



SOCIETY OF OHIO ARCHIVISTS

Strategic Planning Update

Society of Ohio Archivists is working through the strategic planning process. A lot has changed in our field and world since our current strategic plan was finalized in 2023. This is an opportunity for SOA to thoughtfully consider how the organization can best meet the needs of archives professionals in our rapidly evolving landscape.

In winter 2025, SOA Council solicited proposals for a strategic planning facilitator from several potential partners and selected Ohio Humanities Alliance (OHA), formerly Ohio Humanities Council, to guide the organization through this endeavor. The expertise OHA brings to the table has kept us open to fresh perspectives and encouraged us to consider opportunities for growth. Over the summer we distributed a survey to membership to help us better understand what folks want from SOA, what's working well, and what we can do better. Following the survey, OHA led three focus groups with select SOA members and non-members. The focus groups offered an opportunity to hear from a variety of professionals—current students, recent graduates, and faculty; early, middle, and advanced career; professionals from a variety of cultural heritage organization types; and diverse lived experiences.

In October, the Strategic Planning Committee and OHA will meet in-person to work through the themes collected from the membership survey and focus groups to inform our new strategic plan which will serve as SOA's roadmap for 2027–2030. I look forward to sharing more with you as we move forward.

Thank you to those serving on the Strategic Planning Committee for your time and commitment to SOA: Michelle Ganz, Jennifer Long Morehart, Jim DaMico, Darrell Blevins Jr., Hannah Kemp-Severance, Kris Kallies, Bill Rahe, and Brooke Stiles.



Photo depicts a man reading a book while sitting at the top of a ladder which is leaning against a bookcase in the OSU Main Library.
[Ohio Memory.](#)

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The President's Message

Society of Ohio Archivists Members,

What an exciting time to start my service as SOA president! I am truly honored to lead our organization over the next year alongside my fellow Council and Committee members.



The joint MAC/SOA Conference held at The Ohio State University in May was a huge success. As a first time MAC attendee, I was impressed by the quality of the sessions and posters, the conference's overall organization and thoughtful amenities, and the rich conversation that carried through the weekend. I hope those who were able to attend left feeling inspired, excited, and full of gratitude for the work our colleagues across Ohio and the Midwest are doing for our field and the communities we serve. Many thanks are in order. I would like to extend special thanks to SOA Past President Jennifer Long Morehart for doing an outstanding

job leading SOA through coordinating and planning the joint conference, and to Michelle Sweetser, SOA member and current MAC president, for making this a true partnership between our organizations. Thank you to those who represented SOA on the Program and Local Arrangements Committees: Nora Blackman, Stacy Chaney-Blankenship, Janet Carleton, Meghan Crawford, Matt Francis, Dan Noonan, and Adam Wanter. Thank you to SOA members who represented MAC on various planning committees as well. Lastly, thank you to our membership for sharing your work, expertise, and passion for preserving and sharing history with your colleagues.

At the SOA Business meeting, we welcomed elected officers and new committee co-chairs—Michelle Ganz (vice president/president elect), Sophia McGuire (treasurer), Jim DaMico (at-large council member), Katie Gable (Marketing & Communications), Hannah Kemp Severence (JEDAI co-chair), and Kris Kallies (JEDAI co-chair). Thank you to Matt Francis (Nominating), Emily Gainer (Marketing & Communications), Michelle Ganz (JEDAI), Christine Liebson (Advocacy & Outreach), Sara Mouch (Educational Programming), and Stephanie Shreffler (Membership & Awards) for your service!

I am looking forward to the strategic planning work ahead, and we've already made some exciting strides for the future of SOA. The JEDAI Committee worked with Membership & Awards to establish a new scholarship, which was awarded for the first time at this year's conference. The Mentorship Taskforce is working on next steps after examining the data collected from the survey distributed to membership this spring.

There are exciting opportunities on the horizon for SOA and I'm looking forward to growing with you all over the next year. If you have ideas to share, please don't hesitate to reach out.

All the best,

Kristen Newby



SOA History Day Awards

Ohio History Day, affiliated with National History Day, helps students in grades 6–12 learn to research using primary and secondary sources, build a thesis and supporting argument, and create a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website presenting their work.

The Membership and Awards Committee enjoyed participating in April's Ohio History Day. We selected Millan B., Niko C., and Noah D.'s group website, [Revolutionary Resting: How The Akron Sit-Down Strike Brought Reform To Goodyear's Factories](#) as the winner of the SOA Special Award in the Junior Division (grades 6–8). We were impressed by the depth of their in-person archival research, using the Goodyear Company archives at the University of Akron.

Congratulations to the 2026 SOA History Day Award winners! And thank you to the SOA Membership and Awards Committee for coordinating SOA History Day Awards selection.

To learn more about History Day and SOA's involvement in the event, see [George Bain and Connie Connor's blog post National History Day at 50: A Salute.](#)

SOA Merit Award Recipients

SOA's Membership and Awards Committee was excited to honor two very deserving recipients with its Merit Award at the May annual meeting.

Tina Ratcliff, the first recipient, is the Records and Information Manager of the Montgomery County Records Center and Archives, where she has worked for almost thirty years. She is also active with the Ohio County Archivists and Records Managers Association, serving as its Retention Schedule Committee Chair since 2016. In this role, she has led the way in updating over 40 different agency records retention schedules for county government. She has also served three terms as a member of the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board and has served on several of its committees. As Chair of its Awards and Grants committee, she oversaw over \$100,000 in OHRAB regrants given out to cultural institutions across Ohio. Jen Conover and Ginny Dressler, who nominated Ratcliff for this award, wrote that Tina "exemplifies the type of person you want as a leader and mentor in the archival field."

Michael Scharer-Zielinski, our second recipient, has served as the Digital Archives and Preservation Manager at Western Reserve Historical Society since 2019. Since then, he has helped the Society develop a comprehensive digitization strategy. They are now able to ingest born-digital materials and provide access to digital and born-digital materials from processed collections. They are able to provide ongoing digitization of requests by patrons and staff, and think programmatically about their digitization strategies. Scharer-Zielinski has successfully applied for grants, allowing WRHS to hire a digital collections specialist. He was also instrumental in the society's migration to Preservica and contributed greatly to its efforts to preserve audio and film recordings. His nominators, Pamela Dorazio Dean and Sean Martin, wrote that Michael's expertise has "proven invaluable."

