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Researching Your English and Irish Ancestors
by Jane Gramlich, Librarian

For many American genealogists, England and Ireland are commonly researched places of origin. The story of these two nationalities and their role in American history is a dramatic one. The English settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth and the subsequent development of the British colonies deeply affected the nation’s identity. The nineteenth century saw an enormous wave of Irish immigrants, many of them destitute, who fought for their own place in the New World. Our English and Irish ancestors have amazing stories to tell.

It’s tempting to jump right into the poetic “scepter’d isle” of William Shakespeare or the “emerald isle” of William Drennan. But before that leap, it’s better to begin with a solid grasp of United States research. Now that so many records are online, it’s certainly possible to identify an immigrant ancestor on a passenger list or in overseas records with minimal effort. But in many cases, it’s not so easy. The majority of genealogical records remain offline. A detailed understanding of the immigrant’s extended family and a firm timeline of several recorded events can also be necessary to pinpoint his or her origin, and that means thoroughly searching American records.

Learning about genealogical records in other countries and how to obtain them is also a large part of the immigrant research process, and each nation is different. One of the most important factors to consider is when civil registration of vital records began. In England, it began in 1837. In Ireland the pivotal year is 1864, except for non-Catholic marriages, which started in 1845. Details like this have a substantial impact on how research can be done. Indexes to England’s civil vital records have been on Ancestry Library Edition for nearly a decade. But original records, which contain more information, may be requested from the General Register Office for England and Wales. Similarly, indexes to Ireland’s civil vital records 1845-1958 are on FamilySearch, but original records are located...
Before civil registration, genealogists are usually dependent on church records for documentation on births, marriages, and deaths. As a result, religious history, denominational jurisdictions, and recordkeeping practices are important considerations. It can be helpful and sometimes even necessary to know approximately where the immigrant family lived or which church they may have attended. Most church records are in local custody, so they can be difficult to track down. But a growing number of transcribed and digitized original records are appearing online, poised to break down many brick walls. Examples are Ancestry’s transcription database England, Select Essex Parish Registers, 1538-1900 and FamilySearch’s England, Norfolk Bishop's Transcripts, 1685-1941, which includes digitized images of original records. The Family History Library (FHL) also carries church records on microfilm, such as Parish Register Printouts of Killarney, Kerry, Ireland, (Roman Catholic Church), Marriages, 1792-1880. Because we are an FHL affiliate, microfilm can be ordered online and sent to Special Collections to use with our microfilm readers.

Like the U.S., England and Ireland have both conducted national censuses every ten years, but while England’s censuses have survived, sadly, Ireland’s have not. Ireland’s 1821 through 1891 censuses were mostly destroyed, either in a 1922 fire at the Public Records Office or by government order. Only fragments survive. This is one reason why nineteenth century Irish research is difficult by comparison and why genealogists rely on more obscure sources to document Ireland’s people. For example, one of the most sought-after sources in Irish family history is Griffiths’ Valuation, a national household survey used as a tax basis. Completed between 1847 and 1864, it covers the later famine years when thousands of Ireland’s people fled to our shores. Digitized images of these lists are available on Ancestry.

Locating an immigrant ancestor on a passenger list is a top goal for genealogists, but one that can be difficult to attain. In 1819, Congress passed legislation regulating the number of passengers on seagoing vessels, ensuring the creation of U.S. passenger lists. As records mandated by the U.S. government, these lists have survived. They are stored at the National Archives and its branches, and many are readily available on Ancestry. Before the legislation took effect, passenger lists were created mostly at the discretion of ships’ captains and shipping companies. Fewer lists were created to begin with, and many no longer exist. Colonial-era passenger lists are scattered; some original records are found among various collections at the U.K. National Archives. Many of these lists have been transcribed and published in books, such as Peter Wilson Coldham’s three-volume series, The Complete Book of Emigrants. Volunteers for online sources such as Olive Tree Genealogy and the Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild are busily adding transcriptions as well.

