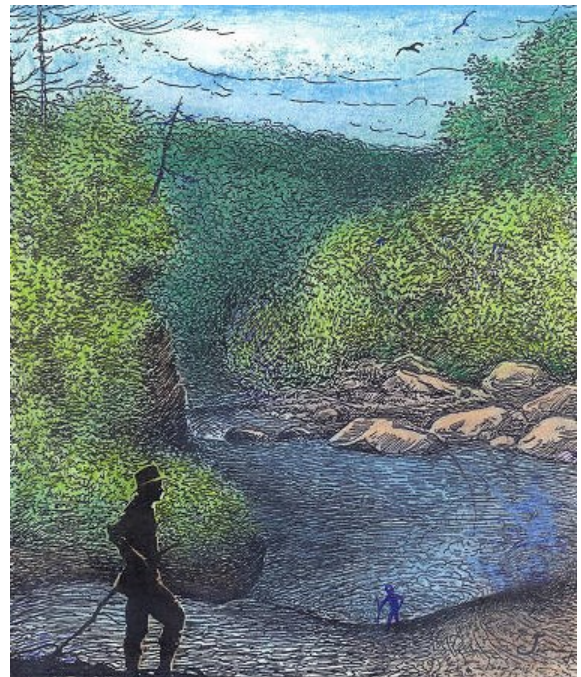
**DNA and Genetic Genealogy featuring CeCe Moore**  
Saturday, July 28, 9:30 am-4 pm

Join us for an all-day program featuring renowned genetic genealogist [CeCe Moore](#), founder of [DNA Detectives](#). Watch for more information in the summer issue of *Past Pursuits*.

9:45 am: The Power of DNA: Genetic Genealogy Basics  
11:15 am: Who Am I: Exploring Ethnicity Estimates  
1:30 pm: I Have My Results, Now What?  
3 pm: Breaking Through Genealogical Brick Walls with DNA

## Correction: Ten Years of Summit Memory

We were remiss in not including former Special Collections librarian Joanne O'Dell in the article about Summit Memory's tenth anniversary appearing in the Winter 2017 issue of *Past Pursuits*. Joanne was integral to both the planning and execution of Summit Memory, and her hard work and dedication ensured Summit Memory's success. Thank you to one of our Summit Memory partners for pointing out our omission. And, of course, thank you to Joanne!



The Big Pool-Entrance to the Great Gorge of Tinker's Creek by Joseph Jesensky. Image from the Artwork of Joseph Jesensky collection, Summit Memory.



*The Mustill Store about 1866. Photo from the Cascade Locks Park Association Collection, Summit Memory.*

## On Display: Cascade Locks Park Association and the Memorial Garden Project

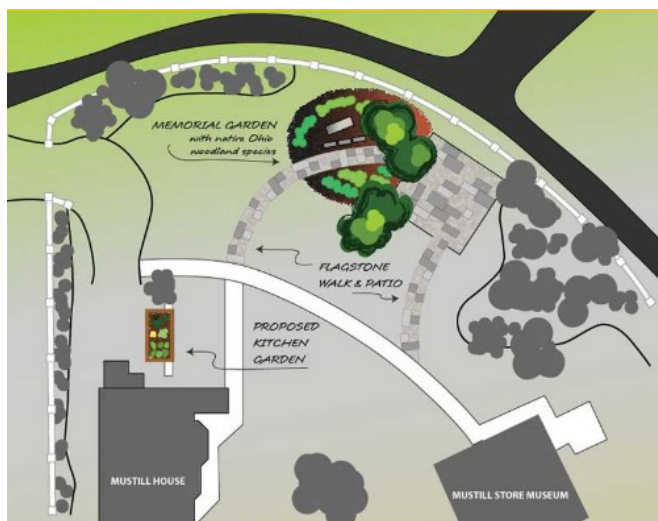
*by Mary Plazo, Division Manager*

One of the first families to rise as entrepreneurs and develop their business on the Ohio and Erie Canal in the 1840s was Akron's Mustill family. The historic sites known as the Mustill House and the Mustill Store Museum are located on the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail just off North Street. These landmarks are preserved by the Cascade Locks Park Association (CLPA), which incorporated in 1989 for the purpose of restoring this historic area. The mission of CLPA is to

preserve, protect and promote the industrial, commercial and cultural heritage of the Cascade Locks Park along Locks 10-15.