SOA Student Scholarship Award

GABBY HALCOMB, SOA STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



I am very grateful to the Society of Ohio Archivists for awarding me a student scholarship to attend the 2026 MAC/SOA Annual Meeting. As a graduate student who was finishing up my studies at Wright State University, this was a rare opportunity to gain professional insight into the realm of

archives immediately after graduation. The theme was *Find It Here*, which allowed for a diverse range of sessions that show how we can make collections more accessible to the public.

One of my favorite sessions was Advocacy, Activism, & Archiving FOCAS-ed on the Community: A 360 Perspective. The Faculty Organizing for Community Archives Support (FOCAS) is a three-year project that supports archives of historically underrepresented communities in North America. Thus, the session speakers talked about how they are changing the way we create community spaces with archives. The biggest takeaway came from Dr. Sheila Radford-Hill from Dominican University who advised everyone to “build relationships and move in different spaces.” I thought

this was a simple, but brilliant way to say that we (as archivists) must be active members of the public. If we want to empower the history and people we intend to serve, then we need to make our presence meaningful rather than passive.

Other sessions provided me with technical knowledge for managing collections and using practical tools that help with workflows. Bridging the Elusive Gap Between Accessioning and Stacks Management showed different methods of handling undocumented materials to establish better intellectual control. Ctrl+Alt+Comply explained the process of understanding AI and its risks to write policies that ensure it's being used responsibly. The Grants Landscape gave me a plethora of resources of where to find grants, as well as how to draft a good application that is realistic yet stands out from the rest of the pile.

Overall, I loved seeing how each speaker brought a fresh perspective on what it means to *Find It Here* when it comes to archival work. There were no two sessions alike, often making it hard to choose which one to attend next. They showed me what it means to be an ally in my community and to the collections themselves. Best practices manifest when archivists realize their efforts are not isolated, one-off endeavors. They build upon each other to develop a strong archival program that reaches communities who need them the most.

Thank you again to the Society of Ohio Archivists for this opportunity! This was my first conference, and I look forward to attending MAC and SOA meetings in the future.

SOA Student Scholarship Award

CASSIDY KUCHAR, SOA STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



I am incredibly grateful to the Society of Ohio Archivists for awarding me the 2026 Student Scholarship and providing me with the opportunity to attend the MAC/SOA Annual Meeting in Columbus. As a graduate student entering the field of archives and public humanities, this conference was an invaluable experience that

allowed me to learn from professionals across Ohio, connect with other emerging archivists, and better understand the role archives play in preserving and sharing our collective histories.

My path to archival work has been shaped by an interdisciplinary interest in people, stories, and the ways we preserve knowledge. I completed my undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Akron, where my research focused on psychological science, emotions, expertise, and aging. During my undergraduate studies, I also began working at the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, where I gained hands-on experience with archival collections, exhibitions, public programming, and making historical materials accessible to broader audiences. Continuing my work at the Cummings Center while pursuing my master's degree in Applied History and Public Humanities at the University of Akron has shown me how archives can serve as a bridge between research, education, and public engagement. While my academic background began in understanding people and human behavior, I have found that archives provide another powerful way to explore human experiences by preserving the records, stories, and voices that shape our understanding of the past.

One of the most meaningful sessions I attended was "Find It Here! Ohio LGBTQ+ Archival Perspectives and Projects," which featured representatives from LGBTQ+ community archives throughout Ohio. This session was especially significant because I am currently involved as a student researcher with the Akron LGBTQ+ Archives project at the University of Akron. Hearing from archivists and community members about the process of building and sustaining community archives reinforced for me the importance of preserving histories that have often been overlooked or marginalized. The discussion also highlighted that archival work is not just about collecting materials—it is about relationships, trust, and responsibility to the communities whose histories are being preserved.

Another highlight of the meeting was the "Lightning Tour: Archival Projects Across Ohio" session. As a University of Akron student, I was excited to hear CJ Jacobs discuss "Telling Akron's Black History: A Classroom Approach to Archiving" and to learn more about the important projects happening within my own institution. I was also especially inspired by Nick Pavlik's presentation on podcasting for archival outreach. As I prepare my own master's

capstone project—a podcast exploring the history of comedy through a psychological lens—learning about his experiences creating narrative archival programming gave me valuable insight into the possibilities of podcasting as a tool for public history and engagement.

The conference also connected with many of the skills I have been developing throughout my graduate studies. The session on grants and funding strategies was particularly useful because I had recently completed coursework focused on grant writing, and it was exciting to see how those skills translate into real-world archival projects. Other sessions on community advocacy, social media engagement, and stewardship of sensitive collections challenged me to think critically about accessibility, ethics, and the responsibilities archivists hold when working with historical materials. Across the sessions I attended, one theme consistently stood out: archives are not passive repositories of the past, but active spaces where communities decide what stories are preserved, how they are shared, and who has access to them.

Beyond the presentations, one of the most rewarding parts of the meeting was meeting archivists, librarians, students, and public history professionals from across the Midwest. Some of my favorite moments happened outside of the formal sessions, through conversations over meals and informal discussions with other attendees. As someone who is still early in my transition into the archival field, I appreciated how welcoming the SOA community was. These conversations helped me learn about the many paths people take into archival work and reminded me that the field is strengthened by the diverse experiences of its practitioners.

I left the conference with new ideas, professional connections, and a deeper understanding of the many ways archives can serve the public. My work at the Cummings Center has shown me the importance of interpretation and public engagement—ensuring that historical materials do not remain inaccessible but instead become meaningful resources for communities. The sessions and conversations at MAC/SOA expanded that understanding by showing me the many ways archivists approach this work through community partnerships, advocacy, accessibility, and storytelling. My background in psychology has shaped the way I think about human experiences, and this conference reinforced for me that archives provide an essential way to preserve and explore those experiences across time.

I am incredibly thankful to SOA for this scholarship and for supporting students who are beginning their careers in archives. Attending the MAC/SOA Annual Meeting strengthened my commitment to public-facing historical work and reaffirmed my excitement for the future of archival practice. It gave me greater confidence as I continue transitioning into the archival field and a clearer sense of how I hope to contribute to public history in the future. I look forward to continuing to learn, collaborate, and contribute to the preservation of stories that help us better understand ourselves and our communities.

