

PAST PURSUITS

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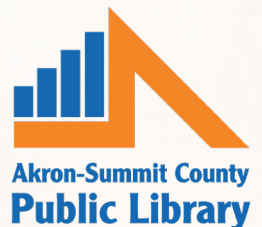
A Newsletter of the
Special Collections Division

Akron-Summit County
Public Library

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*The cover of local magazine Akron
Topics for August 1931.*



PRICE 10 CENTS..

Tees and Greens in the Rubber City

BY JANE GRAMLICH, LIBRARIAN

Long before the American Golf Classic and the World Series of Golf, decades before crowds stood in awe of Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, and Arnold Palmer at Firestone Country Club, Akron was a hub of divot diggers. These early players paved the way forward, making it no accident that Akron became a favored location for golf's storied tournaments. The game's local beginnings in the mid-1890s signaled a pioneering approach. Akron was "one of the first cities in this neck of the woods to boast a golf course," claimed the Akron Beacon Journal in 1950. By then, the city had become "one of the nation's hotbeds of golf."

How did it all transpire? Across the country, business and leisure travelers from smaller locations discovered the game in larger U.S. cities and abroad. The effort to establish it in their hometowns was the natural next step. "Rumor has it that golf is to become popular," suggested the Akron Beacon and Republican on August 1, 1893. The shadowy sources who informed the paper proved correct. Within a couple of years, Charles C. Goodrich, son of B.F. Goodrich, was angling to form a local club. After some resistance, he persuaded Col. George T. Perkins to donate a portion of the property on Perkins Hill for a nine-hole course, with John Brown's home as the clubhouse and the adjoining barn as a locker room. Had he known, it might have come as something of a shock to the firebrand abolitionist that his former residence was now the headquarters of the Portage Golf Club.

Akron's reputation as a golf destination began to grow quickly. In 1896, the Portage club hosted an early tournament against a



The clubhouse at Portage County Club as it appeared on a postcard dated November 23, 1912. From the Ruth Wright Clinefelter Postcard Collection, Summit Memory

Cleveland team. In March 1902, the Beacon reported, “it is probable that many out-of-town teams will be brought here by the Portage team for match games.” It wasn’t long before they outgrew the Perkins Hill facility. A change in name and location followed, with Portage Country Club opening at the corner of North Portage Path and Twin Oaks Rd. in May 1906. In 1909, they had the distinction of being the host for the Ohio Golf Association’s annual tournament. It drew players from twenty Ohio locations, including all major cities and smaller municipalities such as Wooster, Zanesville, and Marietta. Reporting from the four-day tournament merited front-page news, and writers effused at everything. Little was amiss. The visitors were “high in their praises for the grounds and surroundings,” and the decorated clubhouse was “one mass of beauty.”

During these early years, Akron also made strides in manufacturing golf balls. The use of gutta-percha, which forms an elastomer closely related to natural rubber, made this development perfectly

suited to the Rubber City. The B.F. Goodrich Company, not surprisingly, was one of the first Akron companies to produce golf balls. Their reputation traveled quickly. In 1900, their western U.S. distributor, the Whitman Company of Lincoln, Nebraska, proclaimed in the Nebraska State Journal that Goodrich was the “largest [manufacturer] of high-grade Golf Balls in America.” Goodyear Tire & Rubber soon followed suit, and in 1906, the Beacon stated that “three-fourths of the golf balls used in the United States are manufactured in Akron.”

The expansive years between World War I and the Depression saw local golf courses and clubs skyrocket. Incorporated by Goodyear and Mohawk Rubber Company executives, Fairlawn Heights Golf Club opened in 1919. Silver Lake Country Club, Rosemont Country Club, and Barberton’s Brookside and Anna Dean courses were among those serving suburbanites farther out in Summit County. By the time Akron celebrated its centennial in 1925, the Beacon noted that golf was the

city’s “most rapidly growing sport,” but that was likely true for much of the U.S. What was certain was that the boom they had witnessed hadn’t yet reached its peak, and the best-known course had yet to be built.

