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

VOLUME 20  Nº 3
AUTUMN 2021

PAST PURSUITS

CONTENTS

2  Along the Mohawk Trail: Akron’s Mohawk Rubber Company
6  Featured Archival Collection: Local Business and Labor Periodicals
9  Getting to Know... Stanford R. Ovshinsky
12  How We Did It: Mystery Sculpture
14  New to Summit Memory
15  New Books
16  Spotlight on Databases: NewspaperARCHIVE Academic Library Edition
18  Special Thanks

Artifacts from the William W. Cox Mohawk Rubber Company Collection
A new player joined Akron’s rubber game in January 1913 when five investors purchased the former Stein Double Cushion Tire & Rubber Company plant on the corner of River Street and Second Avenue in East Akron and incorporated the Mohawk Rubber Company for $350,000. The investors were former Buckeye Rubber Company superintendent Stephen Samuel Miller; president John K. Williams; Robert M. Pillmore and Frank J. Mishler, president and vice-president, respectively, of Citizens’ Savings and Loan; and Francis Seiberling, cousin of Goodyear’s co-founders.

Mohawk produced automobile casing and tubes, beginning production at 50 tires per day. But the company and its production grew quickly. In April 1914, Mohawk purchased land adjoining
the right of way of the Akron & Barberton Belt line railroad from Goodyear, and within months was building additional factory buildings. The following summer, the company was doing enough business to necessitate a $30,000 addition to double their manufacturing floor area and build an annex to the tube department, repair department, and machine shop. Mohawk closed out 1915 announcing that within six months, they expected to double their 300-tire-per-day capacity and increase their number of employees from 200 to 300. They added even more buildings in 1916.

As the company grew, so too did its role in the lives of its employees and the community. The Akron Beacon Journal carries reports of employees bringing preachers to the company to speak (some employees sitting on tires to hear the sermons); of company bowling, baseball, football, and glee club; and of Christmas parties and summer picnics at Summit Beach Park. Mohawk was featured in the YMCA boys’ program tours and in the advertising for residential developments such as Irvin Park, East Park, East Market Acres, and Neville allotment, each of which touted its proximity to the factory.

On a national scale, Mohawk provided travel tips as well as tires through its Mohawk Hobbs Grade and Surface Guide series in the 1920s. Compiled by Howard F. Hobbs and published by Mohawk’s Tourist Service Department, each guide provided the mileage between two points, details on hills and road surfaces, points of interest and reviews of campgrounds, hotels, and service garages along the way. Mohawk sold its guides to dealers, automobile clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and hotels for $.08 each and priced them for resale to tourists for $.20 each. “There is no stronger magnet to bring tire prospects into a tire dealer’s store, than the quest for the most highly regarded tourist guide published,” claimed the July 1925 Mohawk Messenger.

The company struggled during the Great Depression, but rebounded in the mid-1930s due largely to the efforts of Ray E. Bloch, who had started his career with Mohawk on the day it opened and became company president in 1936. As Wheels of Fortune authors Steve Love and David Giffels recount
in a 1997 Beacon Journal article on Mohawk and the Sun Rubber Company, Bloch reorganized Mohawk, cutting administrative and sales costs and spearheading a new stock offering in 1937. His efforts paid off, and Mohawk saw its highest earnings in a decade the following year.

Profits and expansion continued in the 1950s and 1960s, with Mohawk opening new plants in West Helena, Arkansas and Salem, Virginia. Mohawk’s federal contracts banned racial discrimination and led to the hiring of African Americans such as World War II veteran Don W. Tyler. Tyler had been a member of the “Triple Nickels,” the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, America’s first all-black parachute unit during the war. After initially facing discrimination upon returning to Akron, Tyler became the first black electrician in his shop in 1951 and consequently encouraged fellow paratroopers to come to Akron to pursue opportunities in the rubber factories.

Bloch’s style set the tone for easy labor-management relations at Mohawk and was continued by his successor and son-in-law, Hank Fawcett, who became president in 1956. Fawcett, a Harvard Business School alumnus who had intended to work for Goodyear, changed his mind upon meeting Bloch. “He was gracious, kind and considerate. He was a completely self-made man with no formal education, but you could sense his professionalism and his dedication to the company,” Fawcett told Love and Giffels. “He was willing to share his knowledge with everyone. I knew I could learn from him.”