The ways in which records were created and how surviving records can be accessed clearly differ a great deal. Knowing these details is crucial to doing successful research, as well as understanding why success isn’t always easy or possible. FamilySearch’s wiki pages for England and Ireland are a great place online to start learning about how to locate and interpret the records in these countries. Don’t forget, there’s nothing like a good how-to book to deepen understanding of a complicated subject. For Ireland, try Tracing Your Irish

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*Baptisms for the Parish of Bunwell, 1825, from England, Norfolk Bishop's Transcripts, 1685-1941, FamilySearch.*

*Killarney, Kerry, Ireland, (Roman Catholic Church), Marriages, 1792-1880.*

*Past Pursuits*

*Autumn 2014*

English and Irish research, like all immigrant research, is complex. The good news is that the availability of records continues to grow on a daily basis, and many reliable sources offer sound advice on where to find the records and how to understand them. It’s never been easier to be a family historian, because we live in an era where a great deal of information is quickly accessed. But doing good research takes plenty of time and effort to absorb and process that information. One of the best ways to honor our ancestors is to research thoroughly and purposefully, learn as much as we can, and let the stories unfold in their own time.

Join Us for “Discovering Your English and Irish Ancestors” on October 4

Internationally known genealogist Paul Milner will present “Discovering Your English and Irish Ancestors” Saturday, October 4, 9:30 am-4:30 pm in the Main Library Auditorium. The program, co-sponsored by the Library and the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, will focus on British Isles research.

Paul Milner, a native of northern England, is a professional genealogist and internationally known lecturer specializing in British Isles research. Paul has been designing genealogy workshops, writing books, and lecturing for over thirty-five years. He holds an advanced degree in theology and is particularly knowledgeable about the church and its role in recordkeeping. As a genealogist he speaks on a variety of topics relating to research in the British Isles, migration to North America and research methodology. For more information, visit Paul’s website.

The day’s schedule includes:
9:30 – 9:45 Introductions
9:45 – 10:45 English Parish Registers: How to Access, Use and Interpret
10:45 – 11:00 Break
11:00 – 12:00 Buried Treasures: What’s in the English Parish Chest
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch on your own
1:00 – 2:00 Are you Lost? Using Maps, Gazetteers and Directories for British Isles Research
2:00 – 2:15 Break
2:15 – 3:15 Irish Emigrants to North America: Before, During and After the Famine
3:15 – 3:30 Break
3:30 – 4:30 Finding Your Ancestors in Ireland

The program is free and open to the public, and free parking is available in the High-Market parking deck. To register, contact Special Collections at 330-643-9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org. For more information, see http://sc.akronlibrary.org.

Past Pursuits
Autumn 2014
Getting to Know…Samuel R. Shepard
by Rebecca Larson-Troyer, Librarian

Newspaperman and community advocate Samuel Rudolph Shepard made Akron his home for much of his life, publishing a local African American newspaper and devoting his time to community causes.

Shepard was born in 1908 in Paint Rock, Alabama. As a child, his family relocated to Chicago where Shepard would excel in school and find his passion for newspaper work. At Chicago’s Wendell Phillips High School, Shepard, known as Sam or Shep to friends, began his newspaper career as editor of the school paper. In 1936, the accomplished honor student completed four years of coursework in just three years’ time. Shepard continued his education at Crane Junior College, a two-year city college on the west side of Chicago known today as Malcolm X College. While there, Shepard studied English composition and literature, serving as associate editor of the college weekly. He would also earn a spot as one of the top scholars in a school of 3,000 students.

Shepard went on to study at the University of Chicago and was introduced to philanthropist and social reformer Jane Addams. Addams was co-founder of Hull-House, a settlement house in Chicago’s West Side, where Shepard spent eight years working. During his time at Hull-House, Shepard was greatly influenced by Addams and her work. After leaving school to spend a year as rewrite editor for the Chicago Defender, regarded as one of the most influential weekly African American newspapers, Shepard returned to work at Hull-House. Addams encouraged him to resume his education, providing a full scholarship for him to complete his studies. Shepard graduated with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 1934.

