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Ask an Archivist

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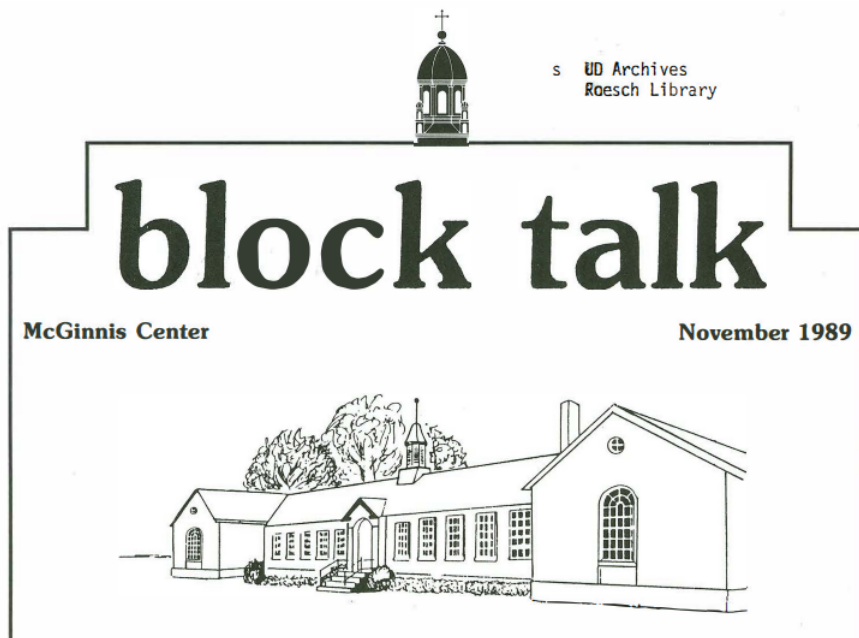
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WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2021

Ask an Archivist

By Amy Rohmiller, Stephanie Shreffler, Kayla Harris, and Katy Kelly

In October we celebrate [American Archives Month](#), and #AskAnArchivist day was Oct. 13. Here's a compiled list of questions answered by the University of Dayton archivists representing University Archives and Special Collections, the Marian Library and the U.S. Catholic Special Collection.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE STRANGEST OR MOST UNEXPECTED ITEMS IN THE ARCHIVES?

Amy Rohmiller, associate University archivist: The collection that surprised me the most when I started in University Archives was the [Miriam Jacobs Baseball Collection](#). Miriam Jacobs was an avid collector of all things baseball, and we have cards she collected from the earliest years of professional baseball — the 1890s. Another unexpected find was the scheduling/advance checklist for when U.S. Rep. Newt Gingrich spoke at UD during his time as Speaker of the House. His team made sure to cover every minute detail, down to allowed types of transportation. It's a good look at what goes into ensuring a politician's visit avoids even the appearance of any conflicts of interest.

Kayla Harris, associate professor and librarian/archivist for the Marian Library: The strangest items within the archives would probably have to be some of the items in the [Marian Apparitions collection](#), including a vial of glitter used at a site of an alleged apparition and rose petals that were alleged to have been miraculously imprinted with an image of the Virgin Mary. Another favorite of mine is an album of wine and beer labels featuring the Virgin Mary. I can only hope that drinking the beverages to get these labels was part of the job duties for my predecessors.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE JFK CONSPIRACY THEORY COLLECTION?

Rohmiller: Roy Schaeffer has spent decades collecting materials related to the assassination of John F. Kennedy,

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and he has generously donated a [collection](#) of his research and writings to the archive.

WHAT FAMOUS PEOPLE APPEAR IN OUR COLLECTION?

Rohmiller: You can see what famous alumni like U.S. Rep. Mike Turner, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, NFL coaches Chuck Noll and Brandon Staley, NBA star Obi Toppin and internationally known humorist Erma Bombeck were doing when they were in college in our [yearbooks](#) and the [Flyer News](#). Alumna Bette Rogge Morse hosted a local television talk show where she regularly interviewed celebrities. You can see clips of interviews with Jessica Walter, Mary Tyler Moore, Mike Farrell, and others in [her collection on eCommons](#).

Harris: It can be argued that “famous” is in the eye of the beholder, and within the Marian Library, there are several notable or “famous” people within Catholicism, such as feminist Sally Cunneen; Father René Laurentin, an expert in Marian apparitions; and social justice pioneer Catherine Doherty, who is being considered for sainthood.

WHAT IS THE OLDEST THING ACROSS ALL OF THE ARCHIVES?

Stephanie Shreffler, associate professor and collections librarian/archivist for the U.S. Catholic Special Collection: Depending on whether you believe in their veracity, the U.S. Catholic Special Collection has relics of several disciples of Jesus, including Mary Magdalene, St. John and St. Jude Thaddeus. So the relics are about 2,000 years old (although the reliquaries they’re stored in are newer).

Harris: Similar to the U.S. Catholic Special Collection, a purported relic of Mary’s veil would likely be the oldest item in the archives.

WHAT IS THE SMALLEST THING ACROSS ALL OF THE ARCHIVES?

Technology has made documents, images, music, art and languages more accessible for the study of Native American culture and history.

