

# Past Pursuits

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

Volume 16 Number 3 Autumn 2017



## The Reporter Now Digitized and Available on Ohio Memory

by Mary Plazo, Division Manager

Akron's African American newspaper, *The Reporter*, is now digitized and full-text searchable for free on [Ohio Memory](#), with coverage from 1969 to 2016.

The Library has received *The Reporter* since its beginning and microfilms it every year, but the newspaper has never been indexed, which made research difficult or nearly impossible. Now, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Dick and Chris Chenoweth Fund of the Akron Community Foundation, *The Reporter* is available online for researchers, students, and family historians.

One of the first issues of *The Reporter*, November 15, 1969. The Library has maintained the newspaper from its first issue.

The Library contracted with [Ohio History Connection](#) (formerly The Ohio Historical Society) to digitize the Library's microfilm and paper collections. Using standards and technology established by the Library of Congress, the digital version of *The Reporter* was placed on Ohio Memory, the Ohio History Connection's collaborative digital project with the [State Library of Ohio](#). Ohio Memory includes newspapers and other materials contributed by more than 360 cultural heritage institutions from all 88 counties.

Akron's African American community has a rich history, and we are fortunate to have this unique publication which has been documenting the community's history since 1969. Established that year by William R. Ellis, Sr., *The Reporter* was founded as a response to a lack of coverage by the mainstream press. Now operated by his sons William R. Ellis, Jr. and Carlton D. Ellis, this weekly publication records the lives and perspectives of our African American residents, covering everything from church histories, biographies, and social events to articles about current issues.

Using optical character recognition (OCR) software, approximately 30,000 pages have been

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scanned. This software “reads” words, enabling keyword searches that take the researcher directly to the page or pages where that term or phrase may be found. Thanks to this project, we now have unprecedented access to the stories, news, and events of our African American community for over 45 years. The Library will also continue to microfilm and digitize future years that are published starting with 2017.

We are grateful to *The Reporter* and the Ellis family for their support and enthusiasm for this project, and to the Dick and Chris Chenoweth Fund of the Akron Community Foundation for this generous grant and for recognizing the importance of preserving this crucial piece of Summit County’s history.

## TODAY’S BLACK NEWS IS TOMORROW’S BLACK HISTORY



### “Searching *The Reporter*” Program October 25

Interested in knowing more about *The Reporter*? Curious about digital historic newspapers? Join Jenni Salamon, Coordinator for the [Ohio Digital Newspaper Program](#) at the Ohio History Connection, to learn how *The Reporter* was transformed from hard copy to microfilm to digital images. Jenni has been with the Ohio History Connection since 2009 and currently manages their newspaper digitization and microfilming projects. She will present tips on how to search *The Reporter* and other digital historic newspapers now available on [Ohio Memory](#).

The program will be held 6:30-8 pm in Meeting Room 2AB at Main Library. No registration is necessary.

### Summit County OGS Meeting

#### English and Welsh Research - Part 2

Presented by Liz Pearson

Saturday, October 21

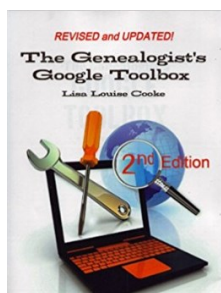
1:30-3:30 pm

Main Library, Meeting Room 2AB

Liz will continue the conversation from the September 16 meeting on administrative jurisdictions, parish chest records, and the government census. For more events, please see the chapter’s [website](#).



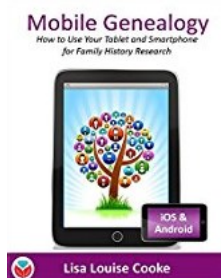
### New Books



Lisa Louise Cooke is the producer and host of [Genealogy Gems Podcast](#) and the author of four

books covering digital tools for genealogists. *The Genealogist’s Google Toolbox*, now in its second edition, shows readers how to use the popular search engine to maximize research, including

search strategies and functions such as Google Books, News Archive, Earth, and Translate. In *Mobile Genealogy*, Cooke offers tips and tricks for genealogists using tablets and smartphones and discusses apps for note-taking, file storage, reading, and more.



For more new books, see our [New Books](#) page on the [Special Collections](#) website.



## Getting to Know...Mary Paul

by Cheri Goldner, Librarian



Miss Mary Paul

—Photo by Goddard

Akron Beacon Journal,  
July 22, 1925.

Mary Paul, the first woman to hold elective office in Summit County, was born on February 12, 1879 in Akron. She was the fifth of seven children born to Sarah Matilda (Romig) and Robert Spencer Paul. She attended Spicer School and Akron High School (later Central), graduating in 1896.