Soon after graduating, Shepard relocated to Cleveland. He worked as a bookkeeper and eventually started his own advertising agency, which proved unsuccessful. Taking a job as an insurance salesman at Domestic Life Insurance Co. would eventually bring Shepard to Akron. In 1936, the company sent him to establish an Akron office, where Shepard remained until he joined the Army in 1942. His military career took him to Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Corsica, France and Germany. Even during his service, Shepard was a newspaperman at heart. He edited a weekly for personnel of the 1955th Quartermaster Truck Company, The 1955 Dispatch, and documented the history of the company through his writings and hundreds of photographs.

In 1946, Shepard returned to Akron and, briefly, the insurance business. He soon resumed his newspaper career, taking a position as editor at the Akron Informer, the city’s first African American newspaper. A few months after coming on board, Shepard became owner, buying the small newspaper and increasing circulation to more than 2,000. The publication, later renamed the Ohio Informer, remained in print until 1960.

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In addition to his work at the Informer, Shepard was active in Akron’s African American community. He served four terms as secretary and one term as president of the Akron Chapter of the NAACP and was chairman of the civil liberties committee of the Rubber City Elks. He spent time working on several local committees to support African American employment and adult education programs, amongst other civic work that supported the role of African Americans in Akron, Summit County and beyond.

Shepard’s personal life has not been well documented. He married Mary Frances Matthews of Akron in 1942. She preceded him in death in 1989, after which time he left the area. Upon his death in 1997, Shepard was living in the Washington, D.C., area. His short obituary touches only briefly on the life and career of a man who achieved a great deal of success. His accomplishments are all the more admirable knowing the racial and cultural climate of the time in which he achieved them. To see a sample of Samuel Shepard’s work, please visit the Summit County Historical Society’s Samuel Shepard Collection in Summit Memory.

Preservation Tips: Newspapers

by Mary Plazo, Librarian

Your great aunt has just passed away and you have been given the task of going through her house and deciding what to keep and what to throw away. You’d really like to keep that stack of old newspapers that include practically every important headline in U.S. history since the Great Depression. This will definitely be a preservation challenge.

Those wonderful old newspapers are printed on boiled sawdust with a troublesome little wood polymer called lignin. Lignin is the main reason why newspapers do not last and become fragile quickly. Unless they are stored very carefully in a dark, temperature-controlled environment that’s never been hot or humid, they will last fifty years at best. That’s why most libraries and archives have transferred important newspapers to microfilm. In a properly controlled environment, microfilm will last for centuries. Microfilm also helps save a great deal of storage space.

If you find a newspaper page, article, or obituary that you really want to make last over time, the best way to preserve it is to copy it onto archival, acid-free paper. If there is a front page or an item from the newspaper that you would like to display, the display copy should be acid-free. Newsprint is very susceptible to brittleness and yellowing when exposed to any kind of light, whether natural or fluorescent. It’s also very vulnerable to temperature changes. Whether you decide to display the original or the copy, it should always be backed with acid-free matting and covered with an acid-free polyester sheet as an overlay. This way, the item will not stick to the glass.

If you still want to keep the original newspapers, your best bet is to store them in an acid-free archival box with acid-free paper in between issues. The box should be the size of the newspapers so that they will not slide around and cause any damage or tearing. No matter what preservation choice you decide to make, ultimately, your ancestors will have to rest with it!
Pennsylvania has no shortage of great, free online resources for genealogical research. The best starting point for online research in the Keystone State is the Pennsylvania State Archives. The Archives’ website is loaded with helpful indexes to records and some digitized items. Most digitized collections can be accessed from the Digital Copies of Documents page.

Military Records
A direct link to military documents on the Pennsylvania State Archives site is through the Archives Records Information Access System (ARIAS). Currently, there are about 1,500,000 records on ARIAS that relate to military service. The Revolutionary War Military Abstract Card File contains information transcribed from original records held by the Pennsylvania State Archives concerning service in the Pennsylvania militia, Pennsylvania Line, and the Navy. Information provided includes name and rank of soldier, whether active or inactive duty, county of residence, battalion in which served, any fines incurred by the soldier, and the record from which information was transcribed. The Civil War Veterans’ Card File was originally created to index Samuel P. Bates’ five-volume book set History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-1865 (digitized on the website Pennsylvania Volunteers of the Civil War), but its scope was expanded to include data from muster rolls and related records. The information generally includes the soldiers' names, military units, Bates' citations (volume and page), ages at enrollment, physical descriptions, residences, birthplaces, the dates and places where enrolled, the dates and places where mustered in, and the dates of discharge.