Though late to the party, Harvey Firestone refused to be outdone. Firestone Country Club opened a nine-hole course for the rubber company’s employees in 1928, and by 1930, it had completed two eighteen-hole courses. According to the Beacon, this was “one of the few 36-hole layouts in Ohio and, as far as can be learned, the only industrial golf course of that length in the country.” The magazine Akron Topics called it a “conspicuous addition” to area courses, which were becoming increasingly elaborate. “With a million dollars and good taste, you don’t need a wand,” quipped local journalist Helen Waterhouse.

Despite the abundance of golf courses at fashionable, private country clubs, there was still room for a public course. In 1925, hardware merchant and

Tees and Greens in the Rubber City continued

philanthropist J. Edward Good donated about 180 acres of land west of Hawkins Avenue to the City of Akron for use as a golf course and park. Akron Municipal Golf Course opened the following year. A mere seven pages of random records from this course give us fascinating snapshots over the 1930s and 40s. In 1934, it cost 60 cents to use the course Tuesday through Friday, while weekends and holidays commanded 90 cents. Both prices included a 10-cent state tax. Monday was “Bargain Day” at 50 cents.

Municipal’s administrators also observed the city’s dominance in the field, noting that there were “24 golf clubs in the Akron district, more per capita than any

large city in the U.S.” This led to a competitive environment requiring heavy promotion, and while that could be burdensome, it also had benefits. It drove a great deal of business and collaboration with other local organizations and enterprises. For example, in 1947, Municipal’s special events included local high schools, the Fraternal Order of Police, Akron Liedertafel, and B.F. Goodrich. The cumulative effect over all the clubs would have been increased economic activity and broad networking. There can be little doubt that for many years, golf was a significant catalyst that knit the city together.

Though Portage Country Club had dominated the local golf scene for decades, Firestone Country Club gained worldwide recognition as the site of prestigious tournaments. Their challenging course, a favorite among players and affectionately dubbed “the Monster,” was a large part of the appeal. An early indicator arrived in 1954. That year, the Rubber City Open, a local tournament, received a stamp of approval from the Professional Golfers’ Association of

WINNER of \$1,000.00

Mrs. John C. Billings
853 W. Market St., Akron, O.

IN THE
Pepsi  

American Golf Classic
Guess the Attendance Contest
OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE 35,176

THE FOLLOWING 100 WINNERS RECEIVE A CARTON OF PEPSI. Coupons will

<small>Joe Leone, 780 Danner Rd., Tallmadge</small>	<small>Larry Loppman, 678 Moreley Ave.</small>
<small>Charles Hicksted, 1076 Lincoln Ave., Cuy. Falls</small>	<small>Mary Alice Twining, 62 Beck Ave.</small>
<small>John A. Washburn, 870 Graham Rd., Cuy. Falls</small>	<small>Donald R. Dockert, 169 Hyde</small>
	<small>St. Larry, Dana, 1811 Conley</small>

Local affiliates of national companies such as Pepsi-Cola of Akron sponsored promotional events for the American Golf Classic, bringing the city under a wide circle of corporate auspices. Akron Beacon Journal, August 29, 1963.

America (PGA). Significant funding, support, and the interest of top players followed. The success of the Rubber City Open led to the PGA's American Golf Classic and the World Series of Golf, premiering in 1961 and 1962, respectively. Broadcasting nationwide, attracting numerous visitors, boosting the local economy, and producing substantial profits bestowed on local charitable organizations – it's easy to see why these events were a hit and an immense endorsement for Akron. Getting in on the action could only be an advantage. One media director for the World Series of Golf observed an unusual level of cooperation among the rubber companies – “it was Firestone's tournament, but...Goodyear, General, and B.F. Goodrich helped run it too.” There wasn't much room for competition in this particular hustle. Wisely, they left that to the golfers.