The Paul family was heavily involved in both the local land business and county government. Paul's grandfather, Hosea Paul, moved here from Vermont and started a surveying and engineering business. Her father, Robert, served in the United States Engineer Corps with the Army of the Cumberland from 1862-1866 before moving to Akron and founding the civil engineering firm Paul Brothers. He also served as County Surveyor for eleven years. After graduating from high school, Paul spent the next seventeen years working on maps and serving as office manager of her father's firm. When her brother, Edward, was elected County Engineer in 1913, she joined him at the courthouse, organized the county's new Tax Map Department, and worked there twelve years.

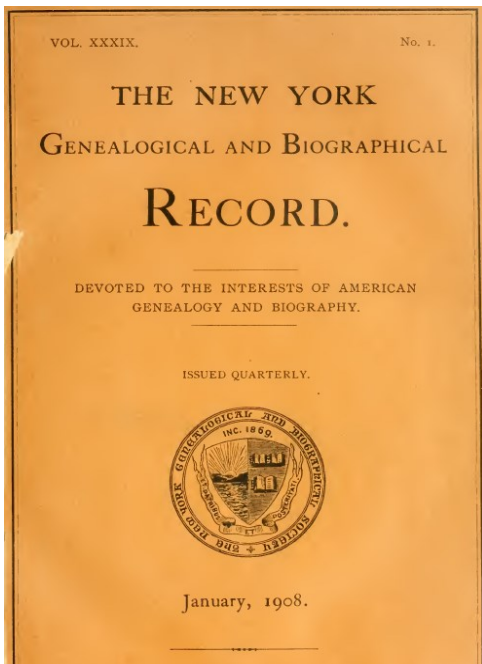
In 1924, after winning a six-way Republican primary, Paul became the first woman elected to a countywide office when she won for County Recorder. She won reelection twice, serving from 1925-1933. Although a Republican, she had the support of some Democrats as well. An August 20, 1924 *Akron Beacon Journal* item reported of "a well known democratic woman of Barberton being unable to cast a vote for

nomination of Miss Paul took the importance of [her] nomination into the street cars, busses [sic], stores, banks and church[es] and wound up a splendid campaign by telling of her fitness for office of recorder on election day to scores of people in front of Central Savings and Trust [Building]." Paul even ran for mayor of Akron in 1929. While she received 13,000 petition signatures when she needed only 4,700, she withdrew from the race after failing to receive the endorsement of the *Akron Beacon Journal*.

Paul held a variety of positions after her days as County Recorder. In 1933, she worked in the county office certifying applicants for Works Progress Administration and National Youth Administration jobs under President Roosevelt's New Deal Cultural Program. She also held a position with the Barberton Welfare Department and assisted with appraising real estate in the county. In 1944, she became the land title transfer clerk in the office of County Auditor C. L. "Kelly" Bower, a position she held until 1959. While she never practiced law, she did study at Akron Law School prior to running for mayor.

Outside of work, Paul enjoyed collecting stamps, music, reading, and nature walks. She prepared baskets for needy families during holidays and often helped people financially. She held memberships in the Pythian Sisters, the Royal Neighbors of America, the Past Chiefs Association, and the Nomads of Avrudaka. She also had an interest in writing, contributing the chapter "Environs and Landmarks" in the 1925 *Centennial History of Akron*. In 1957, her nieces and nephews established a fund at the Peninsula Library and Historical Society in both her name and that of her late sister, Ellen Paul Martin, to expand the library's local history collection.

Mary Paul died December 21, 1961 at the age of 82 in her home at 586 Carroll Street, the same home in which she was born. She is buried in Oakwood Cemetery. Those who worked with her remembered her as "Miss Precision." A biography published in the *Akron Beacon Journal* on December, 18, 1961, just days before her death, remarked that, whatever you asked her, "you could be sure of a ready, complete and accurate answer."



## A Closer Look at Genealogical Society Periodicals

by Jane Gramlich, Librarian

Successful genealogy research is largely about taking chances. It's impossible to know if a source will help you unless you take time to track it down and look at it. Frequently you'll strike out, but once in a while you'll strike gold. That's especially true with periodicals published by genealogical societies. Often overlooked and underused, they carry a wealth of buried information. Understanding these treasures and learning how to dig for them is a valuable skill in any genealogist's toolbox.

You'll find these publications at every level from local to national. The Ohio Genealogical Society (OGS) has dozens of county chapters, many of which publish newsletters. At the state level, OGS publishes *Ohio Genealogy News* and *Ohio Genealogical Society Quarterly*. Similar publications can be found in other localities and states. Researching in southwestern Pennsylvania? *Cornerstone Clues*, published by the Cornerstone Genealogical Society in Greene County, may have just the information you need.