SOA New Professional Award

RACHEL GAMIN, SOA NEW PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



I was deeply honored to have been selected as a recipient of one of SOA's 2026 New Professional Scholarship Awards and to have had the opportunity to attend the joint MAC/SOA Conference this May at Ohio State University.

Growing up, I loved history and research and shared this passion with my father,

who was an avid amateur historian and taught me the importance of primary sources, accurate and complete record-keeping, provenance tracking, and most of all, the way that history gives insight into the human condition. As a college student, I spent my summers as a page and intern at the West Virginia Library Commission and often got to do work across the hall in the state Archives and History department, where I got my first real glimpse of the richness of history that can be found in seemingly simple daily artifacts. That experience stayed with me for many years and shaped my record-keeping and research throughout graduate school and my education career.

When I retired from public school teaching and adjunct university faculty work after 28 years, I wondered what would be next for me and decided to return to the world of librarianship and archive work. I was fortunate to find a position at the Medina County District Library as an associate in the local history and genealogy department there, and I have spent two years finding my footing as a new archiving professional.

A significant challenge for a career-changer like me is impostor syndrome, even though I knew that my background in research, data collection and analysis, and education would transfer well into archiving work. Despite having "hit the ground running" by being hired to work on an aerial project funded by the Ohio History Fund and learning a lot about digitization, metadata, and preservation in the course of my job, I know there is so much more to explore

and understand about the profession. The opportunity to attend the MAC/SOA conference was thrilling, but I also felt some nervousness about being around so many accomplished people as a new archival professional. As things turned out, everyone was welcoming and helpful and made me feel comfortable.

The MAC/SOA conference was not just informative and an incredible learning opportunity, it was also affirming and encouraging in ways that made me feel capable of and excited for my new career. The depth and scope of what one can do as an archivist is thrilling, and hearing about the variety of projects members are working on really opened my eyes to the possibilities of the profession.

With so many interesting and insightful presentations to choose from, I was certainly spoiled for choice and had consulted with my coworkers about which sessions would be most applicable to our current projects and work. I was able to come away from every single session with new information, techniques, ideas, and understandings that will inform and enhance my work.

Standout sessions for me included a very timely and important session on applying trauma-informed practices to sensitive archival work to protect archivists and stakeholders alike when working with painful or sensitive collections; a presentation on social media and local history collections that let me bring new, fresh ideas to my coworkers about how we can engage our community with our local history collection; a fascinating look at the challenges of working with records of incarcerated individuals; a look at the opportunities and challenges presented by AI tools and their applications in archival work; and a session on accessioning and stack management that was extremely relevant to my workplace. Every session I attended was engaging and packed with information and ideas that I was excited to bring back and share with my coworkers. I was able to learn more about the processes and procedures that I do every day as well as bring back new ideas for improving my workflow efficiency and applications for some of our upcoming projects.

In closing, I would like to thank the organizers, presenters, and attendees for providing this incredible professional opportunity and for being so welcoming and approachable.

SOA New Professional Award

MELANIE MOHLER, SOA NEW PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



Attending the SOA/MAC joint annual meeting this year was perfect timing for me. The week after the conference, I started a new position as the archivist for Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio. Because of this, I chose to attend several conference sessions that would be most relevant to me going into my new position.

Perhaps the most useful session for me was “In Medias Res: Inheriting Archives as Solo Archival Workers.” Hiram College has not had an archivist on staff since 2017. Since then, library staff, student workers, and volunteers have kept the archives running. Hearing what tasks and priorities the panelists Jenna Kish, Autumn Muir, and Hannah Zmuda have focused on in their positions—particularly in their first 90 days—has been extremely relevant to me.

For the past month, I have been getting to understand the contents of Hiram College’s archives and how it’s organized. My main project has been creating an inventory of all of the collections, which is something that does not currently exist. As the panelists suggested, I am also keeping a list of observations, suggestions for improvements, priorities, ideas for student projects and outreach, etc. Most importantly, I have been documenting everything!

Other relevant sessions I attended included “Connecting People through Exhibit Work: Four Case Studies of Physical and Digital Exhibits in Academic Libraries” and “Students Taking Center Stage: Sharing a Student-centered Archival Outreach Model.” In the former session, I got some ideas for online tools I can use for creating digital collections and exhibits. In the latter session, I

learned more about how students want to be centered in archival outreach efforts. My job’s main goals are to increase awareness of the Hiram College archives and conduct outreach, especially with students, so these sessions were very helpful.

I also began working as a researcher and oral history interviewer with the [Akron LGBTQ+ Archive](#) earlier this year. The Akron LGBTQ+ Archive was one of the LGBTQ+ archives represented in the “Find It Here! Ohio LGBTQ+ Archival Perspectives and Projects” session. Despite already being familiar with this project, I attended the session to learn more about the other institutions represented, the Ohio Lesbian Archives and the University of Toledo, and how they are working with their LGBTQ+ collections. The Q&A session was very collaborative. I took note of some outreach ideas and tips for oral history transcriptions. I left the session feeling that establishing a statewide advisory group for LGBTQ+ archives to collaborate and share resources would be beneficial.

Another session I learned a lot from was “Graceful in Grief: Experiences in Archival Trauma.” I was interested in this session due to my own experiences in archives, particularly in working with reparative metadata for the [David P. Campbell Postcard Collection](#). While trauma in the archives can be an uncomfortable topic, it is something nearly every archivist will encounter at some point in their career. I appreciated each of the panelists sharing their own personal experiences. One of the main tactics they shared to reduce harm is to have multiple projects to work on, so that when one gets too heavy, the archivist can switch to another one.

Overall, I’m very grateful to have received one of the New Professional Scholarship Awards to attend this year’s SOA/MAC joint annual meeting. This was my first time attending a conference in the archival field, and I’m excited to bring what I’ve learned from this conference into my new position.

Ohio Preservation Council Scholarship Award

MADELINE SIMMONS, OHIO PRESERVATION COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



As a new professional in the field of archives and records management, I was eager to attend the SOA/MAC joint annual meeting this year. I am so appreciative of the support from the [Ohio Preservation Council](#) that made my attendance possible; thank you! Not only was I excited about the learning opportunities this experience would provide,

but I was also looking forward to having the chance to network with other professionals in the field. I was especially enthusiastic to attend this particular meeting because of the SOA and MAC partnership which meant that there were even more opportunities to engage with professionals across Ohio and the wider Midwest region.

