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Hidden History

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Wednesday December 14, 2022

Hidden History

By Camila Sánchez-González

My experience working in the University Archives has been very different from my first rotation of my OhioLINK Luminaries internship. I remember the first time I visited the archives, tucked away from plain sight located upstairs from the Office of Admission. The office feels like being transported into an Indiana Jones movie where Dr. Jones is in his study room laying out all his archaeological artifacts. In archives, you never know what you are going to find. I learned that much of the passion and curiosity for the field was for the wanting to find a hidden story — something someone might have missed, an untold story.

That being said, archives is a research-heavy field. It requires a lot of time and reading just to find the source or track you are looking for. When starting my rotation, I had a lot of project ideas in mind for where I wanted to start. However, as I dove into my research, I had to

change my strategies for how that project could be executed. Working with archives involves a lot of trial and error, which served as a good learning experience to be adaptable to new and repetitive information.

Relating to the past

My favorite piece I have done during my Archives rotation was [my first blog](#), written about Latinx students. I was able to relate to the past undergraduate experiences but also learn more about their culture and their unique identities. It made me proud to learn about how the University is taking actions to continue to highlight these individuals today, making me want to embrace my own identity on campus.

An obituary's timeless message

A unique story during the end of my rotation was that of Juana Diaz Honingford '58. An article in a November 1953 issue of the *Journal Herald*, a now-defunct daily morning newspaper in Dayton, detailed how she and seven other Puerto Rican nurses came to Dayton to help alleviate a nursing staff shortage within the Veterans Administration (now Veterans Affairs) hospitals back in the mid 1950s.

Honingford passed away on Nov. 3, 2022. Known as Jenny, she spoke little English when she arrived in the fall of 1953, but within five years, she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Dayton and married fellow Flyer Tom Honingford '58. The two were described in her obituary as a happy couple who had a beautiful marriage with a beautiful family. In addition to this, they both had generous hearts, giving and helping others within the community, like creating the Puerto Rican Cultural Society in Dayton.

From the information I was able to gather on Honingford, it was clear that she followed a lot of the same values I was taught growing up, which just shows me how our cultural traditions continue no matter the decades.

"She instilled a sense of humility and compassion in her children, saying we are defined by how we treat others; a legacy that continues through her children and grandchildren," her obituary said. I related a lot to this statement as my own mother always taught my brother and me to treat others the way we want to be treated, for we can't control how others treat us, but we can control how we choose to treat others.

Reading this obituary at the end of my rotation made me reflect on both the simplicity and the complexity of life. Each story in the archives is difficult to find unless one has prior knowledge of what it is or who one is looking for. Therefore, it is important to dedicate time to those who were part of our history, identity and community to really be cognizant of the change they were able to make, big or small. I believe nowadays we focus ourselves so much on getting things done, on finding the answers to our questions, on getting the full experience. But what

about the discoveries you didn't expect to find in that experience, research or dialogue? Does that not form part of your story — part of the archives? I encourage you to take the time to reflect and see what questions come up from your own curiosities and experiences.

If you ever need help finding anything just know that ***Est Circa Hit Quodom Loco*** (it's around here someplace).

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