One of the many projects CLPA is working on this year is the Memorial Garden Project. This project will create a garden with native Ohio woodland plant species saved by Akron Garden Club members. A flagstone path has been created to wind through the garden, linking to the home and museum's existing path and ending at a flagstone patio. Focal points will be stake-mounted memorial plaques commemorating citizens who were integral to the cultural development and reconstruction of the Cascade Locks area and Mustill site.

This year, plaques will be installed commemorating the outstanding work of Jack Gieck, founding member of CLPA; Bruce Norton, longtime volunteer and pioneer in the development and planning of the restoration of the historic Mustill site; and Lynn Metzger, professor of Anthropology at the University of Akron and co-author of *Canal Fever: The Ohio & Erie Canal from Waterway to Canalway*. On Friday, May 25 at 3 pm, there will be a short ceremony at the Mustill site to commemorate the installation of these plaques.



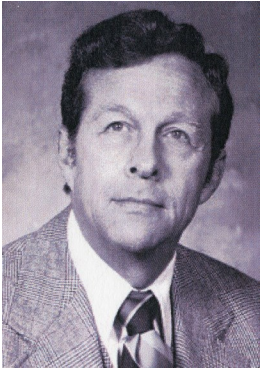
*Layout of the Memorial Garden near the Mustill House and Mustill Store Museum with flagstone walk and patio. Image courtesy of CLPA.*



From the end of April through June, Special Collections will showcase a display to celebrate the work of CLPA with highlights commemorating these three significant and very important citizens in our community.

If you want to visit before May, opening day for the Mustill Store Museum is Saturday, April 21. See the CLPA [website](#) for details.

*The Mustill Store Museum today. Photo from the Cascade Locks Park Association Collection.*



## Getting to Know...CLPA Memorial Garden Honorees

### Jack Gieck

by Mary Plazo, Division Manager

Jack Gieck was a founding member of the Cascade Locks Park Association. Raised in St. Louis, he graduated with a Chemical Engineering degree from Iowa State University in 1947 and was a Registered Professional Engineer. He was hired by Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, and during his 34-year career, spent time in several places including Michigan, Indiana and Akron, Ohio. His titles included Assistant Director of Research and Director of New Product Development. He was responsible for developing an energy-absorbing bumper that is standard on all buses and postal vehicles. He also created many instructional films for Firestone. He took early retirement to pursue his interests in writing and filmmaking.

Gieck authored many magazine articles, technical papers and books including *A Photo Album of Ohio's Canal Era, 1825-1913*; *Litchfield: The U. S. Army on Trial*; *Riding on Air: A History of Air Suspension*; *Fatal Journey*; and *Early Akron's Industrial Valley: A History of the Cascade Locks*. He was the photography editor for the well-known book *Akron: City at the Summit* by George W. Knepper and produced a film by the same name. Gieck also created the documentaries *Ohio's Canal Era* and *DIG: An Archaeological Investigation in Akron's Cascade Locks Park*.

In addition, Gieck was president of the Canal Society of Ohio, co-founder of the Akron Physics Club and a trustee emeritus of the Summit County Historical Society, the Cascade Locks Park Association, the Canal Society of Ohio, and the Eldred World War II Museum.

Jack Gieck died June 4, 2015. Described by family and friends as warm, friendly, energetic and curious about everything, it is good to see him receiving a lifelong acknowledgment in the CLPA Memorial Garden this year. His family was gracious enough to donate much of his important research and copies of his films to add to our archival materials here in Special Collections. Many of these items will be highlighted in our display celebrating CLPA and the Memorial Garden.



### Bruce Norton

by Mary Plazo, Division Manager

Bruce Norton was born in the hills of the Berkshires in Huntington, Massachusetts. He completed two years of Technical Community College in Springfield, Massachusetts and then signed on as a Construction Engineer in the U.S. Army. After the Army, he received his Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering in Lowell, Massachusetts and then worked for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, eventually retiring in 1986.

Norton always had a strong interest in history and loved hiking along the Ohio & Erie Canal by the Mustill site as early as 1977. Because of his engineering background, he was fascinated by the structural aspects of the locks along the canal. He took a special interest in the remnants of lock structures and artifacts he found hiking from Lock 1 at Exchange Street to Lock 15 and continuing on past North Street. He knew that significant archaeological work needed to be done to preserve this part of Akron's history. At a time when it was uncertain whether the historic Mustill store and house could be saved, he joined Virginia Wojno-Forney and others who had a growing interest in preserving the abandoned area.