My experience at the meeting was fantastic; it was everything I was hoping for! I really enjoyed attending the sessions, especially the presentation by Gideon McDaniel and Michael Providenti, *Getting Started on a Shoestring: Digitization on a Dime*, where they discussed not only the nuances of digitization but also the efficacy of OCR and the implications of using OCR for accessibility standards. I really appreciated the discussion around accessibility and how those standards can be met with a realistic time expenditure while still maintaining high-quality outputs.

Another presentation that I gained a lot of practical tools and approaches from was *Big, Born-Digital Challenges: Practical Workflows for Impractically Large Collections*, where Andrew McDonnell and Lara Friedman-Shedlov discussed workflows,

software, and equipment that can assist in the processing and preservation of large collections of born-digital content. I especially appreciated their perspectives on the unique challenges of cloud-based files and their explanations of how they incorporated specific software into their workflows to greatly improve the speed and ease of processing and managing large born-digital collections.

I also had the opportunity to participate in the Friday Forum for those who work in the records management field. I enjoyed the conversational style of the forum where we shared our experiences with records management and had the chance to ask questions and seek feedback from each other. It was enlightening to find that many of the challenges we face individually are not unique to us or our organizations but are a more widely understood issue.

In addition to attending many wonderful presentations and a forum, I also had the opportunity to connect with fellow archives professionals from around the region. I enjoyed meeting other new professionals like me to talk and share experiences, ideas, and career aspirations. I also had the opportunity to meet and talk with more experienced professionals, who shared valuable insights into the field of archives and records management. I really appreciated all of the different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences of the professionals I talked with; I had many good conversations!

Moving forward, I hope to draw from the ideas and suggestions shared by presenters and find ways to apply them in my work, building upon the foundations they provided us. I also plan to stay in contact with the archives professionals I met at this year's meeting so that we can continue to share ideas, thoughts, and experiences even when we're not face-to-face. I really enjoyed attending the SOA/MAC joint annual meeting this year and I look forward to continuing to grow and develop my skills and knowledge as an archives professional.

SOA JEDAI Scholarship Award

HOLLY FITZPATRICK, SOA JEDAI AWARD RECIPIENT



I want to extend thanks to the SOA Membership & Awards Committee for selecting me as the 2026 JEDAI Scholarship recipient. It was my first time at both SOA and MAC, and I am extremely grateful, as a marginalized archivist, for the opportunity to connect with colleagues across the Midwest. I also want to thank the JEDAI Committee

and SOA for offering this award; we've had an incredibly difficult few years in public history with our funding, our institutions, and our identities under constant attack from all levels of governance. Opportunities like the JEDAI award help those of us most affected by our shifting social and cultural landscape.

In the spirit of JEDAI's mission, I set out to attend as many sessions relating to diverse collections and practices as I could, starting with "Find It Here! Ohio LGBTQ+ Archival Perspectives and Projects". In this session, I learned about Ohio's new legislation banning all cultural centers from public university campuses. As a Hoosier, I have not dealt with legislation exactly like this, although we now have SEA 202 which allows students to report faculty who don't teach all perspectives of history. It's a much more complex issue than I can cover in a few short sentences, but to date, it has primarily been weaponized against faculty who teach history only from a marginalized perspective and neglect to show the prevailing, prejudiced point of view in a neutral light. As stewards of the historical record, we know better than most that our work is not neutral, as much as our institutions envision it to be. I'm grateful that this session was the first thing I attended, as it guided the rest of my conference experience; because of the work of these panelists, the audience discussion, and the state of the world, I was inspired to begin brainstorming ways to collect diverse histories at my institution while I still can. In the coming months, I would like to begin building relationships with cultural centers, where I will spend a day with students asking them about their experiences on campus. I plan to bring zine-making supplies and thoughtful prompts to invite students to add their voices to the historical record, anonymously if they prefer, allowing students of the future to "Find it Here" when they feel isolated in their experiences.

Additionally, I would like to thank the presenters from "Say My Name: Identifying the African Americans Enslaved at White Hall"; "Advocacy, Activism, and Archiving FOCAS-ed on the Community"; "Using Social Media to Engage Communities with Archives and Collections"; "Graceful in Grief: Experiences in Archival Trauma"; "Find It Here and Share It Everywhere"; and "Sharing a Student-centered Archival Outreach Model"; as well as the plenary speaker, Doreen Uhas-Sauer and her presentation "A Nation without Archives Is like Eyes without Sight". A few short notes I have from these presentations include: the notion that our real work is in honoring the people who produce the work; that we as repositories are not here to take from our community, rather, to build it up; that the more specific we are with our work, the more universal the public finds it; and that we should be empowering people to engage with archives. Thank you all for the immense amount of work you put into your collections and sharing your work with the profession.

Finally, I would like to dig into a recurring theme present at this and many other professional conferences, which is the intersection of generative AI and accessibility. I recently heard, in a descriptive context, this technology being referred to as "provenance laundering" and I think this term treats the issue exactly as seriously as the situation warrants. I have much more to say on the topic, but in short, I would caution my colleagues against using predictive language models in an effort to make our collections accessible. Our disabled patrons deserve accurate and unbiased information, which this technology by design is unable to deliver, and which goes against the values at the very heart of our profession. Please consider the amount of work archivists who follow you will have to undertake to unravel and correct falsehoods generated by this expensive, exploitative technology, which we won't fully understand the true cost to using—impacts on our communities, environment, education, cognitive abilities, dependence on the tool, deskilling of work, job precarity, and our budgets—until it is too late.

Again, a massive thank you to the JEDAI Committee for the opportunity to attend the joint SOA/MAC meeting. I have faith that SOA will continue uplifting JEDAI as our social and cultural landscapes continue to change. Offering a scholarship with the explicit purpose of improving Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in the profession truly goes to show SOA's commitment to stand by their colleagues of all backgrounds in the worst of times, ensuring that no matter who we are, we can "Find it Here," or if you prefer, "nothing about us without us."

How the Ice Age formed Northwest Ohio's Topography

It is common knowledge to most locals from the counties of Northwest Ohio that where we all live now once sat under a massive extension of Lake Erie during the most recent Ice Age. But what many residents might not realize if they haven't paid close attention, is that remnants of the former lake still exist throughout Northwest Ohio. One of the distinct geologic features from this era of Ohio's very distant past is the Defiance Moraine, located in the southern portion of Seneca County and stretching into both Hancock and Putnam Counties.

