

**Archive  
Lakeshore Museum Center  
Pearl Crippen Stead Collection Finding Aid**

**Collection:** Pearl Crippen Stead Collection

**Object ID Number:** 2003.001.003

**Location:** LCM Archive, room 204, Back Room

**Dates:** 1884-1971

**Quantity:** Two Archival Boxes

**Restrictions:** No Restrictions

**Abstract:** This collection contains personal documents, materials from organizations, and photographs of Pearl Crippen Stead and the Stead family. Pearl Crippen Stead was a resident of Muskegon Heights and lived from 1889 through the early 1970s. She was well known in the Muskegon County community. This small collection contains materials that provide information about Pearl's life and the organizations in which she was involved, such as the Muskegon chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Muskegon Heights Women's Club and the Muskegon Heights Junior Women's Club. The collection also contains personal photographs from the early twentieth century, legal and financial papers, and two autograph books from the late nineteenth century. These materials provide researchers with a better understanding of Pearl's personal life.

**Historical Information:** Pearl Emma Crippen was born in November 1889. Her parents were Martin and Edith Crippen. Martin was a barber, and Edith took care of boarders who stayed in their home. Pearl went to school in a small school in Milford, Michigan, and she graduated from high school in Albion in 1909. Pearl married Thomas Stead, Jr., in Albion, Michigan on November 30, 1912. He was the son of Thomas and Mary Stead and he had three sisters, Agnes, Anna, and Eva Stead. Thomas was a metallurgist at Standard Malleable Iron Company for 25 years and he worked at C.W.C. Foundry for 22 years. Thomas was a life member of the BPO Elks and Lovell Moore Lodge No. 182, and a member of the Saladin Temple Shrine. He retired in 1956 and passed away on December 13, 1970. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery.

Pearl and Thomas Stead lived in Muskegon Heights. She was an active member and served as president of the Muskegon Heights Woman's Club from 1930 to 1931, she served as the secretary for the State Executive Board of the Daughter's of the American Revolution (DAR) in the 1940s, and she served as regent of the Muskegon Chapter of the DAR from 1936 to 1937. Pearl was a descendent of Amons Knapp and published a book on her genealogy. Pearl Stead died in Muskegon on April 1, 1974.

**Scope and Contents:** The Pearl Stead collection contains programs, magazines, and roster lists from the Muskegon chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Muskegon Heights

Women's Club, and the Muskegon Heights Junior Women's Club. It also includes correspondence between Stead and her bank, a tax return, list of expenses and insurance information, correspondence with an attorney regarding projected financial needs, miscellaneous publications she collected, and her personal photographs, which all date to the early twentieth century.

The collection is organized into the following seven series: Daughters of the American Revolution, Muskegon Heights Women's Club, Muskegon Heights Junior Women's Club, Legal and Financial, Autograph Books, Photographs, and Publications.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) series contains a copy of DAR magazine from February 1927, annual programs of activities and rosters for the Muskegon chapter for the years 1936-37, 1940-41, 1941-42, and 1942-43, state conference programs for the years 1938, 1939, and 1940, a note card with information about Benjamin Crippen, and a letter from Pearl's cousin Kay Warner about a vacation and genealogy.

The Muskegon Heights Women's Club series contains annual programs from the years 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40, 1940-41, and 1959-60, each of which contain a list of the current board of directors, standing committees, full club roster, a calendar of activities for the year, and the constitution and bylaws of the club.

The Muskegon Heights Junior Women's Club series contains annual programs from the years 1937-38, 1938-39 and 1939-40, each of which contain a list of the current board of directors, standing committees, full club roster, a calendar of activities for the year, and the constitution and bylaws of the club.

The Legal and Financial series contains letters to and from Pearl Stead and her banker at the Hackley Union Nation Bank and Trust, Raymond G. Hanslits, which concern her insurance payments, medical bills, and other financial concerns. It also contains letters from her attorney regarding projected financial needs and insurance concerns, a 1970 tax return, a confirmation note asking clarification of whether or not Thomas Stead Jr. and Thomas W. Stead are the same person, a booklet and a notice of benefits from the Social Security office, ledger pages on items given to various people that appears to be items Pearl gave away before her death, and medical information with billing information attached. The approximate date for this series of documents is 1968-1971.

