



Ottawa County Historical Society



www.ottawacountyhistory.org

Third Quarter 2020

2020

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OCHS Goes to the Movies

During the past several years, Theo Dunham has recorded several OCHS lectures and events of the Society. Online technology now allows us the opportunity to share those recordings. The Society has created a YouTube channel and has transferred several presentations including:

- *Last Days of the Ship Success* by Rich Norgard
- *Prohibition in Ottawa County* by John Gibson
- *DeLery Portage* by Roger Long
- Upcoming History Book on the 79th *County of Ohio: Ottawa* by Patrick O'Keeffe
- *Rachel & Benajah Wolcott: Life at the Keeper's House* by Karin Messner and Ro Chapman
- *Rerouting of the Portage River* by Chuck Grindstaff
- *Early Northwest Ohio* by Clint Mauk
- *War of 1812 on the Ohio Frontier* by Lou Shultz
- *Dr. Frederick Wilhelm Jaeger* by John Jaeger
- *When Ohio Was The Center Of The World* by Andrew Cayton
- Painted Barn Dedication with Linda Huber and others
- 175th Anniversary History Book Research with Rich Norgard and others
- Oral History Reenactments by Fern Bierce, Ro Chapman, Karin Messner and Paul Moon
- *Peter Navarre: War of 1812 Scout* by Terry Breymaier and Larry Michaels

When you go to YouTube (www.youtube.com), in their search window type "Ottawa County Historical Society" and our channel will display. We have also linked our channel to the YouTube channels of the Catawba Island Historical Society and Lakeside Heritage Society where you will find several of their recorded articles.

History Is So Much More Than a '56 Chevy

It's hard to give up on something you've embraced all your life. If it's something your parents embraced—well, that compounds the difficulty.

And yet, to call ourselves historians, we must be able to distinguish focused observations from visceral notions and feelings that got worked into the grain of who we are in the course of developmental growth. As historians, we're not just beneficiaries of our past, nor its restorers. History is so much more than a '56 Chevy found under a pile of hay in your great aunt's barn.

As historians we assume the responsibility of stewardship, of handing off values to up-and-coming folks whose hearts are open, whose fiber-of-being yet anticipates embracing the newness of things, whose eyes shine with expectation. It is ours to teach them to not just look fondly backwards, but to clearly observe the dynamics of being human and recognize our part in it.

Our Society celebrates history pretty much locally. But that does not insulate us from the much larger human story being told out beyond our own county lines. Nor does celebration of the past abstain us from teaching about the present. I'm not from around here originally. In the past twenty-five years, I've come to embrace our history here for its richness, for its contribution, not only to Ottawa County's culture, but to the whole story of how we got to be who we are.

And so, just who *are* we? Okay, I'll go first.

In my family, from my mother's side, we take immense pride in "Great Uncle Phil," a poor immigrant lad from County Cavan, who received an appointment to West Point (from which he was suspended for a year for brawling) thanks to his congressman, a customer at the store where he clerked. Years later, appointed by U.S. Grant to head the Cavalry Corps, he doggedly pursued Robert E. Lee, forcing the surrender to Grant at Appomattox.

From my father's side, my great-great grandfather, a man from Dublin who fled the famine in 1847, took one of the few jobs allowed Irish Catholics, gravedigger in the Richmond, VA cemetery. By the time of the Civil War, having been promoted to superintendent, he oversaw the interment on thou-

sands of slain soldiers. Skilled at masonry, he was acclaimed in post-war Virginia for the monuments he erected to the Confederate dead.

It's here where the present interjects itself into my family's history. Issues of today raise one's level of consciousness. My great-great grandfather, in the late 1800s a respected leading citizen of Richmond, was to some degree involved in the erection of monuments that celebrated, not the War dead, but the rise of Jim Crow. As a child, some of my father's relatives yet bragged about that aspect of their heritage. And, from my mother's side, Great Uncle Phil—well, following on his heroics, he applied his skills as a major architect of the official government strategy known as the "Indian Wars."

History is complicated. Life is complicated. Humanity is complicated. So, let's move on, then. But, hopefully, not without allowing that level of consciousness—and of conscience?—to sharpen our vision of the history playing out all around us today. Just sayin'... And so, I've told mine. Now, just who are *you*?

PATRICK O'KEEFFE

County Storytelling Update

It is the aim of the OCHS's storytelling program to entertain as well as educate through live performance. What an interesting challenge for our local history -- to communicate the stories of our past through live performance.

Although social distancing has been an interruption to our process, it also provides opportunity for alternatives. Until such time as there can be direct "on stage" connection between audience and speaker, we will continue telling stories through video which can then be viewed on the OCHS website. In the meantime, volunteer story tellers are in the process of learning scripts.