As recently as 1998, Akron was still fostering innovation in golf. Edwin Shaw Hospital for Rehabilitation built the Challenge Golf Course for people with differing abilities as part

of its rehabilitation program. Internationally recognized as the first facility of its kind, the course provides features such as wheelchair-accessible paths and slopes and adaptive equipment. Classes taught by a PGA professional help boost activity and mental and physical acclimation. Most importantly, the course is an encouraging environment promoting confidence and growth.

Akron's role in the larger world of golf has declined somewhat over the past several years. In 2018, the PGA delivered a tough blow to the city when it announced the exit of its signature tournament, the World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational, from Firestone Country Club. However, the club will remain home to the Bridgestone Senior Players Championship at least through 2026. The number of local golf courses has also dwindled. Some suffered debilitating losses in the summer floods of 2004 and never fully recovered, especially in the Merriman Valley. The former Riverwoods Golf Course is currently under construction as

a development of townhomes. Rather than making the news in the form of players and scores, it has sparked environmental debate about the fate of land close to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). Just down the road and on the opposite end of the spectrum, two other former courses have escaped development so far. Summit Metro Parks purchased Valley View Golf Course in 2016 to become part of Cascade Metro Park. Similarly, the Conservancy for the CVNP acquired the former Brandywine Country Club near Peninsula in 2021 and is expected to convert it to parkland.

Despite these changes, much remains. Several area courses continue to operate for the swingers and hitters of Akron and beyond, including Portage Country Club, undeniably the oldest, and Firestone Country Club, widely considered the most legendary. Regardless of the future of Akron's golf scene, enthusiasts worldwide will continue to look to our city for many of the game's historic, memorable moments.

Featured Archival Collection: Northern Ohio Golf Charities

BY MICHELLE PERSONS,
PUBLIC SERVICE ASSISTANT



Archival collections often hold surprises – like this scrapbook from the Northern Ohio Golf Charities Collection.

How does one write a golf article when one’s only prior knowledge of the sport is a wily groundhog evading a groundskeeper in “Caddyshack”? Well, I’m about to take a swing at it-- fore!--to discover the Northern Ohio Golf Charities Collection.

This collection was donated by Akron Golf Charities (now Northern Ohio Golf Charities) in September 2000. It consists of official records, photographs, films, video recordings, audio recordings, clippings, posters, periodicals, signs, and memorabilia about the Rubber City Open (1953-1959), the PGA Championship (1960, 1966, 1975), the American Golf Classic (1961-1976), the World Series of Golf (1962-1984), the NEC World Series of Golf (1984-1998), and the Seniors PGA Championship (2002).

After consulting the [finding aid](#), I found an interesting entry in Series 12—Scrapbooks. Scrapbook 1 “appears to be a personal scrapbook of Emma Schreiber”—who was Emma Schreiber, and what might her scrapbook hold? *G.O.L.F.—Gentlemen Only Ladies Forbidden!*

OK, the sport didn’t get its name that way. There are women golfers, Schreiber being one of them, but the golfers represented in the Northern Ohio Golf Charities Collection are all men. So it intrigued me that Schreiber would be mentioned by name. What was her significance to this collection?

Emma Schreiber was the chair of the registration committee for the American Golf Classic



Mrs. Schreiber

Emma Schreiber as she appeared in the Akron Beacon Journal, August 28, 1990.