Other military collections on ARIAS include World War I Service Medal Application Cards; Spanish American War Veterans’ Card File of United States Volunteers; National Guard Veteran’s Card File, 1867-1921; Mexican Border Campaign Veterans’ Card File; and Militia Officers’ Index Cards, 1775-1800.

Military resources that are not in ARIAS but are on the Pennsylvania Archives’ website include the Registers of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-1865 and information on the Archives’ military holdings.

Land Records
Many land records can also be accessed online through the Pennsylvania State Archives. Warranty Township Maps show all original land purchases from the proprietors or the Commonwealth made inside the boundaries of current townships. For each tract of land, information usually includes name of warrantee, name of patentee, number of acres, name of tract, and dates of warrant, survey and patent. Warrant Registers, 1733-1957 serve as the index to the original land warrants, surveys and patents for most of the land in Pennsylvania for the dates 1733-ca. 1957. Additional digitized land-related documents, including Copied Survey Books, 1691-1912; Land Patent Index, 1684-1957; and other records and maps can be accessed through the Archives’ land records page.

African American Records
A few Pennsylvania State Archives collections of documents relating to African Americans are online. These collections are on the Slavery and Underground Railroad page under Record Group 47. They include Adams County Register of Negroes and Mulattoes, 1800-1820; Bedford County Records of Negro and Mulatto Children and Miscellaneous Slave Records, ca.1780-1834; Bucks County Register of Slaves, ca.1783-1830;
and Fayette County Birth Records for Negroes and Mulattoes, 1788-1826. See Record Group 47 at the above link for additional collections.

Other Pennsylvania State Archives Resources

Registers of Mine Accidents for the Anthracite and Bituminous Districts, 1899-1972 are transcribed registers providing mine name, date of accident, name of miner involved, age, occupation, nationality, citizenship status, marital status, number of children, cause of accident, party at fault, whether or not injury was fatal, whether accident occurred inside mine, and information to help researchers get access to the microfilmed records. Record of Marriages, 1885-1889 lists marriages by brides’ surnames. The 1927 Agricultural Census Data is also online. The manuscripts are arranged by county and township and contain information on individual farms.

Beyond the Pennsylvania State Archives

There are many other helpful websites for Keystone State genealogists. The Pennsylvania Department of Health provides indexes for births (1906-1908) and deaths (1906-1963). The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania has some collections that non-members can access, including Alien Applications to Depart the United States, September 1918- January 1919 and listings of Civil War Conscientious Objectors. Cemetery records, funeral home indexes, and many other collections are available to the public. Links to public collections may be found after the member resources. Links to free historic newspaper collections appear on the Pennsylvania Newspaper Project site of Pennsylvania State University.

Penn Pilot has historical aerial survey photographs of Pennsylvania from 1937-1972. Type in a location, select a time period, and search. Click on the map and select the image resolution. The published multi-series, multi-volume Pennsylvania Archives set is searchable on Fold3, which can be accessed free through the library’s database collection with your library card or directly from Fold3. Click on “browse records” and select “all titles.” Then select Pennsylvania Archives from the menu. As always, be sure to check out FamilySearch, which offers several Pennsylvania collections with a focus on the City of Philadelphia.

On Display: Akron-Summit County Public Library, 1874-2014 - 140 Years of Service to Our Community

In recognition of the anniversary of Akron City Council’s January 26, 1874 ordinance creating a free public library for the city, photographs and select items from the Library History Collection are on display in the Special Collections Division through October. Smaller displays of photographs will be making one-month stops at each of our branch libraries between September and December, so be sure to watch for them when visiting our branches. We will also be adding a library history exhibit to Summit Memory in the coming weeks.