The definition of a moraine is an accumulation of debris transported and deposited by a glacier. In the case of the Defiance Moraine, this moraine exists by the work of the Erie Lobe of the Laurentide Ice Sheet during the Wisconsin Ice Age starting 40,000 years ago.

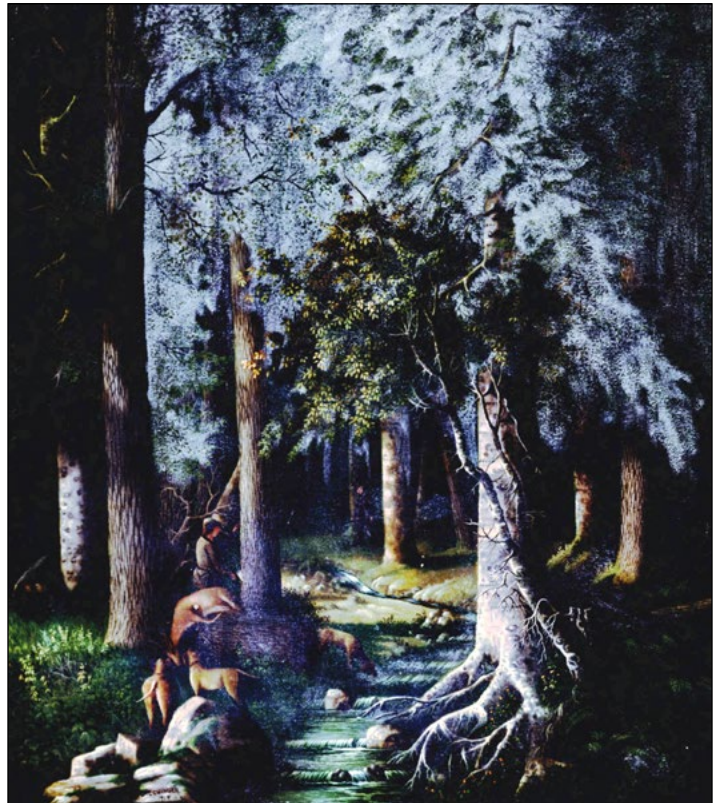
The Defiance Moraine, first recorded by geological surveys conducted in Ohio during the late 19th-century, is anywhere from two to five miles wide and made up of a mixture of clay, silt, sand, gravel and boulders. The height of the moraine is 850 feet above sea level in the New Riegel, Ohio area, (southwest corner of Seneca County) which is significant when you compare that to its opposite northeastern corner where the elevation at Green Springs, Ohio is only 680 feet.

The northeastern corner of Seneca County is part of the Bellevue-Castalia Karst Plain and is prevalent with sink holes (hence, Seneca Caverns).

By no means is the Defiance Moraine the only moraine in Ohio, but it is the most northern (and thus, most recent) one. (The next closest one is the Fort Wayne Moraine in Allen and Hardin Counties near Lima, Ohio). All existing moraines, which can easily be seen on an elevation map or glacial map are "discontinuous" because of the "alternation of advances and retreats of the ice front. Retreat occurred not by a steady recession but by a series of oscillatory movements," explains Paul Shaffer in a document called "The Pleistocene Geology of the Fostoria Quadrangle."

However, these ridges and their high points served as prime locations for many early settlers. For example, both Defiance (after which the moraine is named) and Fostoria were purposely developed directly on the moraine due to its elevation from the surrounding Black Swamp. Several state routes in our region of Ohio follow the path of these ridges, including State Route 18 between Van Buren, Ohio and Tiffin, Ohio, State Route 613 between Fostoria, Ohio and Leipsic, Ohio, State Route 101 between Tiffin, Ohio and Castalia, Ohio, US 20 near Bellevue, Ohio, US 30 near Delphos, Ohio, and Route 12 from Delphos, Ohio to Findlay, Ohio.

The Defiance Moraine and the larger geological formation, the Columbus Escarpment, following the same path, are the



Dischinger, Henry. "Black Swamp Painting". 1915. Harris-Elmore Public Library. Ohio Memory Collection.

delineating lines between the Huron-Erie Lake Plain Reefs and the Central Till Plains regions, making soil composites in these two regions within Seneca County vastly different. (An escarpment is a long, steep slope separating two different elevations, formed by geological erosion).

The northwest region of Seneca County that remained within the confines of the Black Swamp has Hoytville clay soil and there are parts within this section of the county where bedrock is exposed. The rest of the county, except for the very southeast corner, is made up of "Blount-Pewamo-Glynwood" soil with a topography that has more swells and basins that become "more pronounced as the moraine is approached."

Jane Forsyth describes the formation of the Black Swamp in her essay called "The Beach Ridges of Northern Ohio" like a heavy load sitting on a mattress. When you remove the load, the mattress rises up but still leaves an indentation. That indentation left by the glacier is what formed the Black Swamp. The Black Swamp and all of Northwest Ohio's ridges didn't form overnight, though, and Forsyth described each phase in detail.

After the oldest lake, Lake Maumee, retreated in stages, it

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morphed into Lake Arkona. There are some sand beaches about eight miles north of Fostoria, Ohio, from this lake, but no roads were built along them. A radiocarbon dating test in the late 1950s of wood deposits where State Route 4 meets the Ohio Turnpike, dates this lake to 13,000 years ago.

Next came Lake Whittlesey, and it is at this point in time that the southern half of Seneca County was finally dried up and the Defiance Moraine formed. According to Forsyth, "The beaches of Lake Whittlesey are the highest and most prominent of all the glacial lake beaches in northern Ohio." She states this is attributed to the wind strength and patterns in our part of the state, which was able to blow more drifting debris to the edges of the lake. These edges can be found on US 20 in the Bellevue Quadrangle and in Kansas, Ohio, which is part of the Fostoria Quadrangle. Kansas, Ohio forms the eastern boundary of the Fostoria Quadrangle. The beach there, "Belmore Beach, goes in a northeast/southwest direction and lies just south of Kansas, Ohio.

After continued retreat, the glacier formed Lake Warren. It is a Lake Warren beach that constitutes State Route 101. Finally, once

Van Tassel, C.S. "Logging Camp Photograph." Picturesque Northwestern Ohio and Battle Grounds of the Maumee Valley: An Art and Historical Work of the Northwest Section of the Buckeye State. 1901. Wood County District Public Library. Ohio Memory Collection.

the lake had dried up in northwest Ohio, it became one final pre-cursor to Lake Erie, Lake Lundy. Beaches of this lake can be seen about four to five miles southeast of Sandusky, Ohio in the Sandusky Quadrangle.

