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Only a few weeks ago there was an immense fever on social media about a new Off-Broadway musical coming to New York City this September. The reason for this excitement was that this new musical is based off the hit TV show, *The Office*. When most think of theater and Broadway, our minds revert to popular musicals such as *Hamilton*, *The Lion King*, or *Wicked*. While these are some of the most popular theater musicals in the U.S., they do not define the theater genre. So if asked again what we think of theater when musicals are excluded the most prominent answers usually include Shakespeare or *A Christmas Carol*. Our exposure to theater is very limited and often prohibits us from experiencing new genres. Miami University's Native American Women Playwrights Archive is looking to help change that.

Established in 1996, the archive is home to large collection of works by Native American Women. These include scripts, play recordings, personal notes, advertisements, and many other materials relating to the works of these playwrights. When first experiencing the archive, many will be astonished by the amount of material that relates to Miami University without even knowing the genre existed. One of the most famous groups to be a part of the archive is the Spiderwoman Theater out of Brooklyn, New York. The Spiderwoman Theater were a group of Native and non-Native women in the late 1970's who put on plays and performances that promoted Native American culture. While this group of playwrights and actors might seem mundane to the Miami University student, studying and watching these performances is anything but. The compelling, avant-garde style of the Spiderwoman Theater subjects a viewer to a genre and culture that they may have experienced, but likely only through a western media lens. Their performances offer a guide to Native culture but are not exclusive in that they also draw in the viewer emotionally and personally. Only a short browsing is needed in order to want to dig around more. This is what led me to another playwright by the name of Shirley Cheechoo. A

modern playwright from Canada, I found a 1994 manuscript titled *Your Dream was Mine*. While I do not know if the play was ever put into production, it's a story of two Native American women driving to a wedding and the personal conflicts they share to help expose some of the hardships Native Americans face today living on reservations.

The Native American Women Playwrights Archive is a treasure that Miami University is lucky to have. While today's media is primarily digital, the experience of exploring a hard copy archive is one that can not be passed up. Exploring the NAWPA also brings alive a genre that has been wrongfully ignored. It is certain to inspire curiosity in anyone who encounters it.