Mohawk regularly posted record profits under Fawcett’s leadership and remained a family operation with labor and management mixing on and off the job. When United Rubber Workers went on strike nationwide in 1976, Mohawk union members continued to work. Still, the company faced a variety of changes and challenges throughout the 1970s. In 1973, Mohawk built new headquarters in Hudson
and moved 120 workers from its Second Avenue home. Foreign competition and the energy crisis forced U.S. rubber companies into expensive conversions from the production of bias tires to fuel-efficient radials, and Mohawk’s Akron plant was old and considered beyond repair. In January 1978, Mohawk workers finally did go on strike over a pension dispute. Then, on November 13, 1978, with a notice posted above the time clock, Mohawk announced to its 318 employees that after 65 years in business, it would close its Akron factory doors for good on the day before Thanksgiving. Mohawk closed the Arkansas plant six months later.

Mohawk maintained corporate headquarters in Hudson from 1973 until 1985, when it moved to Fairlawn. The company changed hands twice in the 1980s before Japanese company Yokohama Rubber bought it in October 1989. By then, there was only one plant in Salem, Virginia and the Fairlawn office. In July 1992, Yokohama merged Mohawk into its U.S. subsidiary in Fullerton, California, to be known as the Yokohama Tire Corporation with Fairlawn considered a branch. Yokohama closed the Fairlawn office in March 1995, continued to hold an annual reunion in Akron to reconnect and reminisce, proving that, as the advertisements often claimed, “Mohawks go farther.”

Workers clocking out for the last time at Mohawk Rubber Company, 1978; photo from the Akron Beacon Journal Photograph Collection, Summit Memory.

Goodyear purchased the former Mohawk factory building and razed it in 1983 to make way for a parking area. Long after the company was gone and the factory was leveled, the Mohawk family lived on. As late as 1997, the Mohawk 20-Year Club moving employees to Salem and Atlanta.

View the finding aid to the William W. Cox Mohawk Rubber Company Collection to discover our resources on this historic Akron business.
Company newsletters and magazines are not only full of news about products and operations useful to business researchers, there’s a significant amount of local history information, and they can also provide genealogists with background on the jobs and work culture experienced by family members. Coverage among these periodicals ranges from industry-wide and company-wide news to employee news regarding promotions, military service, achievements and activities. Some publications include photographs of employees at work or participating in company social events.

Below are the company and labor periodicals held in the Special Collections Division. Issue holdings for some titles are incomplete. Check with a librarian if you are looking for a local company or year not on this list as we occasionally receive donations. Some publications may also be included in a larger local collection.

**Goodyear Tire & Rubber / Aircraft / Aerospace**

- Big (1946-1981)
- Go (1966-1999)
- Goodyear International Orbit (1970-1973)
- Goodyear News (1951-1965)
- Goodyear Vantage (1990-1996)
- Profile (Goodyear Aerospace Corp. 1976-1987)


Memory. Issues for 1941-1969 are available online through University of Akron Archival Services.

Wingfoot Clan Retiree Roundup (1994-1996)
Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company also published

The Coagulator, a yearbook of graduating trainees for the “Flying Squad.” Squad workers trained as substitutes in all parts of the company’s manufacturing operations. Special Collections has 1927 to 1929.

The November 1950 issue of the Ohio Edisonian featured an award-winning photo of the Gorge power plant near the Cuyahoga River.

B. F. Goodrich
Annual Report (1918-1982)
B. F. Goodrich Merchandiser (1951-1960)
BFG Citizen (1960-1985)
BFG Today (1977-1998)
Goodrich Circle/Circle News (1916-1918, 1944-1959)
Tempo (1969-1974)

General Tire & Rubber / GenCorp
GenCorp News (1990)
Generaly Speaking (1946-1986)

Babcock & Wilcox
The Generator (1951-1970)