To the south of the Defiance Moraine is the Carey Quadrangle. The slow retreat of the water levels made the perfect conditions for the formation of "Big Spring Prairie" in Big Spring and Big Lick Townships of Hancock County (Springville Marsh Preserve). It was an area about six miles long and two miles wide and lies just south of the Defiance Moraine. There were sand dunes found in Section 30 of Big Spring Township that continue to the north edge of Carey, Ohio.

For a look at how the Ice Age formed Ohio as a whole, check out the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Geological Survey website. There, you can find the "Glacial Map of Ohio," "Shaded Elevation Map of Ohio," and a quadrangle map.

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Interning in a Religious Archive

Religious archives are a unique sector of the archival field that's not academia or corporate but borrow from both. Religious archives collect materials similarly to academia, we have departments, committees, special task forces, board meetings, reports, and all the other materials that an academic institution generates. But we also operate like a corporation where many of our collections are closed to outside researchers or require special permission to access, we have unique collection areas related to specific processes unique to the institution, highly confidential information only available to the top members of leadership, and areas of the collection that even the archivists are barred from viewing.

Women Religious are at a crossroads, while there are still a few communities accepting new women, most communities are coming to completion. These communities' archives document the often-groundbreaking work Sisters were doing and cannot be lost. From being some of the first women to earn doctoral degrees, the first educators championing new ways of teaching, and serving some of the most marginalized communities in the country. As communities transition, they are moving away from Sister-archivists to hire lay (non-religious) people to do this important and voluminous work. In turn, we are bringing in interns to help us complete work and to entice new archivists to consider joining the field.

As a SIRLS student at the University of Arizona, I was able to do an internship with Special Collections creating an online exhibition. The skills I learned for that project over a decade ago are ones that I still utilize today. The archivists provided me with the framework, reference materials, equipment and training to create my exhibit. I had regular access to the staff who could answer questions, provide guidance, and help resolve any problems I ran into. It was a large reason why I chose to apply for academic institutions with a museum component right out of school. Today, I provide students with those same types of opportunities and experiences through internships here at the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER DOING AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships are an important part of archival training and a way for students to get a sense of what different types of archival repositories are like. It's a way to figure out what sort of work you'd like to do and the types of jobs you want to apply for post-graduation. It's important to remember that internships count as professional experience, so do as many as possible.

Internships are a place to build skills and practical experience in how we apply theory to the real world. What we learn in school is often the ideal scenario, but that doesn't always translate to the real world in the same way. Internships teach us how and why archival professionals choose to deviate from accepted practice or theory.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER AN INTERNSHIP WITH A RELIGIOUS ARCHIVE?

Religious archives offer interns an opportunity to learn about how unique archival repositories work and a way to gain a wide array of skills. My interns have done processing, filing, inventories, digitization, exhibits, and more. We also talk about the unique challenges religious archives face, from an aging user-base to funding and space constraints.

Religious archivists engage with the general public in structured ways similar to corporate archives, through pre-approved channels and often with pre-approved language. But we also get to do a lot of in-reach to our own communities. Doing presentations, workshops, and webinars for our internal constituents; again, very similarly to how corporate archives operate. We collect materials in similar ways to academia where there are archival deposit cycles, regular events to be supported and documented, and regularly generated materials. We have annual events like Jubilees and group meetings not unlike graduation or homecoming in the academic year.

An internship in a religious archive will provide you with a multitude of skills and experiences to draw from throughout your career.

HOW DO I FIND AN INTERNSHIP?

Your school may have a program to help match you with an internship in your area. If there is a repository where you would like to intern, contact the archivist directly and ask about available opportunities. My first interns reached out to me this way. Keep in mind that not every repository can accept interns, so don't be discouraged by a no. Reach out once, and if you don't receive a response, try another repository.

HOW DO INTERNSHIPS WORK?

Internships can be virtual or in person, depending on the repository. They will last for a single semester, but often they can turn into long term volunteering opportunities.

The students' program will coordinate with the internship supervisor to approve the project and complete all the necessary paperwork to ensure that you receive course credit for your work. Once everything is completed, the student and internship supervisor will coordinate on things like scheduling, expectations, project details and more.

If you do an internship with me, you will get some general instruction on how the archive is set up, how we work, who are stakeholders are, and what sort of projects we're working on. We also talk about how to decide what area you want to work in, what sorts of classes you want to take, and other issues that come up for students. We will create a CV and cover letter template and talk about job searching strategies. We also talk about current issues facing archivists, what the future of archiving will look like, and things like archival trauma.

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WHAT COULD I BE DOING IN AN INTERNSHIP?

Interns are often assigned a specific project designed to allow them to complete the entire project over the course of internship period. While I try to find short term projects, interns often contribute work to an ongoing larger project. My goal is to always ensure that an internship project teaches something about the theory and the practice of religious archival work. We learn about the challenges and rewards of working in a religious archive as compared to other types of repositories as well as general archival themes and emerging topics. None of my interns have gone on to work in a religious archive, but they all learned skills that apply to their current positions.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WOMEN RELIGIOUS ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVISTS?

Check out the [Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious \(ACWR\)](#). And just an FYI, the current President, Vice President, and Executive Secretary of ACWR are all Ohioans!

WANT TO DO AN INTERNSHIP AT THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF PEACE?

[Email me](#) to get a link to our online application form.

JEDAI Toolkit

Kris Kallies, JEDAI committee co-chair

DEI work has always been practical work. In archives, libraries, museums, local history organizations, and community collections, we make decisions every day regarding justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion that affect our institutions. They shape how we describe collections, whose stories we help preserve, what barriers researchers encounter, and which communities will see themselves reflected in the historical record.

That work is taking place in a changing political landscape. Across the country, governmental efforts at the federal, state, and local levels have targeted DEI programs and research in public institutions, higher education, local government, and grant-funded work.

For cultural heritage workers, this isn't an abstract issue. Access to reliable DEI resources affects how we serve communities, support ethical description, improve accessibility, and preserve a fuller historical record. Unfortunately, finding those resources online can be harder than it should be and many archivists may not know where to begin.