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Shreffler: It's boring if my answer is the same, but some of the relics are just tiny fragments of bone, so they're extremely small!

Harris: In addition to relics, some other very small items include [tiny aluminum ex-votos](#) (offerings left at a shrine as a thank you for a miracle), medals and stamps. Selected Marian stamps from countries around the world are [available in eCommons](#).

HOW CAN I LOOK UP MY YEARBOOK AND SHOW MY KIDS HOW COOL I WAS?

Rohmiller: Yearbooks through 2015 are [available online](#) in our institutional repository, eCommons.

WHAT'S A COOL CLASS ASSIGNMENT THAT THE ARCHIVES HAVE SUPPORTED?

Rohmiller: University Archives works with an English 200 class that researches the student neighborhood and student life. They dig into really interesting sources like [Block Talk](#), a newsletter the University published for students living off campus before UD owned most of the houses in the student neighborhood. In *Block Talk*, we can see what it was like when permanent residents and students were all living together. While some things have changed, a lot of things are still the same.

Harris: This semester a teacher education class (EDT 324, Education and World Religions) visited the Marian Library and the *Journeys of Faith* exhibit. They selected items from the exhibit for an assignment where they each presented on how they could incorporate that item into their teaching while contrasting an academic vs. a devotional approach.

WHAT ARE SOME INDEPENDENT NEWSLETTERS THAT I CAN READ THAT TALK ABOUT CAMPUS LIFE?

Rohmiller: *The Black Perspective* is an African American student publication that ran from the late 1970s through the early 2000s. The paper aimed to be the eyes, ears and voice of the UD Afro-American community. Articles and editorials covered campus news, current events and contemporary issues from an African American perspective. Other underground newsletters covered student perspectives and Vietnam War protests.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT VISITING THE ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS?

Rohmiller: University Archives is on the second floor of Albert Emanuel Hall and is open by appointment Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can make an appointment by emailing archives@udayton.edu.

Harris: The Marian Library is on the seventh floor of Roesch Library and is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Anyone is welcome to drop in and use our reading room to study or check out the exhibits (students can receive a PATH point for visiting the exhibit *Journeys of Faith: Shrines, Souvenirs and Catholic Tourism* through Oct. 29). To see items from the archives, however, it's preferable to make an appointment in advance, and that can be done through Book a Librarian or by emailing marianlibrary@udayton.edu.

HOW CAN I CONTACT YOU?

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- **Kayla Harris**, librarian/archivist for the Marian Library:
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— *Katy Kelly is associate professor and coordinator of marketing and engagement in the University Libraries.*

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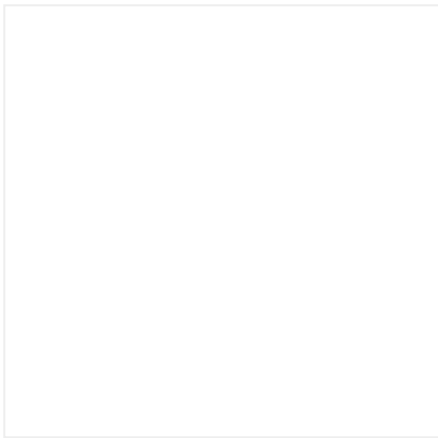
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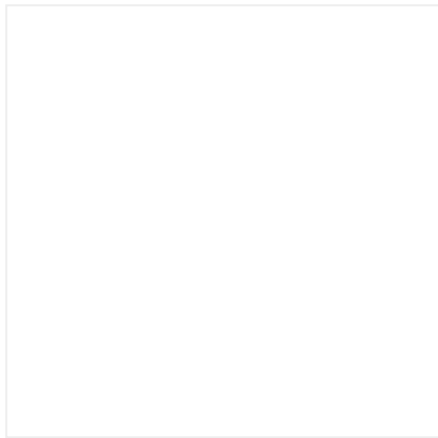
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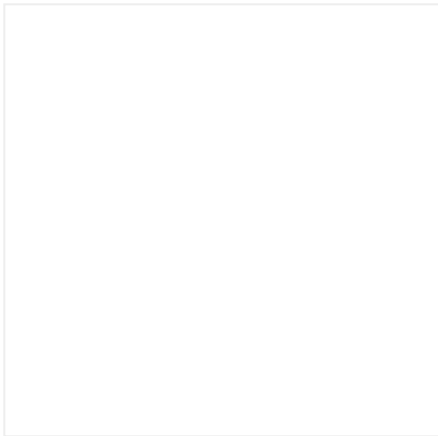
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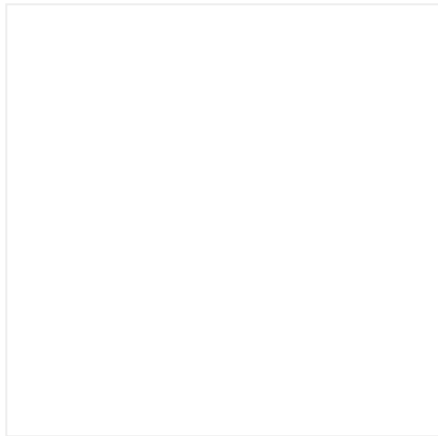
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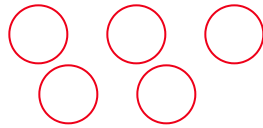
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