Through his research and tireless dedication to the preservation of the Cascade Locks Park area, Norton helped CLPA to realize the dream of restoring the site. He would later consider his most significant accomplishment to be his influence on the accurate restoration of the Mustill buildings and the Towpath Trail

that now runs through this park.

I was lucky enough to serve on the CLPA Archives Committee for several years with Bruce Norton before he died on June 15, 2010. I will always remember his endless patience with others and his enthusiasm for explaining the history behind Akron's Cascade Locks.



## Lynn Rodeman Metzger

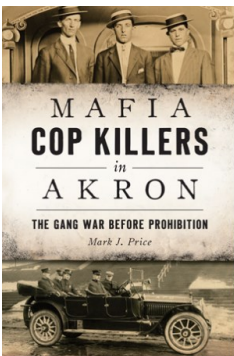
by Jane Gramlich, Librarian

Lynn Metzger was born in Suffield, Ohio, and was raised in Pennsylvania. She returned to Ohio to earn undergraduate and master's degrees at the University of Akron and completed a Ph.D. in Anthropology at Case Western Reserve University. Metzger went on to spend nearly two decades on the faculty of the University of Akron and received the Buchtel Award for Humanities in 2008. She directed or assisted with local archaeological digs at Hale Farm & Village, the Ohio & Erie Canal at Clinton, Sand Run Metro Park and Cascade Locks Park.

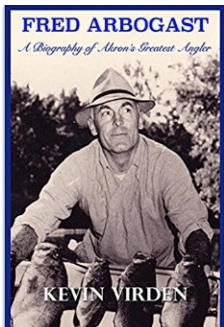
In addition to her teaching and archaeological work, Metzger was an active writer and editor. She co-authored *Canal Fever: The Ohio & Erie Canal from Waterway to Canalway*, which was nominated in the "About Ohio" category for the Ohioana Book Award in 2010. Metzger also assisted in editing *Joe's Place: Conversations on the Cuyahoga Valley* and Russ Musarra's *Along the Towpath: A Journalist Rediscovered the Ohio & Erie Canal*. She held numerous speaking engagements and served as guide for many local historical commemorations and events. The *Akron Beacon Journal* often consulted her for her expertise on many topics including Native American culture, a strong interest she held throughout her career. Outside her academic work, Metzger served as president and trustee of the Summit County Historical Society and was an advocate of the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition.

Lynn Metzger died on July 24, 2015. She left a lasting legacy in a wide variety of important contributions to the study of Summit County's history and landscape, and she will also be remembered for her unfailing support of local historical organizations.

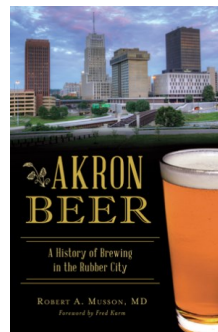
## New Books



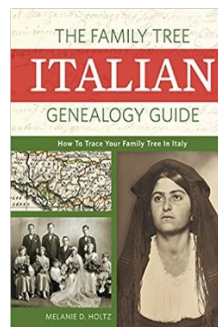
*Mafia Cop Killers in Akron: The Gang War Before Prohibition* explores the gritty underworld tale of a Furnace Street gang set against a backdrop of a dynamic, bustling Akron during the World War I era. In well-researched detail, Mark Price once again breathes life into a previously forgotten chapter of the city's history.



In *Fred Arbogast: A Biography of Akron's Greatest Angler*, Kevin Virden highlights Akron's important role in the fishing tackle industry. Through lively narrative and extensive illustrations, Virden pays tribute to Fred Arbogast, his family and his company.

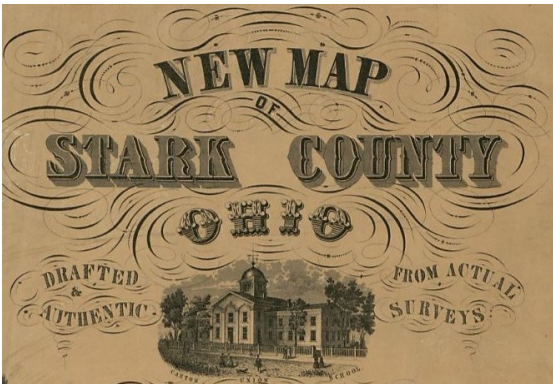


Since Robert Musson's *Brewing Beer in the Rubber City* was published in 1997, the local brewing industry has seen a number of changes. *Akron Beer: A History of Brewing in the Rubber City* revisits historic breweries and updates the reader on the latest entrepreneurs to break into the area's craft brewery scene.



