



Ottawa County Historical Society



www.ottawacountyhistory.org

Third Quarter 2021

2021

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First UCC Holds Rededication for Marblehead Lighthouse 200th Anniversary

On Sunday, November 21, 2021 a rededication of the Marblehead Lighthouse will be held at First United Church of Christ-Congregational in Marblehead at 10:30 a.m. and all are invited. This will be the first event in a year-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of the lighthouse. The light was built over a period of 11 weeks in the fall of 1821 and was finished in November. In 1822, the inside and light mechanism was completed and a keeper's house was built nearby. Both were built by William Kelly, a stonemason from Sandusky which was called Portland at that time. The light was commissioned in June of 1822 and lit for the first time. Originally named the Sandusky Bay Light or Light Station, it was renamed the Marblehead Lighthouse in 1870. There are many activities being planned to celebrate the bicentennial of this elegant lighthouse, the longest in continuous operation on the Great Lakes.

-LORRIE HALBLAUB

Let's Get Together This Fall!!

The OCHS annual meeting of the membership is scheduled for Sunday, November 14 at the Catawba Island Club. The meeting starts at 12:30 p.m. with the CIC brunch to be followed by a business meeting and program. The business meeting is the election of officers, appointment of Trustees, and the approval of the revised By-Laws as sent to the membership last November. OCHS members may remember an enactment of Etienne Brule by Genot Picor at our "Skirmish on the Peninsula" celebration in 2012. Picor is an accomplished story teller with an emphasis on native American heritage and will be our featured speaker, promising a splendid program for the November meeting. Watch your mail for a notice on the meeting with additional details. Reservations are required.



To the Front of the Stove

By Patrick O'Keeffe

Who among us can forget, at the start of 2020, the Ottawa County Historical Society was looking at a full recipe of planned events and activities. The farm tradition so much a part of us says winter months are for planning the upcoming season. But, by mid-March, we knew we suddenly had to shut it all down and wonder if we should just go in the barn with the horses and hide.

Early 2021 looked like it would be a repeat of 2020. We cancelled the Spring Members' Meeting, and then the Hearth Cooking Opening Day at the Wolcott Keeper's House. Exchanging dishes did not seem appealing under the circumstances, and so we never gathered the resources for our much-loved Annual Picnic, so well-orchestrated by Kathy Leonard years after year. It wasn't until mid-summer, as the beneficial effect of a growing vaccinated population began to be realized, that we took the risk of opening the Keeper's House and Annex, albeit for a very limited season.

It should not—it cannot—be not lost on us newer “come-lately” folks that the expectations attached to traditional activities and events our Society has long been known for had their beginnings in a lot of worry, sweat and toil of long-standing members, trustees and officers, past and present. They handed us a treasure. And, rightfully, they keep a watchful eye on what we are doing with it and offer advice from a time-proven perspective.

Yet, the great hiccup that was—to a large extent, still is—Covid 19 interrupted a lot more than that. Also put on hold through such a trying time have been the thoughts, ruminations and planning regarding how we of the present should go about building on what we've been entrusted with. The future, in the past two years, was left simmering on a back burner. As we emerge from the pandemic, the future is eager to move to the front of the stove, where we can begin to give it the attention conducive to turning ideas into activities and events that effectively serve the community.

Large among our Society's traditions has been the telling of stories. It was the story of Benajah and Rachel Wolcott's remarkable lives, along with that of their descendants, that brought about restoration of the old House, saving it from a wrecking ball in the 80s and bringing it forward to the present in a

manner that allows our appreciation of its, and their, rightful place.

It is in the telling and re-enactments of that story, and in the on-going performance and publishing accomplishments of the Page and Stage group, that storytelling proves itself to be in our Society's marrow. The History Speaks program, still in its infancy, has begun to find its legs under Nancy Dunham's direction. Successful live performances have inspired it to go from a crawl to a walk.

A new performance is in the offing for this year's Civil War Encampment on October 9. Discussion is under way with a well-known professional storyteller to join in our 2022 celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of Banajah's appointment by President Monroe as the first Keeper of the Light.

History, mistakenly, is easily presumed to be the sole domain of the oldest among us who hold onto its memories. They also have learned and handed down memories from before their time, and have gained perspectives that allow a deeper understanding of it all. But, just think about it: who are always the most eager to appreciate and participate in stories? It's the young. The combination of old and young and stories that pass between them make up the main ingredients of the OCHS pot now on a front burner, being stirred.

Multiple efforts are ongoing, currently in semi-planning stages, by which the Society will strive to serve the community in a new way: facilitate and encourage younger folks throughout our County, particularly school-age youth, in the gathering, learning and retelling of history specific to each local region.