This undated photograph from the Library History Collection illustrates two of the Library’s most important missions throughout its history—supporting children’s literacy and encouraging lifelong learning.
New Books

Several new works on DNA and genetic genealogy have been added to our collections, including the two listed below. They are available for checkout.

The *New York Times* calls Brian Sykes’ *DNA USA* a “hybrid work of science and cross-country reportage.” Sykes, professor of human genetics at Oxford University and author of *The Seven Daughters of Eve*, takes the reader on a historic tour of the U.S. through genetic data, with surprising revelations along the way. *DNA USA* earned starred reviews from *Kirkus Reviews* and *Booklist*.

In *Genetic Genealogy: The Basics and Beyond*, Emily D. Aulicino explains DNA testing methods, offers advice for choosing a testing company, and discusses how to create a DNA interest group. Aulicino is the regional coordinator of the International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG).

Our complete New Books list now appears on our website. The list is published quarterly at the same time as *Past Pursuits*. Please contact us if you receive the print edition of *Past Pursuits* and would like a print copy of the complete New Books list sent by postal mail.

Unique Photo Opportunity at Glendale Cemetery

Beginning with Memorial Day, various events took place this summer to recognize Akron’s first municipal cemetery. On Saturday, October 11, Glendale Cemetery, Metro Parks, and the Akron-Summit County Public Library will offer one more opportunity to celebrate the beauty and grandeur of an Akron treasure. From 7:30 am to 11 am, amateur and professional photographers are invited to explore the cemetery, take photographs, and submit them for possible inclusion in an exhibit at Main Library. Photographs chosen for the exhibit will be selected based on the criteria of focus, clarity, and artistic, natural, and historic interpretation. An opening reception will be held at Main Library on Sunday, November 9 from 1 to 3 pm, and the exhibit will run from November 9, 2014 through January 2015. For consideration, all photos must be matted (not framed) and delivered to: Pat Rydquist, Summit Metro Parks, F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Visitors Center, 1828 Smith Road, Akron, 44313. Deadline for submission is November 4. The rain date for this event is Sunday, October 12.

Thank You to Summit County OGS

Once again, the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society has made a generous donation to the Library to support our programming and genealogical projects. This year’s donation of $700 will help to fund our October 4 program, *Discovering Your English and Irish Ancestors*, as well as pay the 2015 annual fee for our participation in the Ohio Obituary Index managed by the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont, Ohio. Since last year, our staff, along with a group of volunteers including several chapter members, have been working diligently to add Akron Beacon Journal obituary citations to this online index which currently includes more than 2 million names. We are proud to be a partner and grateful for the Chapter’s financial assistance to renew our membership. We are so fortunate to have the support of our local OGS chapter and continue to be thankful for its ongoing support and friendship.
CHIPS Meeting
The Council for Historical Institutions and Preservation Societies (CHIPS) will gather at Preservation House, 2074 West Market Street, Akron on Saturday, October 11, 9 am - noon. A light breakfast will be available. All historical and preservation organizations are welcome. The Council would like to meet you and hear your biannual report of what’s happening with your projects and museums. For more information, contact Dreama Powell at Dreamarona@outlook.net or 330-923-6678.

Civil War Commemorative Events

From now through 2015, Summit County will commemorate the 150th anniversary of Ohio’s involvement in the Civil War. For more information about events here and throughout the state, visit Ohio Civil War 150.

Shades of Blue & Gray: Ghosts of the Civil War
Presented by the Largely Literary Theater Company Peninsula Valley Historic and Education Foundation
Civil War Lecture Series
October 23, 7 pm
GAR Hall
1785 Main Street, Peninsula

War of 1812 Commemorative Events

Although 2012 marked the 200th anniversary of the commencement of the War of 1812, the war did not end until 1815. Communities throughout Ohio continue to commemorate this conflict with ceremonies and remembrances. For more information about events taking place in our state, visit the Ohio War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission. For information about local events and projects, visit the William Wetmore Chapter Daughters of 1812.