If you have Italian ancestors, you'll want to know the latest tools and techniques available for tracing them both in the U.S. and overseas. In *The Family Tree Italian Genealogy Guide*, Melanie D. Holtz covers the history, geography, language and record types necessary for successful research.

For more new local history and genealogy books, see the [New Books](#) list on our website.



New Map of Stark County, Ohio,  
Williams Dorr & Co., publishers, 1850.  
Image from the Library of Congress  
Geography and Map Division.

## Online Genealogy Resources for Stark County

by Barbara Leden, Librarian

This issue's installment of our continued series of online genealogy resources for Ohio counties will focus on Stark County. Bordering Summit County to the southeast and named after the Revolutionary War General John Stark, the county was founded in 1808. Part of what is now Summit County was once in Stark County, so it may be beneficial to check records from all surrounding counties when doing research.

The [Stark County District Library](#) has links to various government offices on its website, including naturalization records processed in Stark County through the Clerk of Courts. A successful search by name will provide a PDF copy of the document. Another item of interest is the [Cemetery Locations Map](#). A map showing cemeteries as well as addresses is provided. The [Combination Atlas Map of Stark County](#) for 1875 can also be viewed online from the library's website, and there is a section of further links to digitized indexes to [courthouse records](#) such as wills, patents, taxes, naturalization and military records. Several digital historic local newspapers are available through the [digital archives](#) section. The Stark County District Library also has a [Flickr](#) page highlighting local historical photographs. [Massillon Memory](#), maintained by the Massillon Public Library, offers city directories, yearbooks, and a local Business and Industry database.

The [Stark County Recorders Office](#), which requires a free account, provides information on up to 209 years of land transactions. Real estate transactions and values can be found through the [Stark County Auditor](#). At the [Stark County Clerk of Courts'](#) website, you can search for civil, criminal and divorce records. The [Probate Court of Stark County](#) enables searching by name, which may lead to case numbers containing more information. The Probate Court holds information in regard to marriages, guardianships, estates, birth records, adoptions and land appropriations.

FamilySearch now requires a free account to search and view records. It offers small browsable (unindexed) collections of Stark County resources, including [court records, 1809-1917](#); [coroner's records, 1890-2002](#); and [probate records, 1886-1921](#). More recent will and estate information may be located on the Probate Court's website. Stark County records are included in many of FamilySearch's statewide Ohio databases such as [Ohio, County Births, 1841-2003](#). Other county resources in larger statewide databases are listed in [Ohio Online Genealogy Records](#).

Several Stark County resources have been digitized on [Internet Archive](#). Some titles are *Cemetery Inscriptions: Stark County, Ohio* (six volumes); *Honor Roll of Ohio: Stark Edition* (a biographical history of World War I); *Old Landmarks of Canton and Stark County, Ohio*; *History of Stark County, Ohio* by William Henry Perrin and *The Farm Journal Rural Directory of Stark County, Ohio* (1915).



Home of Loren E. Immel, Hartville.  
Image from The Farm Journal Rural  
Directory of Stark County, Ohio,  
[Internet Archive](#).

Check out these local society websites for more online resources: [Stark County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society](#), the [North Canton Heritage Society](#), [Osnaburg Historical Society](#), the [Plain Township Historical Society](#) and [The Canton Historical Society](#). Consult the [Ramsayer Research Library](#) of the McKinley Presidential Library and Museum for further historic photographs and indexes to some county records. The [Alliance Historical Society](#) discusses historic topics, provides a photograph collection at [Alliance Memory](#), and suggests other websites of interest in regard to Stark County history.





## The Akron Woman's City Club Celebrates 95 Years

by Cheri Goldner, Librarian

The Akron Woman's City Club is celebrating its 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Fifty women gathered at the home of Helen Wolle on February 8, 1923 and formed the Woman's City Club of Akron to discuss subjects of interest, hold seminars for education, promote charitable events and serve as a social center and meeting place for women of Akron. Most members were housewives married to rubber industry executives or to other prominent Akron professionals.