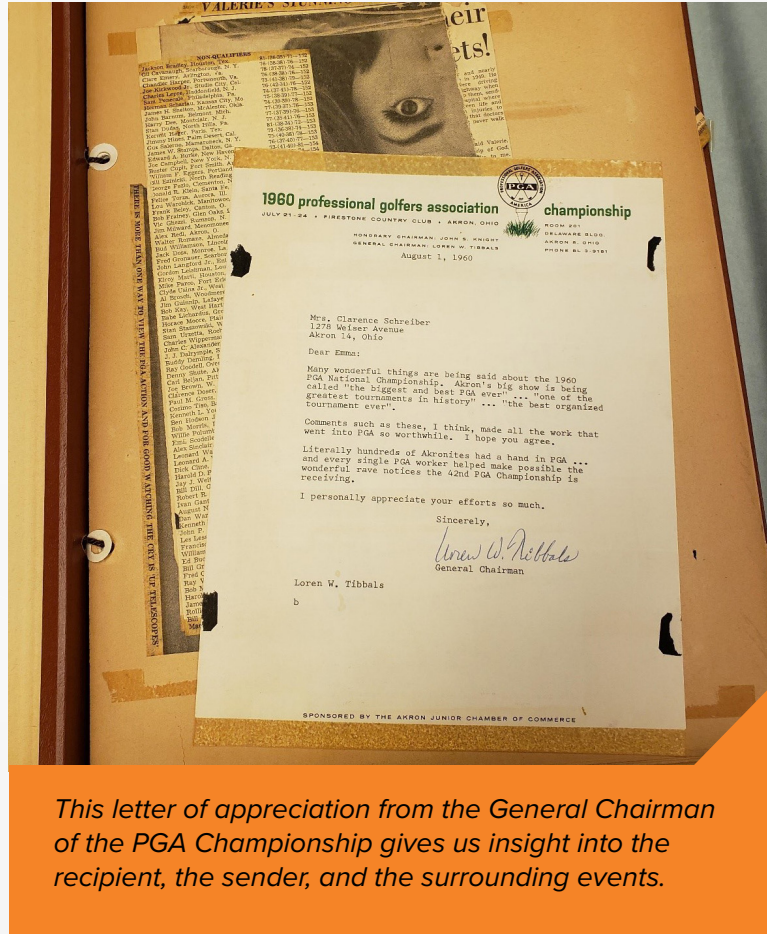
tournament from 1959-1984. Within the scrapbook—accented by a whimsical rotating tire emblem with “PGA” printed in the hub—are newspaper clippings about the tournament, mainly featuring fellow volunteers. She also included some photos of herself and with others, as well as letters from various tournament officials. Typical scrapbook fare until you consider that this 1960 scrapbook would have been from her second year in the volunteer role for the PGA Championship.

The scrapbook captures the perspective of these tournaments from the volunteer side, plus the creator happens to be one of the women who became an integral part of the administration of the tournament. Schreiber was so well organized and had such a good rapport with the golfers that by 1967,

the PGA flew her out to Denver to do registration for another tournament. That we have a snapshot of her perspective from the second tournament

Award. The award was given to her in recognition of both her bowling skills and her contributions to the sport of golf.

That she took the time to compile this scrapbook indicates that she was very proud of the hard work and time she dedicated to this particular tournament, as well as valuing her relationship with people—both the golfers and perhaps their families, as well as fellow volunteers. These were people with whom she enjoyed spending time. In recognition of her service, she received the David H. Franklin



This letter of appreciation from the General Chairman of the PGA Championship gives us insight into the recipient, the sender, and the surrounding events.

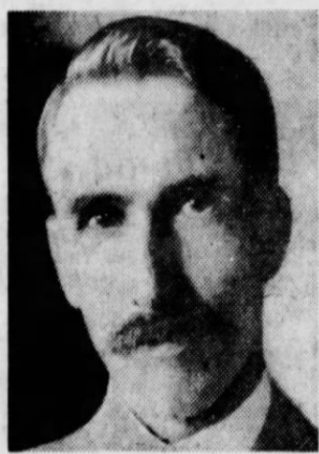
she volunteered for makes for a fascinating research perspective.

Although an avid fan and player of golf, Schreiber was better known for her bowling prowess. In 1971 she was a co-recipient of the Summit County Sports Hall of Fame Andy Pallich Memorial

Volunteer of the Year Award from the PGA in 1990. Though Schreiber died in 1998, her scrapbook remains to give us a valuable viewpoint on the history of golf in Akron.