One plus for the current situation is the way it opens time for creative options. For those with interest and desire to participate or share ideas, either as performance or story writers, please get in touch: ndcat@roadrunner.com

Let's Take A Tour (Virtual Tour, That Is)

OCHS has filmed a virtual tour of the Wolcott Keeper's House. With narration provided by Paul Moon and Patrick O'Keeffe, you will hear the history of Keepers Benajah and Rachel Wolcott, the builder William Kelley, and the house. At the hearth, Becky Shemanski provides a frontier style cooking introduction. In the Annex, you will see early farming equipment and photographs of Wolcott relatives. The video will be available on the OCHS YouTube channel soon. Other virtual tours have been completed by the Catawba Island Historical Society of their Union Chapel Museum and the Port Clinton Lighthouse Conservancy of the Port Clinton Lighthouse,

Scan the Code



With the Keeper's House being unable to open due to the coronavirus pandemic, we have created a QR (quick response) code to help provide information to traveling visitors who stop at the House. The QR code is similar to a bar code that you have probably seen on merchandise. On display in the Keeper's House and Annex windows, when they scan the code, they will be routed to the OCHS website page "Keeper's House History" providing additional information on the House. Our recently filmed Keeper's House virtual tour will be included on the website page so visitors will be able to read information on the House and take a virtual tour. Although we have been unable to connect with visitors in person this year our intent is the QR code will make due until our much valued docents return next year.

OCHS Website Offerings

The coronavirus experience here in Ottawa County has caused the cancellation of the Society's 2020 events and activities. To stay connected with all of you, we have attempted to increase the offerings on our website and we thought

we'd provide here a tour on what information you'll find on the website

(www.ottawacountyhistory.org).

Home page---includes tabs across the top (those tabs are described in more detail in this article). There are short descriptions on the various parts of the County by category: "West", "Center West", "Center East" and "East". The the "County Events" section lists by date any known activities throughout the County. The bottom of the page has a map to the Keeper's House and contact information.

Keeper's House tab has two selections focused on the House:

- ✓ **History** page---provides a snapshot history of the House and the first Keepers of the Marblehead Lighthouse, Benajah and Rachel Wolcott.
- ✓ **Past Events** page---recaps activities held at the House with photos for the Civil War encampments, annual picnics, and perch wagon events.

Community tab has several choices covering county-wide interests:

- ✓ **Storytellers** page---the newest project of the Society. Under the leadership of Nancy Dunham, scripts are compiled, storytellers are lined up and a performance is scheduled. This page has information and photos on our first Storytelling event in August 2019 and plans are underway for a second performance event.
- ✓ **What's Nearby** page---lists organizations in and around Ottawa County with contact information and a brief description.
- ✓ **Out and About** page---lists Society events held within the County including membership meetings and our first "Harvesting History" event in Bay Township.
- ✓ **Barn Quilt Trail** page---in partnership with the Greater Port Clinton Area Arts Council, the Ottawa County 4-H Program created an Ottawa County Barn Quilt Trail. On this page you'll find addresses and photos on the current 22 quilt blocks that have

been installed on barns throughout the county.

- ✓ **Painted Barn** page---details the 2018 project sponsored by the Ohio History Connection in bringing the Commodore Oliver Perry painted barn mural to the County.

Collection tab has four selections detailing the Society's various holdings:

- ✓ **Newsletters** page---lists the OCHS quarterly newsletters in a PDF format to read or print.
- ✓ **Video** page---provides information on filmed past Society events with links to our YouTube channel where you can view the event.
- ✓ **Objects** page---a bit thin but the hope is to eventually have catalogued more photos from our holdings.
- ✓ **Research** page---we do not provide research services to the public but occasionally Society and Museum volunteers do independent research on topics of interest. On this newest page, when that research is made available to the Society we post a PDF copy here.

Events tab: Although the coronavirus experience has impacted our 2020 event schedule, as activities are scheduled around the County this page lists the what, where, and when specifics along with a brief description. Also, at the bottom of the website **Home** page the "County Events" section includes a listing by date of any scheduled known activities.

Shop tab: This page lists the books for sale from the Keeper's House Annex and an Order Form is available to download for your shopping convenience.

Join tab: If you are not already a member of the Society, this page includes information on membership as well as an application form to download.

About tab has a number of pages of interest:

- ✓ **OCHS History** page---describes the Society since its 1963 inception and its major accomplishments.

