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Bowling Green State University. Center for Archival Collections

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## Archival Chronicle

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### Fresh Perspectives on the Past



✦ *Ella P. Stewart, Toledo pharmacist, also became an influential civic reformer, goodwill ambassador, civil rights leader and women's rights advocate. Center for Archival Collections. General Photograph Collection.*

Thanks to a growing appreciation for social history and for the contributions of Americans of many backgrounds, manuscript repositories are welcoming correspondence, diaries, and business and organizational records from a variety of sources.

Conflict often marked the relations between native peoples and European settlers, and the manuscripts in the Center for Archival Collections reflect this. Tribes removed to the West early in the history of Ohio, and for generations, the stories handed down through settlers' families and in school textbooks focused on the sensational or romantic. Pioneer "recollections" such as Florence Blackford's (MMS 567) of Hancock County include stories of casual encounters and growing interest in collecting and preserving cultural artifacts. Popular books recorded captivities of people, both locally and nationally (Olive Oatman's captivity in the southwest is recounted in her Chautauqua lectures in MMS 566), and mission work among the tribes. These materials are written almost exclusively from the settlers' point of view. Federal government records, particularly from the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the Bureau of American Ethnology, are an excellent source for learning more about the daily lives of native peoples and their interactions with the government. Letters received by the Ohio Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (MMS 244, letters dated 1824-1881) reveal much about tribal relations as the reservation system developed. More recently, there has been renewed interest in the land claims of native peoples, not only in the West (MS 52, L.T. Eugene Ness served as an attorney for the Mission Indians of Southern California), but in Ohio as well (MMS 1062 includes research notes by Dr. Paul Kostyu for an article on Indian land claims in Adams Township of Seneca County, Ohio).

The Ella P. Stewart Collection (MS 203) includes the scrapbooks of the first African-American woman pharmacist in the United States, spanning from the 1920s to the 1980s. The collection consists of Mrs. Stewart's accomplishments, interests and honors as preserved by herself. It gives insight into her life as not only a pharmacist in the city of Toledo, Ohio, but also as a business woman, club woman, civic reformer, goodwill ambassador, civil rights leader, and women's rights advocate. A

two hour interview of Mrs. Stewart documenting her life is included with the scrapbooks, as well as information on the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), the Pan-Pacific Women's Association (PPWA) and Toledo's Ella P. Stewart School.

George A. Phillips (MS 377) was an African-American educator in Ohio and Michigan for over fifty years. The collection of correspondence, educational files, and scrapbooks covers 1844-1976 and documents the writings Phillips produced during his years of teaching. Also included are the scrapbooks in which he detailed his life and accomplishments. In addition, there are thirty-five diaries kept by his wife Myrtle from 1932-1971, again documenting a period of tremendous change for African-Americans.

The Ohio Hispanic Institute of Opportunity (O.H.I.O., Inc.) was initially formed as La Raza Unida (LRU) de Ohio in 1969 as the only state-wide nonprofit agency designed to serve the disadvantaged Hispanic community, particularly migrant farm workers plagued by seasonal unemployment or displaced by technology. Its program, "Viva Toledo" expanded employment opportunities and helped in the creation of small Hispanic-owned businesses near the downtown Toledo area. Although the agency is no longer in existence, the records it left document its administration and describe the projects it carried out. The collection also preserves information about Hispanic culture and other agencies which address Latino needs.

These records, whether from individuals, government agencies, or private organizations, will be of special interest to researchers. They record the work, the reactions, and the feelings of the people who shaped our nation, built opportunities for themselves and others, and brought about social change.