*The NYGGBR is one of the oldest and most respected genealogy periodicals. Back issues before 1923 have been digitized on the Internet Archive.*

Look beyond the event listings and member news. State and local publications can carry two types of important content useful for anyone researching in that area. Transcribed local records appear frequently, and they're often unique or hard-to-find records such as newspaper snippets

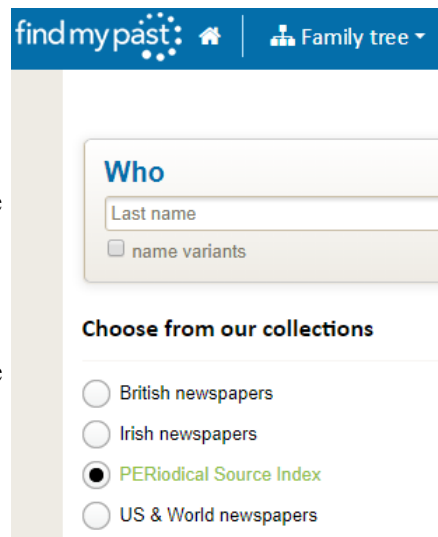
or family Bible records. Narrative articles are usually written by society members who report findings on their families. Keep in mind that these writers could be your distant cousins who are researching your shared ancestors. In the professional and scholarly ranks of the field, publications like *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* and *The Genealogist* tackle complex research situations and offer detailed and wide-ranging family studies. Articles in these journals will be of the best quality, written by credentialed authors and carefully selected and reviewed by an editorial board. This is genealogy at its most highly regarded level—and you may find your ancestors lurking there.

So how does a researcher tap into these rich resources? There are a number of ways. Some periodicals that are no longer under copyright are freely, if somewhat randomly, accessible online through the [Internet Archive](#) or [Google Books](#). A few local societies have made back issues of their periodicals openly available online on their websites, such as the Ashland County chapter of OGS, which offers PDF issues of *The Pastfinder* back to 1982. Even if full-text issues aren't available online, you may still find indexes or tables of contents on the websites of some periodicals, like *The Genealogist*, which offers complete tables of contents back to 1980. Treat older journals with the same healthy skepticism you'd apply to any genealogical source, but don't dismiss them outright because they're not current. Information in older journals may still be the best we can find.

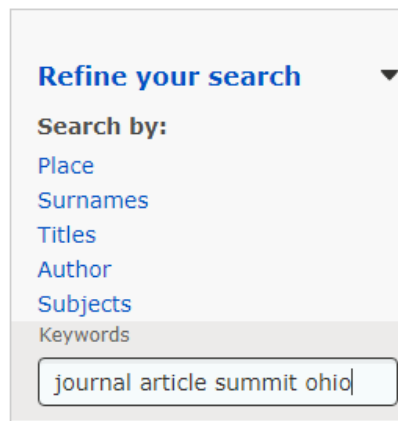
Most genealogical societies don't make their newsletters and journals openly accessible online. Considered a member benefit, issues are put behind a membership paywall. But that doesn't mean you can't find them—that's where libraries come in. Libraries with genealogy departments like Special Collections subscribe to these periodicals in print form and carry current and back issues. The next time you visit us, take a look at our shelves holding the older bound periodicals. The volumes might look a bit boring, but what's in them is not. Take a look also at our resources organized by state and county. We carry genealogy periodicals for several localities, with an emphasis on OGS chapter newsletters.

Finding specific, relevant articles about ancestral families is the goal of most genealogists, but it can take some persistence. It's also very possible you may not find anything on your direct line, but you might find data

on associated families or local history that can still be useful for your research. Browsing these journals is an excellent way to get a sense of their scope and you might come across something you didn't know existed. But if you're looking for something specific, combing through print indexes volume after volume or seeking out individual publication websites takes a lot of time. That's why genealogists turn to PERSI, or the PERiodical Source Index. Created and maintained by the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne, Indiana, it's the most comprehensive central index to genealogy periodicals. It's currently hosted on Findmypast, which can be accessed at Main Library. PERSI can be searched by name, location, and keyword, with options to narrow your search with many filters including title and date of publication.



Records Family Tree Genealogies



Another central source for genealogy periodicals is [FamilySearch](#), which offers many digitized periodicals and useful ways of finding print ones. You can use FamilySearch's catalog to search for a specific periodical or article title if you know it. But what if you don't? One useful "fishing" approach to get a sense of available publications is to search the catalog with the keyword *periodical* combined with a location (county and/or state). To search for specific articles, use the keywords *journal article* combined with a location, surname, or both.