Getting to Know Will Christy

BY RIZA MIKLOWSKI, LIBRARIAN



WILL CHRISTY
...Firestone executive

*Akron Beacon Journal,
January 31, 1965.*

“Will Christy was one of the finest men I have ever known, unselfish, loyal, always trying to do good for others and to make everyone around him happy.” – H.S. Firestone

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Christy was one of Akron’s most prominent and prolific businessmen. His professional work ranged from bank director and president to creating telephone companies and building construction projects. Christy is responsible for establishing many electric streetcar lines around the country. From his early career working with his father to his later work as president of many leading Akron businesses, Christy touched the lives of many Akronites as they moved and worked around the city and country.

Will Christy was born on December 7, 1859, in Akron to James Christy, Sr. and Janette (Warner) Christy. His father was a leading businessman in Akron who owned and operated a leather

tannery with his brother, John H. Christy. Will Christy started his first business venture in 1871 at the age of twelve. He became a member of the firm Christy, Walker & Berry, which sold transfer pictures using the decalcomania technique.

Around 1876, he joined his father and brother, James Christy, Jr., in the leather and tannery industry. He worked as a bookkeeper and cashier for the business, which they named James Christy & Sons.

In 1883, Will Christy left his father’s business to join John E. Metlin, Ira M. Miller, and his brother, James, Jr., to form the Akron Street Railway & Herdic Company. Until 1888, he worked as treasurer and secretary for the company, which created a horse-drawn streetcar service in Akron. These twenty-five passenger horse-drawn cars rolled on iron wheels and were called herdics. In 1888, they sold the company to the Akron Street Railway Company.

The following year, 1889, he co-founded the Cleveland Construction Company with C.W.



as president of the company. Even after he stepped down as president, he continued to serve as a director.

Christy also continued to work with the Akron Street Railway Company, which became the Northern Ohio Traction and Light Company in 1899. From 1893 to 1898, he served as treasurer of the organization. In 1894, the NOT&LC constructed the Akron, Bedford, & Cleveland system, the first long-distance suburban system in the world. From 1895 to 1897, Will Christy was the general manager of this system.

His knowledge of electric streetcar lines also resulted in several inventions. Christy designed two switches for electric motor trolleys, which he patented on April 23, 1889, and November 5, 1889. He invented a vehicle tire for electric streetcars, which he patented on July 2, 1903.

Christy's other interests spurred his career beyond electric streetcar lines. In 1897, he co-founded the

Christy's impact on the Northern Ohio Traction & Light Company is clearly portrayed in this cartoon appearing in the Akron Beacon Journal on March 14, 1911.

Foote and several others. The company constructed a large number of electric streetcar lines around the country, including the system for the Erie Motor Company in Erie, Pennsylvania, the Prospect

Street, Cedar Ave, and Wade Park lines for the East Cleveland Railway Company, and several different railway lines in Niagara Falls, New York, and in Canada. From 1889 to 1906, Christy served

Getting to Know Will Christy continued

BY RIZA MIKLOWSKI, LIBRARIAN

Central Savings Bank of Akron and became its vice-president. When the company merged with the Akron Trust Company in 1904, Christy became the new Central Savings & Trust Company's president. In 1898, he co-organized the Hamilton Building Company, which constructed the first large fireproof building in Akron. That same year, Christy established the Akron People's Telephone Company with J.R. Nutt. He was president of the company until 1915 when they sold it to the Ohio State Telephone Company. Christy was also an early investor and founder of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. He was the president from 1902 to 1903. He then served as vice president until 1912. After leaving his position as vice president, Christy was a director of the company until his death.

Outside of his business activities, Christy was an active community member. He helped reorganize the Akron YMCA and served as president. Furthermore, Christy was involved with the Union Club, the Century Club of Cleveland,

and the Commonwealth Club of Richmond, Virginia. He was also a member of the Portage Golf Club and the Portage Country Club. In 1904, he won the 18-hole men's bogie handicap and the trophy offered by the Portage Golf Club. By 1906, he was president of the organization.