Firestone Tire & Rubber / Bridgestone/Firestone
Annual Report (1922-1985)
Firestone Non-Skid (1944-1982)
Network (1990-1997)
## Featured Archival Collection continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Collection Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roadway Express</strong></td>
<td>Roadway Digest (1956-1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roadway Express Magazine (1966-1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spotlight (1952-1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohawk Rubber</strong></td>
<td>Annual Report (1938-1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mohawk Messenger (1924-1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seiberling Rubber</strong></td>
<td>Annual Report (1938-1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Seibeneer (1946-1961)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Polsky</strong></td>
<td>Polsky News (1960-1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Akron, Canton &amp; Youngstown Railroad</strong></td>
<td>A.C &amp; Y News (1951-60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Ohio Gas</strong></td>
<td>Dateline (1967-1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Midwest Rubber Reclaiming</strong></td>
<td>The Midwest MilLine (1951-1969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motor Cargo</strong></td>
<td>Cargoite (1951-1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ohio Edison</strong></td>
<td>Ohio Edisonian (1948-1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PPG Industries, Chemical Division</strong></td>
<td>Barberton People (1966-1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quaker Oats</strong></td>
<td>The Quaker (1946-1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sun Rubber</strong></td>
<td>(1956-1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Sunlight Rubber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labor and Union Publications</strong></td>
<td>Summit County Labor News (microfilm: 1944-1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum, and Plastic Workers of America</strong></td>
<td>Local 5 News (1946-1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local 7 Flash (1946-1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local No. 2 News (1953-1981)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stanford Robert Ovshinsky was born in Akron in 1922 to Benjamin and Bertha (Munitz) Ovshinsky. The son of Jewish immigrants, Ovshinsky lived in the Sherbondy Hill neighborhood of Akron, then home to many families from Poland and Eastern Europe. His mother worked in Akron’s rubber factories, while his father worked as a scrap metal dealer, though Ovshinsky described him as more of a collector who was known to haul his wares through town in a horse-drawn cart. Ovshinsky attended Crouse Elementary, where he recalled being bored and frustrated by school, preferring to spend his time at the public library reading everything from poetry to astronomy. In an Akron Beacon Journal article published just after Ovshinsky’s death, his son remembered that Ovshinsky kept a picture of the Library in his office at home, and that “it was the Akron Public Library where he got much of his early education...he was Akron through and through.”

His father’s work gave Ovshinsky the opportunity to visit various local factories as a child, where he became fascinated by the intricate workings of the machinery. In 1941, he graduated from Buchtel and Hower Vocational High schools, having attended both at the same time. Trained as a tool maker and machinist, Ovshinsky worked at Akron Standard Mold and Imperial Electric before briefly relocating to Arizona for the climate and a job at Goodyear. Unable to serve in the military due to asthma, Ovshinsky worked in a tool shop during World War II before returning to Akron and establishing his own machine shop. In 1942, he married Norma Rifkin, with whom he had three children. At the age of 24, he sold his first machine design from drawing alone to General Electric. He continued designing components for the automotive industry, eventually taking a job as research director for Hupp Corporation of Cleveland in the 1950s despite never attending college. Described by a former boss as an “absolute genius,” Ovshinsky went on to hold over 400 patents.
In the late 1950s, he relocated to Troy, Michigan, where he and his second wife Iris Miroy founded Energy Conversion Devices (ECD) with a goal of addressing global issues in energy and information. A self-taught scientist, engineer and inventor, Ovshinsky made a name for himself by turning the electronics industry on its ear with his research in the area of semiconductors, in particular the substances that could be used in manufacturing semiconductors that are used extensively in the electronics industry. His advancements made many items we use today possible by devising a means to produce necessary components faster and more affordably. He dubbed his breakthrough “Ovonics” and predicted (in the 1960s) that it would pave the way for “flat television sets that can be hung on a wall and small computers with permanent memories that can operate on household electric current.” In 1968, Ovshinsky became the fourth American to be honored with a gold medal from the German Inventors Association for his discoveries, which the organization called “as important as the discovery of the transistor.”

Ovshinsky’s work led to monumental advancements in the field of alternative energy. After a decade of development in Ovonics, his findings enabled the production of solar cells made from common elements, rather than silicon crystals, mixed and poured to order. Ovshinsky projected he would be able to produce solar cells capable of converting light from any source into energy so cheaply they could be incorporated into consumer products. His ideas initially drew some skepticism, but by the 1980s ECD’s thin sheets of solar cells were powering calculators manufactured by Sharp. In 1986, Ovshinsky patented perhaps his best-known invention, the nickel metal hydride battery, a type of rechargeable battery used in cell phones, laptops and hybrid vehicles. Ovshinsky was an early advocate for hydrogen-powered cars and was committed to developing technologies that reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
In 1999, Time magazine named him a “Hero for the Planet.”

Ovshinsky’s work was driven by innovation and progress, perhaps more so than profits. Though he was able to generate multi-million-dollar funding and partnerships with huge corporations, in interviews he often centered his work on how science and technology could improve lives or solve social problems, such as bringing affordable solar energy to populations without access to electricity. He and his wife Iris advocated for peace and the advancement of human rights, civil rights, and equality. The son of outspoken activists for social and labor causes in Akron, Ovshinsky’s parents surely influenced his commitment to living according to his principles, which he told the Akron Beacon Journal in 2001 was his real contribution.

In 2006, Ovshinsky’s wife and business partner Iris died, after which he left ECD and founded Ovshinsky Innovation with physicist Rosa Young, whom he married in 2007. Stanford Ovshinsky died in 2012 at his home in Michigan at the age of 89. He is buried at Farband and Workmens Circle Cemetery (Arbeter Cemetery) in Akron, alongside his parents and late wife Dr. Iris Miroy. In 2015, Ovshinsky was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.
Ever wonder how we come up with answers to your local history and genealogy reference questions? This is how we went about answering one request. In this case, personal knowledge of the item in question and flexibility in search terms made the difference.