Now remember, a watched pot never comes to a boil...but it won't be long before we can expect to start serving up a new opportunity for young folks—and let's not forget educators, librarians and parents—to engage in a real-world enlivening of who and where we came from and how we got here.





Immigrants of Ottawa County

The Society has been approved and awarded a grant for the 21st historical marker of Ottawa County to honor the immigrants who helped develop the County in the late 1800s. The marker will be placed at Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Marblehead. One side of the marker will reference Holy Assumption and the other side will provide more details on the County's immigrant experience and Port Clinton's St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. Please see our second quarter 2021 newsletter for the wonderful article written by Patrick O'Keeffe detailing the unique legacy of Holy Assumption and the influx of immigrants to the County in the establishment, settlement, and development of this region. A marker dedication ceremony is being planned for August of 2022.

LINDA HUBER



Do You Like to Cook?

Would you like to cook over the Hearth as your ancestors did in 1822?

Please contact Becky Shemenski at 419-898-3852 or becky.f.ski@gmail.com.

Our next demonstration and sampling of hearth cooking will be October 9th, 2021 when we will be sampling apple pie, hot apple cider and applesauce. Yummm!



Civil War Encampment

Saturday, October 9
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Wolcott Keeper's House will again hold the annual Civil War Encampment as part of the Marblehead peninsula-wide Lighthouse Festival. The encampment features Civil War music, period re-enactors and "frontier-style" food.

The 14th Ohio Volunteer Regiment encampment includes demonstrations and drills along with Civil War lore. Music will be provided by the 73rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regimental Band, a 15-piece authentically uniformed band playing Civil War era music on instruments from the period. The band has performed at various ceremonies and historic venues throughout Ohio. Also performing will be our "History Speaks" storytellers sharing oral histories of the County. Come and enjoy a bit of history with good food and music!

Ottawa County Museum Begins Winter Hours

Wednesday's
12 noon to 3 p.m.

Note: Second of a three-part series on farming written by Patrick O’Keeffe in “History of Ottawa County---First 175 Years.”

Early Decades Farming

In those first years of the new century, most of what Ottawa County residents experienced in their day-to-day lives was rooted within a few miles of home. The majority of citizens in our region were involved in one of the many dimensions of agriculture. Early settlers had learned to rely on their own means, and in the harsh environment they found here early farms had been islands of survival. But now, with that environment somewhat tamed, determination to survive off the land evolved into self-sufficient farming. Families planted vineyards, orchards of peaches, apples, and pears, and plotted huge gardens



Port Clinton, Madison E 200 block, c1910s

They raised domestic animals for milk and meat. They raised chickens, ducks and geese, also for meat, and gathered eggs. They canned and dried fruits and vegetables, butchered animals, salted, canned and smoked the meat, and made their own butter from the cream provided by milk cows. Butchering domestic animals would be carried out in early or late winter when freezing temperatures allowed meat to be kept for longer periods of time. The smoke house was a common sight among farm buildings. With new discoveries and rapid expansion of inventions, technology came to the farm and took some of the burden of labor off the backs and out of the hands of men, women and children and turned

them over to the levers, cranks and wheels of mechanical implements and devices, mostly run by horse or steam power.



Before the pull-behind baler gained prominence, hay was gathered loose using a hay loader and wagon assembly.

Photo courtesy of Dorothy Glackstetter who appears here with father Carl Whiteman and brother Harold.



William Reif (father of Melvin Reif, Graytown, Ohio) on his first rubber tired tractor, Minneapolis Moline Model J, with two-row cultivator attachment, 1938.

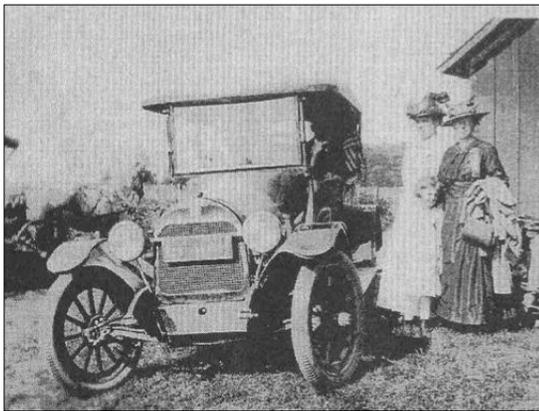
Photo provided by Melvin Reif

And what farm did not have a windmill for pumping water?

