



Ottawa County Historical Society



www.ottawacountyhistory.org

First Quarter 2020

2020

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Corresponding Secretary, Oral History Chairman, Newsletter Editor

Martha Dykes ~ 419-732-1843

From the President's Desk.....

Kay Dulaney seemed a bit surprised. On Friday afternoon, February 21, a number of her neighbors at Edgewood Manor on Fulton Street in Port Clinton gathered around her in the common room to celebrate her 83rd birthday. Nothing unusual about that.

But then, the Ottawa County Historical Society presented Kay with a birthday gift, her own copy of its recent publication, *History of Ottawa County, the First 175 Years*. And her face lit up when she realized that the festivities would include a presentation by the Society on the history of the Wolcott Keeper's House on Bayshore Road in Danbury.

"That was once my home," she said, just above a whisper.

And indeed it was. Kay's daughter, Deb Jeneary, had alerted the Society to the fact that her mother had lived in the house as a little girl when her name was Kay Sedlak. In honor of her birthday, she was front and center as part of an attentive audience of Edgewood residents to which the Society presented a thorough history of the iconic house. The program covered the period of time from when Connecticut Land Company surveyors first visited the Danbury Peninsula in 1806 up to a recent renovation and restoration.

The Wolcott Keeper's House, built in 1822, is the oldest house in Ottawa County, second in age only to the county's longest standing structure built in 1821, the Marblehead Lighthouse, or what was originally known as the "Sandusky Light." Both were built by William Kelly, a Sandusky mason.

Its place in history had been all but forgotten by the early 1940s when Kay's parents rented it as their family home. Prior to that, in the 1930s, it had been converted into a chicken restaurant to take advantage of the flow of traffic now able to cross the Sandusky Bay thanks to the new automobile bridge connecting Sandusky and Danbury.

Just how has Kay's childhood home, a good two miles from the lighthouse, acquired historical significance? It appears to be just a farmhouse, albeit a somewhat fancy one for the times, a stone replacement of the log home built earlier by Benajah Wolcott for his family. Wolcott had been a member of the original survey team from Connecticut.

In the days of the Sandusky Light's construction, our area was sparsely populated. President James Monroe looked for the nearest resident who was also a veteran to appoint as its keeper. Benajah, who had served in the War for Independence under General Washington from the age of fourteen to its conclusion, fit the bill. He was hired as the keeper, a position he served from 1821 until his death in 1832 from cholera. His widow Rachel then assumed his duties, the first female lighthouse keeper on the Great Lakes.

A childhood home with so much history attached to it—so, what is Kay's most impressive memory of having lived there? "Oh, that would be when my baby brother was born," she said with a smile.

This text was also submitted to the Beacon, so some or all of it may appear there in the next week or so.

PATRICK O'KEEFFE

We Need You!

If you haven't already renewed your membership for 2020, please take a moment to do so now. Our members represent the biggest supporters of the Society, and they help sponsor OCHS various events and activities throughout the year. As a member, you'll receive the quarterly newsletter and periodic email updates on upcoming events in the County. If you are uncertain whether you have already paid your membership, please contact Linda Huber at 419-702-7060 to confirm your membership status. Thank you for supporting the Ottawa County Historical Society. Or check the mailing label on this newsletter above your name.

LINDA HUBER, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Spring Meeting of the Membership

On Sunday, May 3 at 12:30 p.m. we will hold our spring meeting of the membership at the Hartford House, 200 W. Water Street, in Oak Harbor. A luncheon plate will be available prior to the meeting (choice of roast beef or baked chicken).

In keeping with our interest in developing a storytelling project here in Ottawa County, our featured speaker will be Tim Haney, President of the Board of Caesar's Ford Theatre in Xenia, Ohio. In 2019, their organization held a "History in Action" event presenting short dramatic scripts based upon people or events in Ohio history. Tim will discuss how they developed the event, including details of the process such as the call for scripts, how specific stories were selected, and how people were engaged in performing the stories.