Will Christy died suddenly on August 8, 1916, at the age of 56. He left his wife, Rose (Day) Christy, who died in 1929. At the time of his death, he was still serving as president of the Hamilton Building Company and the Central Savings & Trust Company, vice president of the Northern Ohio Traction & Light Company, and held positions within many other businesses and organizations. Christy is remembered for these activities and the triangular park he donated at West Exchange Street, South Rose Boulevard, and Augusta Avenue, which is named in his honor.

Radio Recordings Added to Summit Memory

BY REBECCA LARSON-TROYER,
LIBRARIAN



In 2021, the Special Collections Division undertook a project to convert radio transcription discs in our Library History Collection to digital format. The discs, most of which contain recordings of children’s radio programs from the 1940s and 50s, came to the library shortly after the conclusion of the popular “Tip Top Tales” show in 1957. Because of their format and the equipment required to play the discs, many recordings had not been heard for over 60 years.

After evaluating the collection for content and condition, Special

Collections selected 48 discs to send out for professional archival audio preservation. Almost all of the recordings were salvageable. Fifteen recordings of “[Tip Top Tales: Stories in Music](#),” a music education and appreciation program presented in partnership with the Children’s Concert Society of Akron, are now available on Summit Memory. Once the project is complete, the [Library History Collection](#) will include over 50 recordings of library radio programs recorded between 1947 and 1957.

Summit Memory Featured Photo

[Bookmobile at Camp Y-Noah,](#)
[ca. 1950s](#)

Library History Collection,
Summit Memory

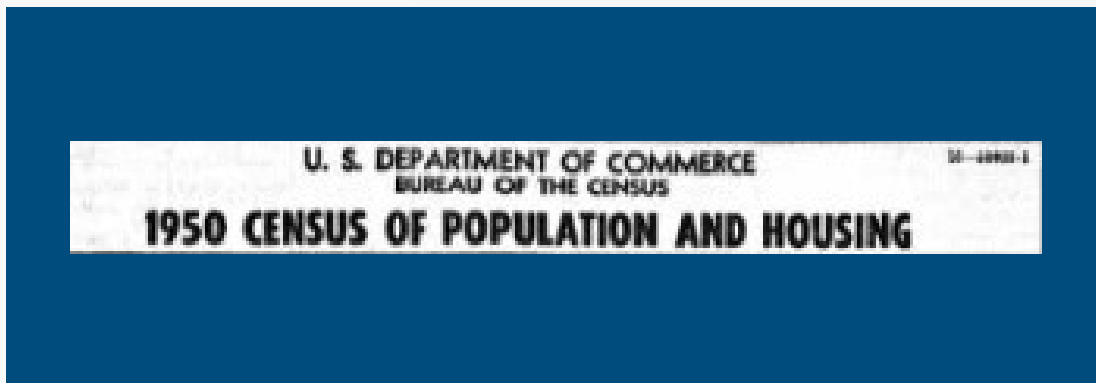
Campers at Camp Y-Noah in Green, Ohio, review the selection of books on the Akron Public Library bookmobile

Summit Memory is a countywide, collaborative effort to make available some of the remarkable local history collections maintained by organizations throughout Summit County, Ohio. Summit Memory is administered by the Akron-Summit County Public Library.



1950 Census Updates

BY BARBARA LEDEN, LIBRARIAN



Now that the 1950 U.S. Federal Census is available, just how much of it can be easily accessed? Creating an index is a necessary step to find information quickly in the census. Databases and websites including the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Ancestry and FamilySearch have initially relied on artificial intelligence/optical character recognition tools to extract the names from the handwritten population schedules to create an initial index. These computer-generated tools are considered less than perfect for

creating an index, but at least there's a basic index to start with. As a result, these sites are relying on people from the genealogy community for help in cleaning up the indexes to reflect the data more accurately. You can continue to check links to the [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#) for updates on the progress they're making in creating a more precise and complete index state by state.