Recently, a gentleman contacted us concerning a large public sculpture. He took a few photos of it and wondered if we could help him find out who the artist was, when it was created, and what it was titled. He stated that there was no plaque identifying the artist or title. I walked into the Orangerie Mall (also known as the Shoppes at Akron Centre) and down the steps, surprised to find that a second unidentified sculpture clearly connected to the first one winds its way down the stairwell.

A little winded and frustrated by my initial defeat, I returned to Special Collections, determined more than ever to solve this mystery. I started to do a little research in the Akron Beacon Journal concerning the Edison Building, the Orangerie Mall, and the skywalk, and soon found out that there had
been a delay in opening the skywalk. I also learned that the Orangerie Mall actually had orange trees in it when it opened, in case you ever wondered why it’s called Orangerie Mall.

This information led me to search with an alternative term, “skyway,” on Summit Memory, and up popped the sculpture. At this point I was nearly ecstatic. The image was part of the Akron Beacon Journal Photograph Collection and gave the date that the image was taken as December 2, 1977. I then went back to the Beacon and started a page-by-page search starting December 2, and found the image in the paper on December 5, 1977. The article stated that there were “two pleasing wall sculptures by Harry Wheeler, an Akron-area artist.” Short, sweet, and to the point.

So now I could answer most of our patron’s questions, though I’m still uncertain of the name of the piece. After doing a little more research about Harry Wheeler, I realized that we have one of his pieces hanging prominently in the Main Library Atrium, a teakwood sculpture titled Garden Trio.

I emailed the newspaper article and a link to the Summit Memory image to our patron. He soon replied, “thanks for all your hard work.” I then packed up and went home, feeling that sense of victory and accomplishment that only a researcher can fully understand.

To view Garden Trio and other pieces of art on display at the Main Library, please see Articulation: The Art of the Akron-Summit County Public Library.
New to Summit Memory

BY REBECCA LARSON-TROYER, LIBRARIAN

Coffee Time by Dr. María Alejandra Zanetta, Distinguished Professor of Spanish Literature and Culture at the University of Akron. Image from Summit Memory.

The Akron Art Mail project is a joint venture between the Akron Art Museum and Akron-Summit County Public Library, aimed at putting art and writing into people’s hands during the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioned artworks were on display at the museum alongside community-submitted pieces. At the close of the exhibit, the commissioned artworks seen in this collection entered the Akron Art Library and were made available for loan through the Akron-Summit County Public Library.

The Richfield History Collection includes digitized copies of the Richfield High School student newspaper, The Echo, 1925 to 1951 (incomplete). The collection was compiled, organized and digitized by recent Revere High School graduate Joey Egleston on behalf of the Richfield Historical Society. The newspapers, which provide news on clubs, activities and general information about the village of Richfield, have been processed using Optical Character Recognition (OCR), making them fully searchable. Later issues include photographs of students.

The Summit County Sports Hall of Fame Collection includes programs from the annual Hall of Fame banquets from the first induction in 1957 to 2015. The programs have been processed using OCR, making them fully searchable. The collection was donated to Special Collections by the Summit County Sports Hall of Fame in 2016.
New Books

Prohibition in Summit County
Sharon Moreland Myers

With rich, creative research and intriguing photos, Sharon Moreland Myers takes a detailed look at a checkered past and its colorful characters in Prohibition in Summit County. During this era, the local scene offered jazz, dance halls, cafés, and movie theaters. The seedy underbelly involved speakeasies, bootleggers, gangs, and a corresponding rise in crime. Myers wraps up her study with a related topic, the Akron founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Czech and Slovak Immigration to America When, Why, How and Where
Stephen Szabados

Genealogy speaker, author, and columnist Steve Szabados has family ties to Akron and recently shared his extensive knowledge with us during his program on September 11. If you have ancestors from Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, or the Czech Republic, you'll want to turn your attention to his many useful books. With helpful instructions and case studies, Szabados guides you through the complex field of Eastern European genealogy.

For more new books recently added to our collection that can help you with your research, be sure to see the New Books page on our website.
Spotlight on Databases: NewspaperARCHIVE – Academic Library Edition

BY BARBARA LEDEN, LIBRARIAN

While most local researchers will recognize newspapers such as the Akron Beacon Journal or the Cleveland Plain Dealer, there are many other Ohio newspapers offering a wealth of information for genealogical research. These newspapers are smaller in scale for smaller localities, but they may contain just as much or even more genealogical information.