The club held its first regular meeting, a luncheon attended by 80 of its 175 charter members, on Monday, March 12 at the Portage Hotel. Among the order of business was electing fifteen directors and finding a club house that could serve as a social center for the women of the city. Several houses were under consideration, with the main requirements being space for a 300-person auditorium and a

*The first clubhouse of the Akron Woman's City Club at 115 South Union Street. Photo from the Summit County Historical Society Collection.*

dining room for private and club luncheons.

In July of 1923, the group found its first club house in the former home of B.F. Goodrich Co. executive Frank H. Mason at 115 South Union Street. Mason left this home after building a new one on Turkeyfoot Lake. The club rented the building at this location for just a few years, however, as its needs quickly outgrew the space. The building was razed in 1963.

In May of 1926, the 970-member club found the space it needed, 9,000 square feet to be exact, when it leased the entire third floor of the Pythian Temple at 34 South High Street. This location also had the advantage of being, as a May 20 *Akron Beacon Journal* article stated, "in the heart of the city and practically next door to the new Keith-Albee Palace." The club began remodeling right away and held its first meeting in the new location on June 30, 1926. It remained at this location for twenty years. While the temple has been demolished, its brass bells are preserved in the club's current home.

In 1945, President Mabel Graham led the purchase of Grey Lodge at 732 West Exchange Street for \$30,000. Designed by Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw and built in 1901 for B.F. Goodrich Co. vice-president Bertram Work, the 40-room mansion was later owned by Goodyear executive George Stadelman. The club's 1,000 members moved into the building on June 3, 1946, with a gala opening at which women wore sequined gowns with flowers and elaborate hats. Details on renovation and rooms within the building can be found on the club's [website](#).

Just as the club's home has changed over the years, so too has its makeup and membership. In 1939, the club was reincorporated as a non-profit organization and became known as Akron Woman's City Club. In 2006, the club was reincorporated once again as a charitable non-profit organization.

Mark Price described changes in membership in a 1998 *Beacon Journal* article written on occasion of the club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The original club bylaws limited membership to 1,300. Its peak years began in the 1950s, continuing through the 1970s and even into the 1980s, so prospective members had to spend time on a waiting list. The average age of members began to rise in the 1980s with changes in family life, and fewer young women joined the club. In 1998, the average age was between 60 and 65. Of the 1,220 members, only about 200 women were 40 or younger.



*The Bertram G. Work residence or Grey Lodge, the current clubhouse of the Akron Woman's City Club. Photo from the Summit County Historical Society Collection.*

Changes in membership were also reflected in changes within the club's subgroups or sections. In addition to its bridge groups and sections focusing on books, antiques, history, music and the arts, euchre and needlework, many of which met during the day, a Six-Thirty evening section was added to give women who work the opportunity to be involved. Other sections added in 1998 include one called Answers R Us to address everyday concerns, ranging from car servicing to financial matters, and another called Little Women to introduce girls from 13 to 17 to dining in a private club and conducting their own meetings.

While the club itself is private, it has offered various programs to the public over the years. Husbands and families are welcome in the dining room, widowers of members enjoy full privileges until they remarry, and the club's Civic Affairs unit, a non-profit subsidiary, runs the club's Coach House theatre and the Town Hall lecture series, both of which are open to the public.

## Archival Collections From Places of Worship

*by Iris Bolar, Librarian*

The Special Collections Division is becoming the location where local congregations choose to donate the records of their places of worship. By being donated to the Library, these records will be accessible to the public for research. This article is an overview of records from religious congregations that are currently housed in Special Collections. Complete [finding aids](#) for our collections can be found on our website.

The High Street Christian Church was founded in Akron in 1839. Although fires destroyed many church records, this collection is currently the largest Special Collections has acquired from a religious institution. The collection includes membership records, photographs and photo albums, church histories, programs, newsletters, newspaper clippings, directories, annual reports, board minutes and other records.

The Beth El Synagogue Collection was donated in 2012. Its coverage goes back to the 1950s. The collection includes scrapbooks, photographs, bulletins and administrative materials. The Fairlawn West United Church of Christ Collection consists of papers of the Women's Fellowship, newsletters, pamphlets, programs and other records from the church's groups and guilds. Materials range from the 1940s through the 1990s. The St. Paul's Catholic Church congregation celebrated its first mass in Firestone Park School in 1919, and its records cover the 1920s through the 2000s. The collection includes photographs, various publications, newspaper clippings and documents from the Boy Scouts, Organ Club, and First Communion classes.