Although most farms maintained a diversity of approaches to living off the land, many also specialized according to where they were located. The islands of Put-In-Bay Township were rapidly developing varieties of wine. Catawba was the main center of the peach crop that made it the peach capital of Ohio. And in Benton Township, Graytown was home to one unique business called the Cloverleaf Medicine Factory

and its red clover bud drier. Farmers raised clover to be dried and shipped by rail to a Chicago medical firm for use as a chief ingredient of a blood purifier. These blossoms were also used in medicines for skin inflammation, whopping cough, and respiratory ailments—concoctions known as patent medicines. Women and children, picking the clover blossoms in the evening, could earn 2 cents a pound. The harvest was taken to a bud drier owned by Shepard & Son, which was in use for about twenty years from 1883 to 1913. It was located just north of the Graytown grain elevator, between the elevator and the creek. After the business declined, the unused building burned, its brick stack remaining for decades and known locally as “the leaning tower of Pisa.” The smaller towns began to prosper around agriculture, and Graytown was typical of many such towns in the County. Thirty years earlier little more than a railroad station, it now had several saw mills, a stave mill, hotel-boarding house, general store, millinery shop, hardware store, barbershop, church, grain elevator, butter factory, wagon maker, saloon, and blacksmith. Peddlers and salesmen arrived through a depot that could boast four passenger trains a day.

An organization important to farmers was the Grange, which provided opportunities for a social life in the midst of all that hard work.



Melba Schulte, mother and cousin going to the Pomona (county-wide) Grange. The badge and ribbon pinned to her mother’s dress were worn to Grange functions and were reversible with one side black to wear to funerals and Grange graveside services; the other side was colorful and worn for meetings, conventions, etc. Source Melba Schulte.

There were Granges in Catawba, Carroll, Erie, Benton, Harris, Clay, Allen and Salem Townships beginning in the 1870s. Genoa Grange, the last of all these Granges, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2015. Erie Township’s Walter Kirk, a farmer and teacher, was master of the Ohio Grange from 1928 until his untimely death in 1941. During his years as master Grange membership in Ohio reached 90,000.

The Grange was a major force behind a development that occurred in 1902 when the Federal Government announced the full establishment of Rural Free Delivery, which for the previous decade had only been operating experimentally and with much controversy. It was a concept much disliked by private services on whom rural postal customers had previously been forced to depend for consistent delivery of their mail. Now, many more offices opened across the region in small communities to manage the new service. The RFD more directly connected farmers to the outside world as well as to each other. A farm family, miles from town, could sit at the kitchen table and find implements, tools, appliances, clothing and household goods in the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalogue. Sears even sold its own model car in 1906, and would later offer a line of houses that it provided through local contractors.

In 1905, Rocky Ridge would be the first village in Ohio where farmers banded together and bought their own elevator and storage building. The Ottawa County Co-Operative Company was started, its elevator located on the south side of the tracks on West Street with its own siding. The cooperative store sold groceries, farm supplies and hardware. There was also a sugar beet facility next to the siding. Sugar beets were hauled by horses pulling a wagon to the elevator, weighed and then hand shoveled into railcars and shipped off for processing to make sugar. Coal and coke were also stored and sold from bins on the elevator property. This concept of a cooperative elevator soon spread successfully to Oak Harbor, Graytown, Curtice and Trowbridge and other communities in the County. All of them have since been absorbed by Luckey Farmers, Inc.

Please mail me the following items.

Item	Description	Price each	Shipping/ Handling each	Tax each	X Quantity	Total
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Book	<i>History of Ottawa County - the First 175 Years</i>	\$49.95	\$5.00	\$3.85		
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Book	Volume VII: <i>The Stories Continue</i>	\$15.00		\$1.05		
Book	Complete set of Oral Histories: Volume 1 through VII	\$105.00	\$6.00	\$7.77		
Book	<i>Combined Atlas of Ottawa County - 1874 & 1900 NEW PRICE</i>	\$15.00	\$4.00	\$1.33		
Book	Historic Driving Tour Guide: <i>Historic Railroads of Western Ottawa County</i>	\$4.00	\$2.00	\$0.42		
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Book	History of Ottawa County Historical Society	\$7.00	\$3.00	\$0.70		
Book	<i>Hearth Cookbook</i>	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$0.56		
DVD	Bicentennial War of 1812 Re-enactment: <i>The Skirmish on the Peninsula</i>	\$15.00	\$2.00	\$1.19		
Book	<i>Marblehead Lighthouse on Lake Erie</i> by James Proffitt	\$15.00	\$3.00	\$1.26		
Book	<i>Lights at the Portage</i> by Richard J. Norgard	\$10.00	\$3.00	\$0.91		
Book	<i>Lake Erie's West Sister Island</i> by Martha Dykes	\$10.00	\$3.00	\$0.91		
Book	<i>My Island Home</i> by Gladys Curd McMeans	\$10.00	\$3.00	\$0.91		

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