If the data you're looking for isn't yet manually indexed, you can try the automated indexes, or you could try your luck with Stephen

P. Morse's [Unified ED Finder](#). To use this method you would need to have a family's address in 1950. Just input the state, county, town and enter their address and it will give you the most likely enumeration district. You can then click on the ED number, which will redirect you to options to browse the digitized handwritten pages in NARA, FamilySearch or Ancestry. Browsing the enumeration districts page by page may take some time, but it may well be worth it to find your family!

Spotlight on Databases: HeritageHub

BY BARBARA LEDEN, LIBRARIAN



Obituaries and death notices are key records when putting together a family history. Biographical information, family relationships, and death and burial information may be found, and sometimes even special messages and photos appear. Considering all possible resources will only help lead to success when looking for obituaries or other genealogical information.

HeritageHub is a premier collection of obituaries and death notices available with a valid ASCPL card on the Library's website, either in the Library or remotely. Visit the Library's [home page](#), navigate to Databases by

HeritageHub is a premier collection of obituaries and death notices available with a valid ASCPL card on the Library's website, either in the Library or remotely. Visit the Library's [home page](#), navigate to Databases by

Title or Subject under Research, and click on HeritageHub to search and view current and archived nationwide obituaries and death notices. Researchers can find information from thousands of newspapers in the 50 U.S. states and territories, some going as far back as the early 1700s. Manual indexing enhances search accuracy and helps find data-rich family connections. The Social Security Death Index is an additional resource available on this database.

Searching on HeritageHub is easy. The home page has search boxes for names, dates, and obituary keywords. Once you are on the results page, there

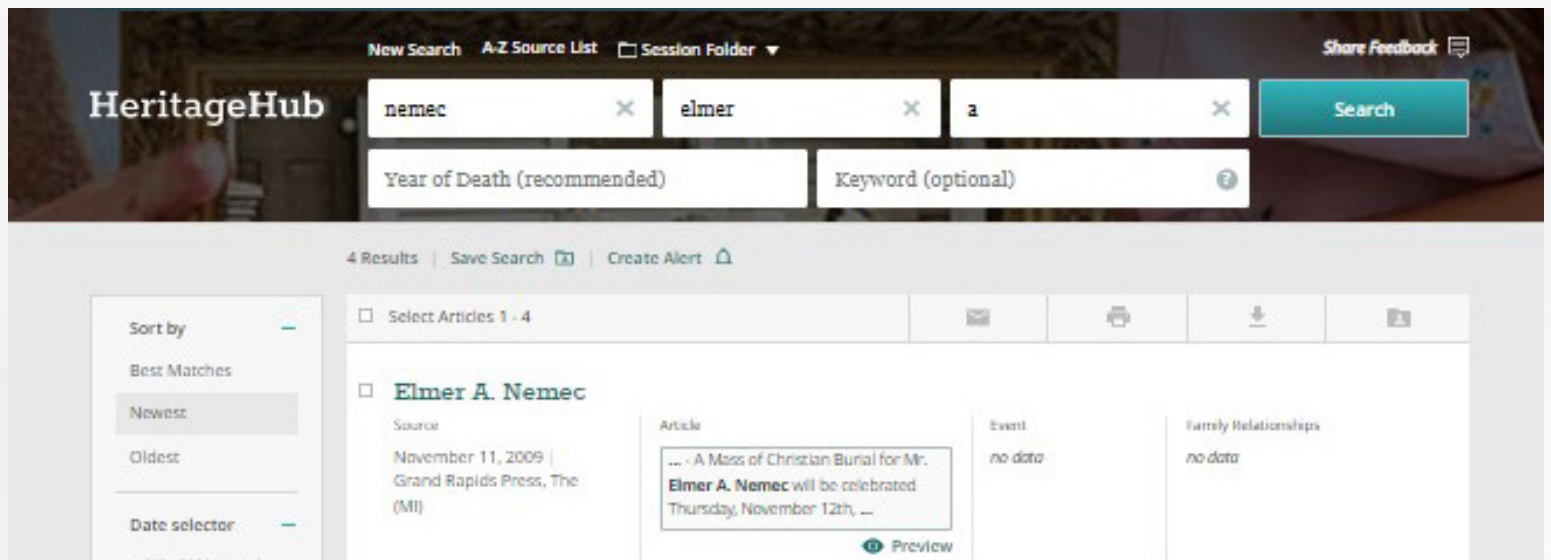
are filters on the left side of the search results page that filter by date, source name, and location. On the home page and results page, there is an option to view the A-Z source list, which shows an alphabetical list of approximately 7,000 news publications available on HeritageHub. This searchable source list shows each publication's available date range, location, media type, format, and language.

