



Mother of the GLOVE: Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin (1903-1988)

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Introduction

Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin (1903-1988) was a pioneer within the field of anthropology, folklore, as well as ethnohistory and her successes and progressions in the field paved a pathway for future women. She received a master's degree in anthropology in 1930 from the University of California despite being a single mother and living in an era when women were expected to be domestic (Tanner, 1991). In 1939, Erminie became the first woman to earn her doctorate in the field of anthropology from Yale University.



Figure 1: E.W. Voegelin. (Gail Voegelin, 1978).

Accomplishments

- ❑ Erminie predominantly studied Great Lakes Native American tribes but had a particular interest in the Shawnee as seen through her fieldwork which resulted in ventures such as her article "Shawnee Mortuary Customs," and her acceptance as an editor for *Shawnee Traditions* written by Charles C. Trowbridge.
- ❑ Throughout her career she published more than thirty pieces including articles and reviews.
- ❑ She became a permanent member of Indiana University Bloomington in 1941 and was a lecturer at IU several different courses including the Army Specialized Training Program, history, and anthropology, as well as the first proper ethnohistory course in the U.S.
- ❑ She was president of the American Folklore Society (1948) and secretary for the American Anthropological Association from 1949-1951.
- ❑ She was awarded the Chicago Folklore Society Prize in 1950 and she became a fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Society.
- ❑ In 1954 she founded the American Society for Ethnohistory.
- ❑ Erminie's arguably largest success and contribution is the GLOVE (Great Lakes-Ohio Valley Ethnohistory) project. In 1956 she led a staff to organize all of the research she had completed during her career chronologically and by tribe. The research spread across 809 standard notebooks and included information on sixteen tribes from over ten states and some Canadian provinces. Her research has been used to backup Native Americans during court cases over treaty claims between the tribes and the government.
- ❑ Due to her thorough research, in 1981 a book award was named for her: Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Book Award, which is awarded to book-length ethnohistory contributions (Library Thing).

Conclusion

Even after passing away of a heart-attack in 1988, her accomplishments continued to spawn. In 2014, Indiana University's Glenn Black Laboratory of Archaeology named their archive the Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archive in her honor (IU Bloomington Newsroom). Naturally, the prize and main attraction of the archive is the GLOVE collection which is now going through the process of digitization. Once digitized her vast examination of Native tribes may be explored by all and her importance to the field may only grow.



Figure 3: E.W.V. (1934).

References

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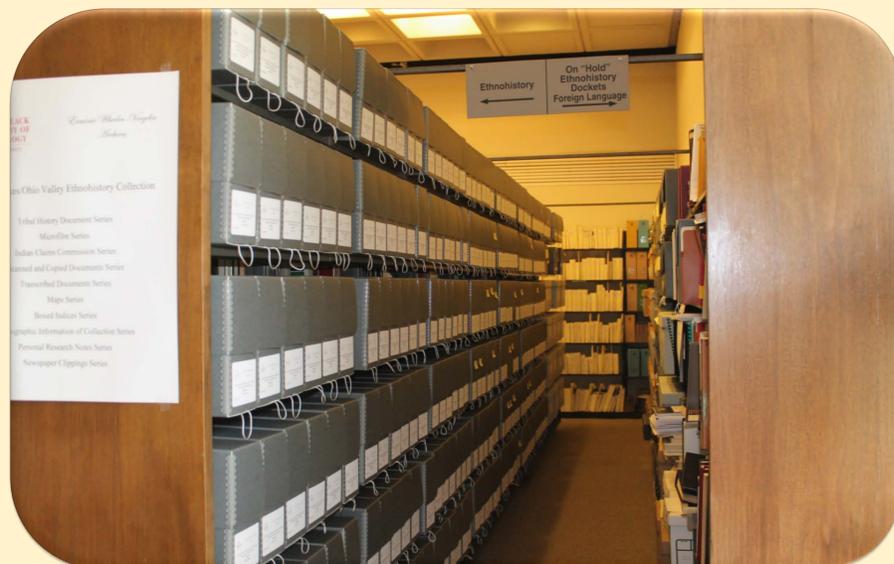


Figure 2: The Great Lakes and Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection in the James H. Kellar Library of the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology includes records from as early as 1613. (2014).