George Croghan and the Battle of Fort Stephenson
Presented by Sharon Myers
William Wetmore Chapter, Daughters of 1812
October 9, 7 pm
Richfield Historical Society
3907 Broadview Road, Richfield

Capture of the South Carolina
Presented by Sharon Myers
William Wetmore Chapter, Daughters of 1812
October 18, 1:30 pm
Tallmadge Branch Library
90 Community Road, Tallmadge
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. For more information and to register, contact us at 330-643-9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org. Classes are also held at branches. Current branch class schedules are posted on the Special Collections website.

Identifying Your Family Photographs
A picture may be worth a thousand words, but unlocking the stories of unidentified photographs requires some sleuthing. Join us for this free class on the 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. The class will also take a look at how genealogy databases and local history resources can be used to identify your family photographs.
Saturday, October 25, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm: Main Library, Meeting Room 1

Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors
Most of us will find immigrant ancestors somewhere in our family tree. Their travels to the United States and along the path to U.S. citizenship are often documented, but finding these records is sometimes a challenge. Join staff from the Special Collections Division for a discussion of identifying immigrant ancestors and locating passenger lists and naturalization records. As we will be using electronic resources, basic computer skills are recommended.
Saturday, November 1, 2014, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm: Main Library, Computer Lab 2

Getting Started in Family History
Are you interested in discovering your family’s history or tracing your genealogy? The Special Collections Division is pleased to offer orientation sessions for new family historians. Each session will include an overview of the resources available at the Akron-Summit County Public Library, suggestions for getting started and tips for organizing your research.
Saturday, November 8, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm: Main Library, Meeting Room 1

Getting Started in African American Genealogy
Do you want to trace your African American family tree? Not sure how or where to begin? The Special Collections Division presents a two-hour class for genealogy beginners who have a specific interest in African American ancestral research. You’ll learn genealogy research methods, tips and tools for getting organized, common sources used by genealogists, resources specific to African Americans, and challenges in researching African American ancestors.
Saturday, November 22, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm: Main Library, Meeting Room 1

“All who have ever attempted genealogical researches will readily understand how impossible it is to ever attain either perfect completeness or perfect accuracy.”
- Theodore Frelinghuysen Chambers, The Early Germans of New Jersey (1895)
We would like to thank the following for their generous donations:

Charles Baldwin for *French Port* by Charles Baldwin.

William Beck for three photographs of the Lester Semonin family and the Reverend Joseph Mahan.

Jon Cain for scrapbook, dance card, and 1936 Summit County Music Clinic program from the collection of Curtiss M. Sarff.

John Carter for 1919 Buchtel College yearbook.

Robert Capanna for twelve books including *Splinters from the Past: Discovering the History in Old Houses*.

Jean Allread and Akron Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution for *The Goddards of Granby, Connecticut; The Hieronymus Story, 1997; A Family of Eckerts*.

Cuyahoga Portage Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution for *Families of Old Pendleton District, South Carolina, volumes 1 and 2; Marriages and Deaths from Richmond County, Virginia Newspapers, 1780-1820* in memory of Catherine Elizabeth Macey and Catherine Elizabeth Ebbert Macey.

Sharon Myers and the William Wetmore Chapter Daughters of 1812 for two binders of commemorative materials pertaining to the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

Mary Grzegorek for three photographs of Akron school classes.

Richard Gulledge for digital files of Akron and Summit County photographs.

Martha Hasenyager for Adams Funeral Home Radio souvenir booklet.

Laura Loew for six scrapbooks created by journalist Frances Murphey.

Beverly Powell for 1936 atlases of Summit County.

Russell Sibert for historic Akron and Summit County photographs and miscellaneous ephemera related to local businesses and organizations.

Marjorie Quillan Wendell for *The Recollections of Samuel Alanson Lane, 1815-1905*.

Todd Snyder for digital images of Akron and Summit County photographs.

Nancy Walls for photographic negatives from the collection of Ted Walls.

William H. Wilcoxson for *Lines of Succession: Heraldry of the Royal Families of Europe*.

Dean Yong for *Catalogue of Buchtel College, 1895-1897, 1897-1898; Portage County Atlas, 1874*. 
Kaase’s Bakery sold Halloween goodies from several locations in Akron. Akron Topics, October 1929.