A useful toolkit might be buried inside of a university intranet. A model policy may be stored as a PDF on an association page. A community archives guide may circulate widely among one network but remain unknown outside it. A government website may have removed a page, leaving the Wayback Machine as the only practical way to find it—providing that hasn't been scrubbed, too.

That's where SOA's JEDAI Committee comes in.

JEDAI, the Society of Ohio Archivists' Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Committee, is developing a toolkit initiative to support archivists and archives-adjacent workers across Ohio, the Midwest, and beyond.

Our goal for the 2026–2027 year is to gather, share, and eventually create practical resources that can help members do this work in their own institutions and communities. We're not looking to reinvent the wheel here. What we want to do is help practitioners find the wheel.

The first phase is intentionally simple: create a clear, accessible, and well-organized list of existing resources that can be shared through SOA's web presence.

We've already started bringing together resources from professional organizations, universities, community archives, preservation groups and allied cultural heritage organizations. Some focus on accessibility. Others address advocacy, oral history, inclusive metadata, reparative description, digital readiness, community archives, or collection care.

That list isn't ready for primetime yet, but once it's ready, JEDAI will work with the Outreach Committee on the best way to make

it available through the SOA website. We'll be hosting it there, as a neutral place, safe from any organization that may want to push back on this effort.

Creating a clear resource list can help members find guidance without having to search across dozens of websites, guess the right keywords, or rely on a link they saved years ago. It can also help us see what guidance already exists, identify the gaps—archives pun intended—and develop new material where SOA can add value. We're also interested in resources that can support students, early-career professionals, volunteers, lone arrangers, and institutions with limited staff or funding.

The committee's longer-term goal is to develop at least one or two new toolkits after the end of phase one. Those toolkits should respond to needs identified through the resource-gathering process or recommendations from the community, instead of assuming in advance what the field needs most.

The goal isn't to build something elaborate for its own sake. Our goal is to build something that's useful, sustainable, and easy to maintain. We're building a simple resource that helps someone take the next step, rather than an ambitious structure that becomes tough to keep updated.

Archivists and librarians have been making an argument for inclusion and equality for decades, so none of this should be new to us.

South African archivist Verne Harris has long argued that archives are shaped by power, absence, description, access and the institutional choices that determine what's preserved, what's neglected, and what can be found.

Hennepin County, Minnesota librarian Sandy Berman spent his career challenging biased and harmful Library of Congress subject headings. His work pushed libraries to confront how the words we use to describe people and communities shape discovery, access, and representation.

Not everyone appreciated Berman's pressure. One line attributed to a humorous essay about Berman called him "a major pain in the ass." The complaint was meant as criticism, but it's probably also the best backhanded compliment a description reformer can get.

That's a useful model for this project.

Truthfully, we aren't looking to make the JEDAI toolkit annoying for the sake of being annoying, but we do want it to be persistent. Our intention for this toolkit is to point people toward resources that make access, description, and community care harder to ignore in a system that is purposely attempting to silence social justice reforms.

When DEI resources disappear, become more difficult to find, or are purposely or politically pushed out of institutional spaces, the

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issue isn't only administrative. It affects how cultural heritage workers learn, how they describe records, how they serve researchers, and how they support communities whose histories have often been under-documented or misrepresented.

A toolkit can't solve every problem created by political pressure, institutional limits, or disappearing resources, but it can preserve access to professional knowledge. Give practitioners a starting point. Point a volunteer toward an oral history guide, a small repository toward an accessibility resource, or an archivist toward examples of inclusive description.

JEDAI also hopes this initiative will become collaborative.

We're inviting all of you to help us identify gaps where existing resources don't meet the needs of Ohio archivists, archives-adjacent workers, or community history practitioners. SOA members and

colleagues across the field can also help by suggesting toolkits, guides, templates, bibliographies, case studies, or practical examples that should be considered.

I'm sure many of you have suggestions as you're reading this, but please, let us get through phase one first. We'll make an announcement when we're ready for feedback.

DEI work is part of how we preserve, describe, share, and make meaning from the historical record. It's present in our finding aids, reading rooms, exhibits, classrooms, metadata, outreach, collecting priorities, and professional relationships.

By gathering resources, identifying gaps, and creating new guidance where needed, we hope to make DEI resources easier to find, easier to use, and, like Sandy Berman's descriptive reforms, a real pain to take away from us all.

Alana Evans, a Master of Library and Information Science student at Grand Canyon University, presented “Humanizing the Archive: Transcription and Access to Historical Manuscripts” at Archives * Records 2026, the joint annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists and the Council of State Archivists, held on July 30 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The presentation examines how transcription can improve access to historical manuscripts by making archival collections more discoverable and usable for researchers, educators, and the public. Alana’s acceptance to present at the national conference reflects her commitment to archival accessibility and professional engagement while providing an opportunity to contribute to conversations on expanding access to historical records.



Learn more about Archives * Records 2026 through the [Society of American Archivists](#).

Dayton Metro Library News

[Dayton Metro Library Special Collections](#) is proud to announce both personnel and collections news. Our new Archival Assistant, **Erica Spilger**, has completed a finding aid for the Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association Collection! This finding aid fulfills the terms of the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board grant whose funds were used to hire Erica late last year.

Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association will also serve as the first non-legacy finding aid to be hosted on our new ArchivesSpace instance! Lastly, DML Special Collections welcomed a new Director in **Gideon McDaniel**, who joined the team after roles at Northern Kentucky University, and the University of Colorado at Boulder.

David J. Lim, MD Papers Open for Research



Dr. David J. Lim in his lab at Ohio State.

The Ohio State University Health Sciences Library Medical Heritage Center is excited to announce the papers of scientist David J. Lim, MD, are available to researchers. The collection contains 254 boxes of media, photographic materials, objects, professional papers and publications documenting over 50 years of Dr. Lim’s work in the field of otolaryngology, the study of the ear, nose and throat. He investigated causes of hearing damage and explored potential therapies for middle ear infections. Materials pertain to Dr. Lim’s work at The Ohio State University from 1966 to 1991 where he led the Otologic Research

Laboratories (ORL), as well as his senior roles at the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders in Bethesda, Maryland, and the House Ear Institute in Los Angeles, California.