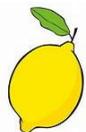
- ✓ **Board** page---includes current officers, trustees and past Presidents.
- ✓ **Volunteers** page---provides information on volunteer opportunities.
- ✓ **Membership** page---lists information and an application for membership.
- ✓ **Page&Stage** page---details the Oral History project with information on the volumes published and available for purchase.
- ✓ **Library Shelf** page---Throughout the years books have been written either about or including a reference to Ottawa County. Some books were written by people who lived in the County. This page lists these known books and includes information on where the books may be purchased.
- ✓ **Donation** page---The Society receives its revenue from memberships, donations, grants, products it sells and through sponsored events. This page provides information on how you may contribute to the Society by check, online or through purchases you make at Kroger or Amazon.
- ✓ **Contact Us** page---displays information on our postal mail and email addresses.

There you have it. Our hope is you'll find the website informative and that it helps keep you current on Society happenings. Stay well and we look forward to gathering again soon.

Oral History Project Carrying On

With COVID-19, the Oral History Committee has had to curtail their usual practice of interviewing Ottawa County residents to hear their stories. But work is continuing on Volume 8. So far seven stories have been completed. Previously unpublished interviews have been transcribed along with articles about Ottawa County.

Instead of face-to-face interviews we are considering online or phone interviews as well searching for stories written by Ottawa County residents. *'When you get lemons - make lemonade.'*



If you know of anyone who has written a story about their family or other Ottawa County areas or would be interested in an online or phone interview, let us know. You can contact Martha Dykes at:

419-732-1843 or martgene80@gmail.com

Remember The Ladies

By Linda K. Huber

In March 1776 John Adams was serving as a member of the Continental Congress and helped write the Declaration of Independence. While there, he received a letter from his wife, Abigail, in which she asked John to “remember the ladies.” Knowing John would be involved in creating the laws governing the country, she wanted his assistance in securing proper laws for women “lest we will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

Although the letter does not specifically reference the right to vote, that intent is clear. The journey for women to secure the right to vote took another 144 years and August 18, 2020 is the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment’s ratification to the U.S. Constitution

Today, in looking back 100 years we find there were a string of societal convulsions occurring and the 19th Amendment ratification was one of them. In the last years of World War I, we had the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, shortly followed by the ratification of the 18th Amendment (the “Prohibition” amendment) and finally in 1919 passage of the 19th Amendment. With such turmoil it is perhaps easy to miss the significance of that pivotal moment in history when women gained the right to vote. This article is meant to provide a brief snapshot on the movement, the main players, and the Ottawa County connections with major leaders in the movement.

The Movement

It is generally accepted that the formal recognition of the “movement” began with the 1848 New York Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Several other major conventions were held thereafter with the express purpose to spread the word about and build support for giving women the right to vote.

Many women suffragettes were also abolitionists who tied African American voting rights with the women’s right to vote. Efforts supporting these two social reforms overlapped and when

the 15th Amendment was proposed and ratified in 1870 the Amendment did not include women. This exclusion caused a major division among the women’s rights activists on how to move forward.



Susan B. Anthony &
Elizabeth Cady Stanton

On one side, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton prioritized working toward a federal amendment for the women’s vote and formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).

On the other side, Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe believed that once African American men were able to vote, women’s rights would follow and therefore favored working state-by-state to gain those rights. They formed the American Women Suffrage Association (AWSA). It would not be until 1890 that the two groups merged to form the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The 19th Amendment started gaining traction in 1915 when a suffrage bill was brought before the U.S. House of Representatives but was ultimately defeated. President Woodrow Wilson lent this support to the effort in 1917 and in 1918 a bill passed the House but failed twice in the Senate.

Wilson called for a special session of Congress in 1919 and a bill for the amendment passed the House with the Senate following on June 4, 1919.

Within days of Congress’ passage, a few states immediately ratified the amendment. Ohio was the fifth state to do so on June 16, 1919. Tennessee became the necessary 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment on August 18, 1920 thereby making it the law of the land. Mississippi took a bit longer in ratifying the amendment doing so in 1984.

One cannot fully appreciate the efforts expended to achieve this monumental social reform---hundreds of organized campaigns targeting federal and state legislatures, millions of dollars and

untold hours of people lives supporting the cause.

Major Players

Said to be the triumvirate for the women's suffrage movement at the national level were Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone.

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906). Anthony grew up in Massachusetts in a politically active family working to end slavery as part of the abolitionist movement. She helped create and produce a weekly publication, *The Revolution*, that lobbied for women's rights. She served as President of the NAWSA from 1892 to 1900 and helped write the three-volume *History of Woman Suffrage* and was the first woman to have her portrait on a U.S. one-dollar coin in 1979.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902). Stanton spent over 50 years in support of equal rights for women. Married with seven children, she helped organize the First Women's Rights Convention (aka Seneca Falls Convention). Stanton's advocacy for reproductive self-determination, liberal divorce laws and greater sexual freedom for women were controversial social reforms of the time.

With Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, Stanton wrote the three-volume *History of Woman Suffrage*.

Lucy Stone (1818-1893). Stone earned a living as an antislavery and women's rights lecturer and was an active abolitionist establishing the Women's National Loyal League to help pass the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. She organized the first national American women's rights convention in Worcester, Massachusetts and the American Woman Suffrage Association. She co-edited with her husband the women's suffrage newspaper *Woman's Journal*.

At the Ohio level, there are several major players but here are a few of note: Harriet Taylor Upton (1853-1945). Upton was president of the Ohio Woman's Suffrage Association and brought the headquarters of the National American Woman Suffrage Association to Warren, Ohio in 1903 where it would remain until 1910. She led efforts to get women's suffrage into the

Ohio Constitution and in 1920 Upton was the first woman to become a vice chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Florence E. Allen (1884-1966). Allen, a graduate of Western Reserve University and New York University's law school, started her own law practice in Cleveland in 1914. She was active in the Women Suffrage Party. Allen was appointed assistant prosecutor of Cuyahoga County in 1919, was elected to the



Florence E. Allen

Ohio Supreme Court in 1922 and was the first woman judge to serve on a federal court when President Franklin Roosevelt appointed her to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in 1934 where she served for 32 years.

Hallie Quinn Brown (1845-1949). Hallie was born to freed slaves, graduated from Wilberforce University and completed advanced courses in New York and Paris. She taught in Dayton public schools, Central State University and Wilberforce University and was dean of women at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. A skilled public speaker on civil rights, temperance and women's suffrage, she helped found the National League of Colored Women in 1896 which joined other groups in becoming the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) serving as its president from 1920 to 1924.

Pauline Perlmutter Steinem (1864-1940). Steinem grew up in Germany and moved to Toledo in 1887 and was the first woman elected to the Toledo school board. She was active in Toledo suffrage efforts becoming president of the Ohio Woman Suffrage Association in 1908. Steinem was the paternal grandmother of feminist Gloria Steinem.

Belle Sherwin (1869-1955). Sherwin was founder of the Consumers League of Ohio lobbying for fair wages and safe working conditions for women. After the Cuyahoga County Woman's Suffrage party disbanded in 1920, the Cleveland Chapter of the League of Women Voters was formed and Sherwin helped register 41,416 women to vote by October, 1920. She was pres-

ident of the National League of Women Voters from 1924 to 1934.

Ottawa County Connections

In learning about these early suffragettes, I wondered what were the training grounds to help these women accomplish so much. Certainly one social construct were the community women's organizations. Two organizations of interest are Port Clinton's "Literary and Social Club" (LSC) and Lakeside's "Lakeside Federation of Women's Clubs" (LFWC).

Started in 1881, the Port Clinton Literary and Social Club (LSC) was originally known as the Ladies Social Club changing the name to reflect a more scholarly emphasis. The first public library in Port Clinton was founded by LSC and that library is today known as the Ida Rupp Library. LSC was instrumental in helping to form other women's clubs in Oak Harbor, Elmore, and Genoa.

In 1894, two Lakeside residents worked with members from the LSC in creating a federation of women's clubs. Joining with Sandusky, Catawba Island and Bryan the group became known as the Lakeside Federation of Women's Clubs (LFWC). By 1917, the LFWC included 30 clubs offering "opportunities for the study of modern problems in the woman's sphere."

Lakeside Chautauqua was visited by leaders and prominent members of both the national and state suffrage organizations who spoke on issues of the day of importance to women: Susan B. Anthony spoke in 1895; Pauline Perlmutter Steinem in 1908; and Florence E. Allen in 1923.

These seemingly innocuous ladies book clubs and garden clubs were the foundation stones for issue-oriented organizations such as the Women's Suffrage Association and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. By networking with women of similar backgrounds, they gained self-confidence and acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to advocate for change in their own cautious ways.

Legacy

In the 1920 presidential election, only 36% of women eligible to vote did vote. It would not be until the 1980s that women would match men in voting numbers. In those 244 years since Abigail Adam's original admonition to John, laws have been enacted giving women a voice and representation thereby bringing fair justice for Abigail's plea to "remember the ladies".



Looking east from the Gypsum fruit house.
Wagon loads of peaches.

**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
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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_____

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I am interested in volunteering.