We're looking forward to sharing ideas with Tim about the Xenia program as resource for developing our own program here. We invite and welcome those among us who have family stories. The May 3rd meeting will be a chance to learn more about our storytelling progress. Cost is \$14 per person with reservations requested by Wednesday, April 29. Make checks payable to the Ottawa County Historical Society and mail to Brennan Madison, Treasurer, P.O. Box 385, Port Clinton, OH, 43452.



2020 Spring Cleaning at the Keeper's House

WHEN: Saturday, May 16
Time: 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Keeper's House,
9999 Bayshore Road, Marblehead



We need help with the annual inside cleaning of the Keeper's House and Annex. Bring light cleaning supplies. We'll be sweeping out the cobwebs inside the Keeper's House and Annex. The Boy Scouts will be there to help get the yard in shape as needed.

We'll start at 10:00 a.m. and pizza will be served at noon. All welcome! Questions call Bill Coder at 419-798-5832. Thanks much!!

Coming Event

March 28, 2020 Elmore, Ohio

In honor of April Fool's Day, the Explore Elmore Organization will be hosting the "Only Fools Run a 5K." For those not willing to take on the 5K challenge, there will be a Family Fun Run of 1 mile. The Run kicks off at Woodmore High School and travel through the quaint downtown along the road to the town's not-so-hidden gem: Schedel Gardens

- **A portion of the profits will be donated to the Life Connections of Ohio**
- Start and finish at Woodmore High School, 633 Fremont St, Elmore, OH 43416
- 5K Race begins at 9:00 a.m.
- Family Fun Run begins shortly after the 5K start
- ***NO DOGS OR OTHER PETS PERMITTED ON COURSE DURING RACE***
- Race will be held rain, snow, or shine. No refunds. We reserve the right to cancel if deemed unsafe to proceed due to weather or unforeseen emergencies or circumstances.

OCHS 2019-2020 Membership

Life Member - Ruth Weisenauer

Patrons (\$100 +)

John Bayliff '20
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Peggy Debien '19
Ron & Diane Gerkenmeyer '20
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Novotny Hartenfeld '20
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Richard & Catherine LeSourd '20
Paul & Maria Moon '20
Randy & Sarah Riedmaier '19
Holly Gast & John Starcher '20
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David Grimm '20
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Joel & Kim Hirt '19
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Karin Messner '20
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Richard & Jeanie Rice '20
Mark & Judy Stahl '20
Robert & Katherine
Steinmiller '20
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Dennis Warga '19



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George McCormick '20
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Ralph Moon '20
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Richard Norgard &
Suzy Wittenmyer '19
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Kathryn Orta '19
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Janet Stephenson '20
Robert & Annette Textor '20
Glenn & Patricia Tinker '20
Judy Twarek '20
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Richard Williams '20
Tom & Mary Wiseman '20

**Ottawa County
Historical Society Website:
www.ottawacountyhistory.org**

Help Support the Ottawa Co. Historical Society

Online: Using PayPal, you can make a donation directly to the Society
by clicking the PayPal button on our new website.

Through purchases you make: When you purchase items through Amazonsmile (Amazon's charity website) or through Kroger supermarket and designate your charity as Ottawa County Historical Society, a portion of your purchase will be donated to the Society

Ottawa County Historical Society
P.O. Box 385
Port Clinton, OH 43452

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OTTAWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2020 - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES - due in January of each year
(If your address label does not say 2020 or Life Member it is time to pay dues.)

Single \$15_____ Family \$25_____ Student \$10_____

Sustaining \$35_____ Sponsor \$50_____ Patron \$100 or more \$ _____

Contributions \$ _____ Keeper's House \$ _____ Other \$ _____

The OCHS is a non-profit organization.. Your contribution may be tax deductible.

Name _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Total enclosed _____ Date _____ Check # _____

Mail to: OCHS, P.O. Box 385, Port Clinton, OH 43452

I am interested in volunteering.