Records from Ohio State include Dr. Lim’s pioneering microscopic photography of the inner ear and applications, data and reports related to numerous research projects funded by grants from NASA, the National Institutes of Health, and the United States military. There is documentation of Dr. Lim’s involvement in national and international conferences and organizations, including the Association for Research in Otolaryngology of which he was a founder. By the late 1960s Dr. Lim’s publications became foundational in the otolaryngology field. His papers contain drafts and reprints of many of his articles, book chapters and conference proceedings. To learn more about Dr. Lim or to access this collection, please [email the Medical Heritage Center](#) or call (614) 292-3275.

“I Too Sing America”: Woodland Historic Cemetery & Arboretum and The Charity’s Children Project Announce Higgins Garden Dedication and Historic Marker Installation Honoring Suffragist Jewelia Galloway Higgins

Press Release, Dayton, Ohio: At a moment when communities across the nation are reclaiming overlooked stories and reexamining whose histories are publicly remembered, [Woodland Historic Cemetery & Arboretum](#) and [The Charity’s Children Project](#) gathered descendants, historians, preservationists, and community members on June 27, for the Higgins Garden Dedication and installation of the Jewelia Galloway Higgins National Votes for Women Trail Historic Marker funded by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation.

More than a historic marker dedication, the event represents

a living continuation of a Black American legacy rooted in faith, activism, suffrage, education, resilience, and community leadership spanning more than two centuries in the Miami Valley.

Born in Dayton in 1873, Jewelia Ann Galloway Higgins inherited a history deeply woven into the earliest chapters of Black Dayton. A descendant of Charity Davis Caesar Broady—among Dayton’s first Black settlers—Higgins carried forward a multigenerational tradition of activism and public service that began in the era of enslavement and continued through the Underground Railroad,

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women's suffrage movement, World War I, and the struggle for civil rights.

A suffragist, humanitarian, and organizer, Higgins became the first African American Red Cross nurse in the Dayton area and worked tirelessly to advance voting rights during a period marked by racial segregation and discrimination. Through her leadership in organizations including the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and the Women's Christian Association ("Colored YWCA"), she expanded opportunities for Black women and families throughout Dayton.

Alongside her husband, Rev. Charles D. Higgins—a boyhood friend and later executor of the estate of poet Paul Laurence Dunbar—she helped build institutions grounded in faith, education, and social justice that strengthened Dayton's Black community for generations.

Now, nearly seventy years after her death, her descendants and community partners are ensuring that her story—and the larger story it represents—will no longer remain hidden in family archives and fading photographs.

"This is not simply about unveiling a marker," said Patricia Smith Griffin, founder of The Charity's Children Project and executive producer of the [award winning podcast, *The Legacy of Charity's Children*](#). "This is about restoring memory, honoring sacrifice, and reminding future generations that these stories belong not only to Black history, but to American history. In many ways, this event is our declaration: 'I Too Sing America.'"

The June 27th gathering transformed Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum into a living space of remembrance, storytelling, and celebration. Guests experienced a pictorial exhibit, guided Black history cemetery tour, historic marker unveiling, fellowship gathering, and reflections on the continuing importance of preserving community memory. The event also celebrated the creation of the Higgins Garden within Woodland Historic Cemetery & Arboretum—a permanent space honoring the Higgins family legacy and the generations connected to Dayton's African American history. Event donations directly support the ongoing growth and care of the Higgins Garden within Woodland Historic Cemetery & Arboretum. A special thank you to the 2026 Keep Montgomery County Beautiful Beautification Grant Program for their support of the Higgins Garden.

STATEMENT FROM THE WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION

"At the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, we're proud to help communities across the country celebrate local history through our historical marker grant programs," said Steve Bodnar, Associate Director for Strategic Marketing at the William G. Pomeroy

Foundation. "Every Pomeroy Marker tells a story, honors a legacy, and strengthens the fabric of a community. Jewelia Ann Galloway Higgins was a trailblazing suffrage leader, humanitarian, and community advocate whose work advanced voting and civil rights in Dayton and beyond. Her legacy lives on through this National Votes for Women Trail marker, which serves as an important reminder that history is all around us and that markers like this help keep these stories alive for future generations."

ABOUT THE POMEROY FOUNDATION

Established by entrepreneur and philanthropist Bill Pomeroy in 2005 to bring together his two greatest passions, the [William G. Pomeroy Foundation®](#) is a private, philanthropic organization located in Syracuse, N.Y. As the nation's leading funder of historical roadside markers, the Foundation has awarded more than 3,000 grants for markers in 49 states and Washington, D.C.

"Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum is pleased to support the dedication of Higgins Garden and the installation of a historic marker honoring Jewelia Galloway Higgins. This project reflects Woodland's mission to preserve and share the stories of those entrusted to our care, while helping bring greater recognition to Mrs. Higgins' important legacy as a Dayton suffragist, humanitarian, civic leader, and advocate for justice and community progress." – Statement from Sean J. O'Regan, President and CEO, Woodland Historic Cemetery & Arboretum

ABOUT THE CHARITY'S CHILDREN PROJECT

The Charity's Children Project is a public history and cultural preservation initiative dedicated to

preserving, interpreting, and sharing multigenerational African American history through

archival preservation, storytelling, exhibits, and community programming.

The June 27th dedication is part of a broader series of public history initiatives connected to *The Legacy of Charity's Children*, the award-winning podcast exploring hidden and overlooked stories rooted in Dayton's Black history and beyond.

The Charity's Children Project, a pending 501(c)(3), maintains a charitable checking account through The Dayton Foundation and currently operates in grateful fiscal partnership with Young, Black & Giving Back Institute under the leadership of Executive Director Ebonie Johnson Cooper.

Woodland Historic Cemetery & Arboretum is located at 118 Woodland Avenue, Dayton, OH 45409. For more information, [e-mail](#) or call (937) 228-3221.

SOA Mission

Founded in 1968, the Society of Ohio Archivists' mission is to improve the state of archives in Ohio by promoting the archival profession and providing professional development and networking opportunities for Ohio's professional and aspiring archivists.

Editor's Note

Greetings, Ohio!

I hope you enjoyed this issue of *Ohio Archivist*. As always, feel free to contact me with suggestions, criticisms, or interest in being included in an issue.

We are also always looking for regular contributors. If you or someone you know may be interested in being an assistant editor or trying your turn as Editor-in-Chief, [please contact me](#).

Thank you to everyone who helps make the Ohio Archivist possible. For the most up-to-date information on SOA, including ways to get involved, please visit the [website](#) and join us on the [listserv](#). Thank you for your readership!

Wishing everyone a peaceful season,

Jessica

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