NewspaperARCHIVE – Academic Library Edition, operated by World Archives, is a leading database of digitized newspaper content. Our edition of the database focuses on Ohio, currently providing access to around 600 smaller historic newspapers representing about 130 towns and cities around the state, with dates ranging from the 1800s to the present.

To access this database whether you are in the Library or at home, visit the Library’s home page and hover over the Research tab near the top of the page. (If you’re accessing the database outside the Library, you’ll need to enter your Library card number.) Select Databases by Subject, then Newspapers to find NewspaperARCHIVE – Academic Library Edition.

NewspaperARCHIVE offers several ways to search for information: Browse by Location, Browse by Date, and Browse by Publication, as well as a basic search form on the home page and an advanced search. Browse by Location allows for filtering by
state, in this case Ohio only, then by city and newspaper. Browse by Date filtering starts with century, then year, and finally publication. The Search tab brings up an Advanced Search box allowing for searching by names, keywords, phrases, locations, and dates. The Publications tab brings up an All Newspaper Directory to choose a publication and on the right side, a location box search, a map search and a date range search to further filter results.

A search will bring up a list of results with thumbnail newspaper page images. Click on these to see the full image. You may want clip the image (scissors icon), email it or share it on social media (envelope icon), save it (disk icon) or print it (printer icon).

Within the save function there is a “Save to My Treasure Box” option that allows you to save and organize results for future use. To use this option, you’ll need to create a free account using the link at the top right of the page. With a free account, information can be saved, organized, and easily shared by storing it within the database. Functions available with an account include Favorite Pages, My Archive, and My Saved Searches. My Saved Searches keeps a record of your previous searches within NewspaperARCHIVE. In My Archive, 25 similar images can be saved together to create a project such as a family memory page.

With NewspaperARCHIVE -Academic Library Edition, finding, saving, and organizing historic newspaper information is made easy. In this database, you may find a small nugget of genealogical information or possibly even make a big breakthrough. You just never know what you might come across.

DNA Genetic Genealogy Discussion Group

DNA analysis has become an important component of modern genealogical research. Although testing became widely available only a few short years ago, it is now frequently used as a research tool by genealogists and can be a fascination in general for test takers. Join us on every third Monday of the month at 6:15 pm for a virtual meeting where we discuss our experiences, ask questions, explore current topics, and share roadblocks. Register on our Events Calendar. No meeting in December.
SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to send a special thanks to the following for their generous contributions:

**Akron Chapter DAR** for books in memory of Katherine Daggett Newman and Phyllis Ann Fuller Pearson

**Cuyahoga Portage Chapter DAR** for Laurel Messenger 1981-1985 in honor of Barbara Griffith, Ohio State Registrar and Chapter Registrar, and five books in memory of Winnifred Emma Sparhawk Whims

**Daughters of the American Colonists – George Washington Chapter** for A Tale of Two Families: A Biographical Genealogy of the Meyers and Sparhawk Families in memory of Winnifred Emma Sparhawk Whims

**Sharon Myers** for sixteen books on various general and local history topics

**Ohio Society Dames of the Court of Honor** for genealogy books on Stafford County, Virginia, and Sumner County, Tennessee

**Ohio Society United States Daughters of 1812** for Sumner County, Tennessee Cemetery Records - W.P.A. Records

**Cat Russell** for two autographed copies of An Optimist’s Journal of the End of Days by Cat Russell

**Bev Shaffer** for Art Work of Akron

**Leonard W. Tritt** for Tritt Family History, Vol. IV

**Nick Planin** for Ancestors & Descendants of Henry Wildy Harding, Sr., 1801-1878

**Nancy Rice** for University of Akron Yearbooks 1974-1976
Changing Seasons

AUTUMN IN OHIO

Soon the colors of Autumn will fill the land and the air will become crisp. The change of seasons is a good change. These are the only changes we make at Sanginiti’s... good changes. We enjoy improving our product... bringing the Akron area the Finest in Food.

Sanginiti’s

now featuring

The MILES BATALINI TRIO

Put a ✔ on your calendar beside Oct. 10, 11 or 12. Plan now to make reservations for Sanginiti’s Annual Clambake

No Cover... No Minimum

207 E. MARKET ST. JE-5-4106

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

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

Phone:
330.643.9030

Email:
speccollections@akronlibrary.org

Website:
www.akronlibrary.org/specialcollections

Sanginiti’s was a popular fine dining destination for locals between 1952 and 1990. This ad ran in the Akron Beacon Journal on October 4, 1962.