The Autograph Books series contains two autograph books from the late nineteenth century, for friends to sign as a memory keepsake. One is covered in maroon velvet, in the archival envelope, and has a few signatures dated from December 25, 1884 through June 7, 1886. Most of the pages are blank and the name written on the first page is John A. McLaughlin. It is not clear if he owned the autograph book or simply signed it. The autograph book was created before Pearl was born and might have belonged to a friend or family member. The other book is bound with leather and wrapped in tissue paper, and has many more signatures, often accompanied by notes, dated from August 11, 1906 through September 5, 1908. It belonged to Pearl Crippen Stead and has the signatures of her friends, as well as Thomas Stead and her mother Edith Crippen and also

contains a photograph of her mother on the same page. There are also portraits of other friends and keepsakes inserted into some of the pages.

The Photographs series contains 54 loose photographs, spread over 29 different archival envelopes numbered 2-30, and an album of approximately 430 photographs, of family and friends of Pearl Stead. Most of these photographs were taken in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The envelopes mostly contain studio portraits, but there are amateur photographs that are unlabeled save for the name of the persons in the photograph. Of these envelopes, the latest photos were taken in 1947. This collection includes photographs of the following people: Pearl Crippen Stead, Thomas Stead Jr., Nellie Stead, men working in the Standard Malleable Iron Company, Willard Cunan Jensen, Myrtle Woodruff, Oscar A. Nelson, Frank Brading, Wally Brading, Haskil Brading, Eugene Nordlund, Kay Ann, students who attended Milford Kindergarten, Ellen Eklund Erickson, Hilda Sundel, Jennie Nordlund, Libbie Becker, Alice Pierce, Faye Meeker, Clara Rattray, William Anderson and his family who lived on Southern Avenue, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Becker, women from the Albion Needlecraft Club, and Bob Worden. There are also numerous photographs of unidentified men, women, and children.

The photo album contains approx. 404 photographs over 93 pages label dates ranging from 1911 through 1936. Many are unlabeled photos of family and friends, but some of the labeled Michigan locations include Muskegon, White Lake, the Kalamazoo River, Brown City, Albion, Milford, Spring Lake, Mona Lake, Manistee, Mackinaw, Glen Lake, as well as Mammoth Cave, KY, Niagara Falls, and New London, Canada. There are also photographs of events such as a parade of the Red Arrow Division following WWI, the shipwrecks of the *Crosby* and the *City of Muskegon*, and the aftermath of a fire at the Curtis Tire Plant in Muskegon. The back cover of the album has a sleeve where several loose photographs and notes are stored.

The Publications series contains an assortment of miscellaneous materials including an envelope (labeled #1) containing a late nineteenth century almanac of useful information, two songbooks published in Michigan, a two page illustrated nursery rhyme, a photographic history of the first World War published by the Magazine Circulation Company in 1918, a copy of *The National Genealogist* from April 1940, a booklet titled "4 Fine Etchings by Four Great Artists," and a White Breakfast Program dated April 6, 1939 from Central Methodist Church.

**Arrangement:** The collection had no original order and is divided into logical series that best anticipates researcher needs. Series 1-6 fit in a single box, divided by labeled folders, labeled Box 1. Series 7, due to oversized contents, is in a separate box, labeled Box 2. The photograph album and an oversized photograph are in Box 2.

## Contents

2003.001.003 Archival Materials

### Series 1: Daughters of the American Revolution

Dates: 1927-1940

Located in Box 1

**Series 2: Muskegon Heights Women's Club**

Dates: 1909 to 1996

Located in Box 1

**Series 3: Muskegon Heights Junior Women's Club**

Dates: 1937-1940

Located in Box 1

**Series 4: Correspondence**

Dates: 1968-1971

Located in Box 1

**Series 5: Autograph Books**

Dates: 1886-1908

Located in Box 1

**Series 6: Photographs**

Numbered 2003.001.003.01 to 2003.001.003.062

Dates: 1890s-1940s

Located in Box 1, Photograph Album in Box 2

**Series 7: Publications**

Located in Box 2