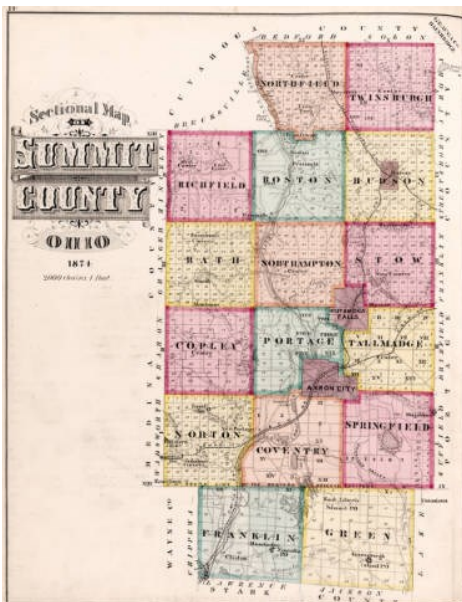
If you find an article in PERSI or FamilySearch that you'd like to see but can't access online, note the article title and the journal title, and the year or volume and issue number. Try us first! Search our catalog or contact us to see if we carry the publication. If we don't, we may be able to get a copy of the article from another library. This involves a simple interlibrary loan (ILL) request. In most cases, there's no charge for article copies through ILL. If an ILL request can't be filled, articles you find on PERSI can still be ordered from ACPL for a small fee.

In today's fragmented landscape of countless online family trees that often lack sources or explanations, remember that well-written articles are stories that can lead us toward a deeper understanding of our ancestors' complicated lives and connections. Much hard work goes into writing and publishing periodicals, and it often goes unnoticed. Special Collections can help you recognize, find and use these important resources.

Article title	Schenkel-Shinkle-Bolender-Apple Family
Periodical	Ohio Genealogical Society Report / Ohio Genealogical Society Quarterly
Volume	17
Issue	2
Month/Season	Sum
Frequency	4x
Topics	US - OHIO
Publication year	1977

*An index entry from PERSI may not look very enticing and the article might seem outdated, but don't let that derail you. If this 40-year-old contribution looks like it might help you, take the chance and track it down. That's easy to do, since we carry the Ohio Genealogical Society Report right here in Special Collections.*





*Sectional Map of Summit County, Ohio, 1874. From the Online Map Room, Summit Memory.*

## Summit County Genealogy Resources

by Iris Bolar, Librarian

Summit County genealogical records are accessible if you know where to look. This article provides a general overview of records available in several local facilities and online collections.

Of course, we'll start with [Special Collections](#). Our website includes [online books](#) of local interest, Summit County agricultural and industrial [census indexes](#), [Akron city directories](#), [obituary indexes](#), and early *Akron Beacon Journal* [subject indexes](#). Other [local resources](#) on our website include some cemetery burials and a Summit County index to Ohio Penitentiary registers. The Local History Database and World War II Index can be found among the library's [research databases](#). [Summit Memory](#) contains digital collections from several local organizations. Early Summit County probate records are available on microfilm. A list of all of the microfilmed records available in Special Collections can be found on our [genealogy page](#). Be sure to visit websites of other libraries in Summit County to discover their resources.

Records of the [Summit County Probate Court](#) can be found at the courthouse, with some available on microfilm in Special Collections and digitized on Ancestry Library Edition. The courthouse records include estates, marriage records and guardianships back to 1840; birth and death records from 1869 through 1908; and name changes back to 1941. Records since 1980 can be looked up using the [CASE Records Search](#) database on the Probate Court website. Contact the Court for further record availability. Naturalization records from 1850 to 1991 can be searched on the [Summit County Clerk of Courts](#) website.

[Archival Services](#) at the University of Akron is one of six repositories of the Ohio Network of American History Research Centers. As a network member, the archives holds a variety of older government records for nine counties. Records include early probate court records, indigent soldier burials, country home journal, township civil dockets, naturalization records, wills, soldier relief, coroner's inquest and Akron civil and criminal dockets. Archival Services' [Digital Collections](#) provide online access to documents related to the history of Akron and Summit County.

