

## **MS-28: Leonard Hill Local History Collection**

**Collection Number:** MS-28

**Title:** Leonard Hill Local History Collection

**Dates:** 1836-1971 (bulk 1950-1970)

**Creator:** Hill, Leonard U. (Leonard Uzal), 1885-1984

### **Summary/Abstract:**

The local history collection of Leonard Hill includes a variety of 19<sup>th</sup> century events and topics related to Piqua area history. Included are an early 19th century farmer's diary by John B. Miller, a Miami and Erie Canal log book by foreman James R. Spencer, and an 1862 Union soldier's diary recounting two months following the battle at Richmond, Kentucky in which he had been captured, paroled and returned to Union custody, north of Columbus, Ohio. In addition, various clippings and magazine articles pertaining to local history and genealogy are included.

**Quantity/Physical Description:** 0.5 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)

**Language(s):** English

### **Repository:**

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092, [library-archives@wright.edu](mailto:library-archives@wright.edu)

### **Restrictions on Access:**

There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

### **Restrictions on Use:**

Copyright restrictions may apply. Unpublished manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

### **Preferred Citation:**

[Description of item, Date, Box #, Folder #], MS-28, Leonard Hill Local History Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

### **Acquisition:**

The collection was donated to Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries, by Leonard Hill, in November 1975.

### **Other Finding Aid:**

The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at <https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms28.pdf>. It is also available in the OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository at <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/>.

**Related Material:**

Hill, Leonard U. (Leonard Uzal), John Johnston and the Indians in the Land of the Three Miamis. With recollections of sixty years, by John Johnston. Piqua, Ohio, 1957. [F495.J6 H5](#)

Hill, Leonard U. (Leonard Uzal), A Reproduction Of A Scrapbook From Newspaper Articles On Local And Regional History, 1948-1970. Piqua, Ohio, Printed by Hammar Graphics, 1970. [F499.P6 H5](#)

Hill, Leonard U. (Leonard Uzal), A Sesquicentennial History Of The Westminster United Presbyterian Church Of Piqua, Ohio : 1812-1962 / by Leonard U. Hill And Associates. Piqua, Ohio : Magee Bros., 1962. [BX9211.O35356 W406 1962](#).

Miami Co., Ohio. Sesquicentennial Committee *A History of Miami County, Ohio (1807-1953)* ... written by a group of more than forty people under the supervision of Leonard U. Hill, chairman of the County Sesquicentennial Historical Committee). 1953. [F497.M6 M5 1953](#)

**Revisions:**

Finding aid reformatted, and subject terms added by Amanda Marquart, February 2015.  
Finding aid revised by Lisa Rickey, April 2020 and July 2021.

**Processed by:**

Patricia R. Shama, June 1981.

**Arrangement:**

The collection is arranged into 3 series:

Series I: Subjects, 1836-1971

Series II: Local History, 1954-1971

Series III: Historical Society Notes, 1966

**Biographical/Historical Note:**

Leonard Uzal Hill was born in January of 1885 in Spring Creek Township, Miami County, Ohio, the son of Willis and Alice Hill. He farmed until age 62, when he devoted more of his time to his fascination with local history. His first major research project culminated in a book about the War of 1812 hero, Colonel John Johnston, who is the grandfather of John H. Patterson, founder of the National Cash Register Company. He has since published a history of Miami County and the Piqua Presbyterian Church. In 1970, he compiled and published a reproductive scrapbook of his many studies and newspaper articles originally printed between 1948 and 1970, concerning Miami County history. This volume is entitled Local and Regional History. Leonard U. Hill died December 10, 1984, in Piqua, Ohio, at age 99. He is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery in Piqua.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The Leonard Hill Local History Collection consists of a variety of primary and secondary sources related to several topics in Piqua area history. The documents include feature articles, newsletters, brochures, two diaries, and a log book.

Of primary interest are the original diaries and log book. The farmer's diary of John B. Miller provides a wealth of information about a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century farm community, although the script is difficult to decipher at times. Mr. Miller faithfully recorded four types of information for each year, 1836-1843: (1) an accounting of winter meat purchased for the coming year; (2) a list of deaths, burials, marriages, etc., throughout the year; (3) the amount of grains raised and sold; and (4) single-line entries of daily events, describing weather, work, family health, purchases, and visits. As indicated, the diary does not elaborate on or evaluate his activities, but the volume of data for this concentrated period of time allows much room for expansion by the researcher. The precision of the diary's method, for example, each yearly account begins with winter meat and ends with the last day of the period, and most monthly accounts are confined to one page, which enables the reader to easily place events in a useful context and adequately compensate for the small gaps. Four months are missing, those of January 1836, January-February 1841, and December 1843.

The 1862 Union soldier's diary recounts two months following the battle at Richmond, Kentucky in which he had been captured, paroled and returned to Union custody, north of Columbus, Ohio. He struggled to overcome the paroled soldier stigma, which appeared to inhibit his reacceptance into active service. This document is very readable and also provides insights into regional army administration and 25-year old Major General Lew Wallace. Secondary materials in Folder 5 provide interpretative accounts of this and related Civil War campaigns in the Ohio area, which can readily assist the reader in placing this soldier's story into a broad context.

The Miami and Erie Canal Log Book was mandated by the State of Ohio, Office Board of Public Works, which required each boat captain to record labor, location, distance dredged each day, and time lost for repairs or delay. This document records the work of James R. Spencer, "Foreman", between July 1, 1879 and September, 1904, in the form of one-line entries on destinations, materials hauled, and construction and repair of the canal locks. Entries are made consistently throughout the period, despite a notable gap between July, 1882 and November, 1886, and several minor lapses not exceeding four months. As an adjunct to the log book, is a photograph of State boat, Frank J. McCollock of Bellefontaine, 1891-1894, with unidentified employees aboard. Also see feature article on the canal days in Folder 8, referenced in the Container Listing.

The collection includes some local tracts on personalities, events, and landmarks of Allen, Clark, Montgomery, and Miami Counties. The Container Listing notes topics of significance to facilitate their use. For instance, a small collection of articles, pamphlets, and poetry reports on the locations and characteristics of remaining Ohio covered bridges.

## **Subject Terms**

### **Persons/Families**

Spencer, James R.

Miller, John B. – Diaries –19<sup>th</sup> century

**Places**

Miami County (Ohio) – History  
 Piqua (Miami County, Ohio) – History  
 Miami and Erie Canal (Ohio) – Logbooks  
 United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Diaries

**Material Types:**

Diaries  
 Newsletters  
 Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)  
 Logbooks

**Occupations****Collection Inventory**

<b>Box</b>	<b>File</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Series I: Subjects</b>			<b>1836-1970</b>
1	1	Farming – Diary of John B. Miller	1836-1843
1	2	Canals – Log Book and Photograph of State Canal boat	1879-1904
1	3	Civil War – Misc.: Soldier’s Diary, Calendar of Commemorative Dates, letters, stories, etc.	1861-1965
1	4	Covered Bridges – news clippings, guides, brochures, and poem by C.A. Hunt (1941)	1941-1970
1	5	Genealogy – Correspondence w/ Catherine Farmer	1961
<b>Series II: Local History</b>			<b>1954-1971</b>
1	6	Allen County – Newsletters	1954-1961
1	7	Clark County – Historical Society Brochure	1971
1	8	Miami County – Piqua area history and “John Simmons, a Life Sketch,” a Troy citizen	1958, undated
1	9	Montgomery County – News clippings, Brochures, and Landmark Committee Report	1956-1969
<b>Series III: Historical Society Notes</b>			<b>1966</b>
1	10	Historical Society Notes	1966