You can save searches by clicking on "Save Search" at the top of a results list and creating a free account for a feature called "My Folder." You can also create an alert that will send you an email, at whatever frequency you choose, if

a new article matching your search becomes available.

Once you find what you're looking for, you can save the obituary to My Folder. Other options are to email, print, download, create a link, or copy the article to your clipboard. The database is also user-friendly, with options allowing users to change the text size of an article or hear the text in an audio file.

New media content is added daily, so remember to check back frequently. Utilizing the information on HeritageHub offers another option to consider when looking for obituary and death information to fill in your family tree.



Summer Events in Special Collections

Join Special Collections as we welcome knowledgeable speakers who can help you with your research challenges! Register online at akronlibrary.org or by phone at 330.643.9030.



Austro-Hungarian Genealogy with Stephen Wendt

Saturday, July 30, 10:30 am-1 pm,
Main Library Auditorium and Zoom

Austro-Hungarian Genealogy: A Germanic-Focused Case Study

Gain a better understanding of historical Austro-Hungary by pursuing records with numerous examples and resources.

German Gazetteers: Locating Historical German Place Names

Come prepared with your German ancestral locations and learn new tools for locating them in the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Stephen Wendt is a professional genealogist and speaker. He founded [Tree Tidings Genealogy](#) and assisted global clients with their German, Prussian and Scottish research. Stephen holds a master's degree in Library and Information Science from Kent State University. He has presented for many organizations, including the [Ohio Genealogical Society](#) and the [International German Genealogy Partnership](#).



Ohio Deeds and Probate Records with Dana Palmer

Saturday, August 13, 1:30-4 pm, Zoom

Ohio Probate Records

Ohio probate records are invaluable to genealogists and can be vital to proving kinship. Learn how to benefit from using these records.

Ohio Deed Research

Did you know early marriages can be found in deeds? Learn where to find Ohio deeds and what else may be found in these valuable records.

Dana Palmer, CG[®], CGL(SM) specializes in lineage society applications, publishing family books, and Midwestern research – specifically in Ohio. In addition to her client work, she reviews military repatriation cases, is part of the Silver Books (Mayflower descendants) team, and lectures at [RootsTech](#) and [National Genealogical Society](#) (NGS) conferences.

Special Thanks

We want to extend a special thanks to the following for their generous contributions:

Sandra L. Denholm for archival materials related to the history of the Alpha J Club of Andrew Jackson School

Barbara Griffith for genealogy books

Thomas Joswick for vintage publications and materials documenting the Arfons brothers of Akron

David McCann for materials about Saint Sebastian Parish

Sharon Myers for self-published books about historical Akron topics

Dawn Pendley for books about historical Summit County topics

Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society for books in memory of Gerry Huhn, Jerome “Jerry” Geist, Louise Royce, and Ed Swonger

Stephanie Whims for local and family history books



**Akron-Summit County
Public Library**

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The Akron-Summit County Public Library
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of the Main Library.

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www.akronlibrary.org/specialcollections

*Professional golfer Craig Stadler on
the 17th green during the World Series
of Golf tournament, Firestone Country
Club, 1982. Photo from the Akron
Beacon Journal Photograph Collection,
Summit Memory.*