Ancestry Library Edition has digitized Summit marriages (1840-1980), births (1866-1908), and deaths (1866-1908). Their collection called *Summit County, Ohio, Coroner's, Hospital and Cemetery Records, 1822-1947* only includes the following records: Edwin Shaw Hospital admittance cards (1915-1947), Edwin Shaw employment cards (1915-1940), Briar Hill Cemetery burial permits (1915-1947), and Summit County Coroner's inquest books (1882-1922). Summit County divorces are included in the index to Ohio Divorces covering 1962-2007 (incomplete). Summit County is also included in the collection *Ohio, Wills and Probate Records, 1786-1998*.

[Summit County Veteran Burial Cards, 1700-1941](#) are digitized on FamilySearch. [Ohio Deaths, 1908-1953](#) covers all Ohio counties. Summit County records are also included in other Ohio collections on FamilySearch. The "Learn more" link in collection descriptions often details county coverage.

GRAVES REGISTRATION CARD			
Name	Butler, Stephen		
Address	Summit, Co.		
Date of Death	1822	Place	--
Cause	--	Date of Burial	1832
Date of Birth	12/10/1758	Place	-- Saybrook, Conn.
Name of Cemetery	Stow Paradise Park	Location	Stow Ohio
Lot No.	A-19	Section No.	--
Block No.	A	Grave No.	4
Marker: Flat	--	Upright	Yes
Next of Kin:	--	(Name)	(Address)
SERVICE RECORD			
War Served In:	Revolutionary War		
Date Enlisted	1776	Date Discharged	1781
Serial No.	M.S.N.		
Branch of Service	Army	Rank	Sgt.
Company, Outfit or Ship	3rd Conn. Regt. Lafayette's Command		
A.F. Ohio Roster Vol. 1-Page 62			

*Burial card for Revolutionary War veteran Stephen Butler listing exact birthdate and birthplace. From Summit County Veteran Burial Cards, 1700-1941, FamilySearch.*

## BIRD CLUB INVITES AKRONITES TO JOIN

### Falls Audubon Society To Hold Meetings Here As Inducement

Akron bird lovers Saturday were invited to join the Cuyahoga Falls originated Audubon society if they want companionship in the study of the bird world.

The only organization of its kind in Summit county, the club intends this year to hold half of its meetings in Akron to accommodate the Akron members. The first meeting of the fall season will be held at the home of Miss Alta Smith, 2057 Seventh st., Cuyahoga Falls, originator of the club.

Starting with a charter membership of nine in 1934, the club grew to 75 members in its first year, but because of the inability of some to attend the meetings, the membership is now only 58. Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month excepting July and August.

#### Take Bird Hikes

The meetings consist of the reading of a paper on birds prepared by a member, and roll call, to which members answer with interesting and helpful observations of birds during the month. In the spring and fall, the club takes bird hikes.

## Greater Akron Audubon Society Collection

by Barbara Leden, Public Service Assistant

The saying “birds of a feather flock together” can appropriately apply to the [Greater Akron Audubon Society](#) (GAAS), a chapter of the [National Audubon Society](#). This group of like-minded bird enthusiasts has been gathering since 1934 in the pursuit of observing and studying birds in the Akron area.

Some activities offered by the society are bird walks, bird seed sales, Christmas bird count, Summer bird census, and monthly meetings. The monthly meetings feature presenters who speak on various bird-related and natural science subjects. At a recent meeting, a representative of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources spoke about injured and orphaned wildlife. Meetings are typically held on the fourth Tuesday evening of each month at the Mingo Shelter in the Sand Run Metro Park.

In late 2016, Special Collections received records of past GAAS activities which will be processed into a collection accessible to the public. The donation includes bird counts, meeting minutes, correspondence and other club information illustrating the long and active history of this local organization.

*The Greater Akron Audubon Society had its start in Cuyahoga Falls in 1934.*  
Akron Beacon Journal,  
September 24, 1939.



*Image courtesy of the Greater Akron Audubon Society.*

## Stone Letters Collection on Summit Memory

In honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States' involvement in World War I, Special Collections is digitizing a series of letters written by WWI servicemen. The Stone Letters Collection includes the correspondence of four soldiers to Gertrude Stone of Akron. Based on contents of the letters, the men likely boarded with Stone and her husband L. K. Stone during Akron's boom years prior to the war. They write of day-to-day life at various military camps, as well as overseas, in letters dating from September 1917 to July 1919. The letters will be digitized in chronological order and made available online on [Summit Memory](#). Follow the progress of this collection on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



*Ohio National Guard departing for duty, 1916. From the collection Early Akron from Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens, Summit Memory.*





*The City Bakery operated six stores in the mid-1930s including locations on Grant Street and South Main Street. Akron Times-Press, October 27, 1936.*

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

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website:  
[www.akronlibrary.org/special-collections](http://www.akronlibrary.org/special-collections)



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