The most recent acquisition from Bethany Lutheran Church came to Special Collections late last year with the closing of the church. This collection will be available to the public after it is processed by staff. Some other collections that may be of interest include the Furnace Street Mission/Victim Assistance Program, Jewish Community Board of Akron and the Roderic B. Dibbert Collection.



*Furnace Street Mission, late 1940s-early 1950s. Photo from the Furnace Street Mission Collection, Summit Memory.*

## Special Collections Main Library Class Schedule

The Special Collections Division offers several recurring genealogy classes to help you with your family research. All classes are free of charge and open to the general public. **Registration is required for all classes held at Main Library. Please register by calling us at 330-643-9030 or emailing us at [specollections@akronlibrary.org](mailto:specollections@akronlibrary.org).** Classes are also held at branches. Check the Library's [events calendar](#) for branch events.



### Identifying Your Family Photographs

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but unlocking the stories of unidentified photographs requires some sleuthing. This class includes tips and techniques for identifying historic photographs. Learn to read clues, such as the type of photograph, clothing and hairstyles, and even whether or not subjects are smiling to reveal the stories behind every photograph. This workshop will also take a look at how genealogy databases and local history resources can be used to identify your family photographs. Saturday, April 14, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Meeting Room 2AB



### Using Historical Newspapers in Your Genealogy Research

From births to obituaries, estate notices to news stories, newspapers can fill in important details and help to paint a fuller picture of our ancestors' lives. This class will take a look at accessing newspaper content through a variety of resources. Saturday, May 12, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Computer Lab 2



### Using Ancestry in Your Genealogy Research

Ancestry is the premier online genealogy resource—and it's available to you for free within any ASCPL location. This class will introduce you to the many features of Ancestry Library Edition and show you how to do efficient and effective searches. A brief overview of HeritageQuest, which is similar to Ancestry Library Edition, is also included. Saturday, June 9, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Computer Lab 2

## Summit County OGS Events

For more information or updates, see the [SCCOGS website](#).

### Early Settlers in Ohio

Presented by Mary Jamba

Saturday, April 21

1:30 pm

Ellet Branch Library, 2470 East Market Street, Akron

(Note location change)

### Frances and Arabella: John and Fanny: Love and War

Presented by John C. Fazio

Saturday, May 19

1:30 pm

Main Library, Meeting Room 2AB

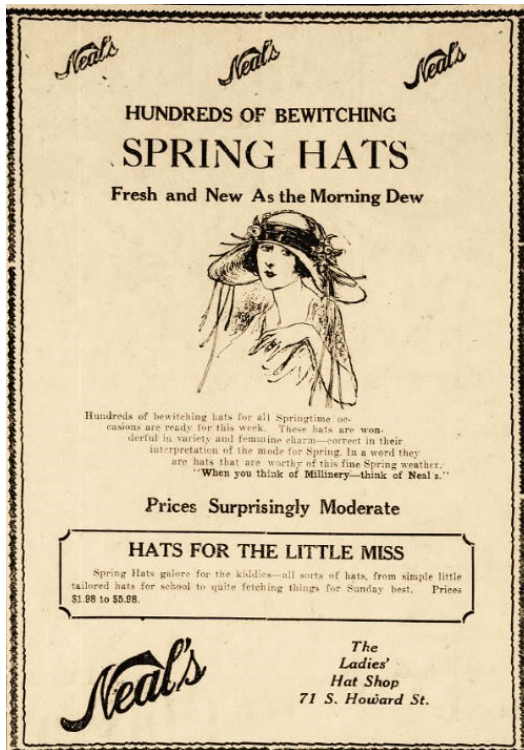
### Cemetery Invasion

Saturday, June 16

Time and place TBD

Kelly McKnight, Cemetery Chair, will announce the location of the annual cemetery invasion at a later date.





*Neal's Millinery Store, which opened in February 1911, ran this ad in the Akron Beacon Journal on April 13, 1921.*

The Akron-Summit County Public Library  
Special Collections Division  
is located on the third floor  
of the Main Library.

Special Collections  
Akron-Summit County Public Library  
60 S. High St.  
Akron, Ohio 44326

330-643-9030

email:  
[speccollections@akronlibrary.org](mailto:speccollections@akronlibrary.org)

website:  
[www.akronlibrary.org/specialcollections](http://www.akronlibrary.org/specialcollections)



**Special Collections Division  
Akron-Summit County Public Library  
60 South High Street  
Akron, Ohio 44326**