



Ottawa County Historical Society



www.ottawacountyhistory.org

Second Quarter 2022

2022

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Ottawa County Participates in Ohio Open Doors 2022 September 9-18

Ohio Open Doors is an exciting and inspiring statewide event where buildings and landmark owners and operators open their doors to the public for special tours and programs. Explore fascinating places that reflect Ohio's rich heritage, some open especially for *Ohio Open Doors* offering behind-the-scenes looks that are not ordinarily available. First held in 2016 and held biennially *Ohio Open Doors* has proven to be a success with hundreds of activities held throughout Ohio. Events are about two hours and free to the public.

The Ottawa County Historical Society is helping to organize various activities and events as part *Ohio Open Doors 2022*. The following organizations will be holding programs: Stone Labs on Gibraltar Island, Oak Harbor Public Library, Catawba Island Museum, Ottawa County Museum, Harris-Elmore Public Library, Lakeside Heritage Society, Johnson's Island Preservation Society, Ida Rupp Library-Marblehead Branch, Wolcott Keeper's House, and Union Center School in Oak Harbor.

The Society's website Events page will list a complete schedule of all planned activities as soon as specific dates/times have been confirmed at www.ottawacountyhistory.org. We hope to see you at one of the events.

Tour Ottawa County History

With summer months approaching and your thoughts turn to driving adventures, the Society's updated website has heritage trail tours for you and your family to enjoy. The Trails page of the website includes a "Historical Markers" trail providing maps and information of the County's 61 historical markers at the national, state and local level.

The State of Ohio's historical marker program was started in 1957 and about 1,800 markers have been placed throughout the State helping to share the incredible history stories of people, places and things. The program is administered by the Ohio History Connection in Columbus. This August Ottawa County will be dedicating its 21st marker to honor the contributions of the 1800s immigrants in developing the County.



Israel Harrington (1779-1841) established a tavern at Lower Sandusky (now Fremont) shortly after the War of 1812. As a judge and land speculator, Harrington influenced the organization of much of northwestern Ohio. In 1824 he traded the tavern for land, where an Indian trail crossed the Portage River. Elmore grew from this settlement. Harrington and his father (also Israel Harrington, a veteran of the American Revolution) are interred at the cemetery, along with many of the pioneers who transformed this section of the Black Swamp into productive farmland. *Photo: courtesy Doug Huber*

At the national level, the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register is part of a program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. The County currently has 27 places on the National Register.



The Carroll Township Hall was erected between June and September of 1880 at a cost of approximately \$880, by two local men, Enos Williams and James Floro. Around 1920 a storage shed was built on the hall lot to house a sprinkling wagon and roller used to maintain the township roads and in 1954 a second shed was built to house the township snowplow. Due perhaps to the township's rural nature and lack of meeting facilities the Township Hall was utilized by its community far more than an average township hall and acquired a significance within its community far greater than expected for a township hall. From its construction in 1880 until a new hall was built in 1981, the Carroll Township Hall served as the governmental, social service and social center for Carroll Township. *Photo: courtesy National Register of Historic Places*

On the local level, through the efforts of local organizations and individual people, the County has 14 historical markers to commemorate people, places and things that helped develop its history. Some of these local markers have also been recognized by the Ohio Historical marker program and the National Register of Historic Places programs.



The Maumee Bay Basket Weaver's Guild became interested in Victoria's life and her basket making skills. It was decided to place a marker at the site of her log cabin on the golf course, now the home of the Dan Mees family. Dan agreed to what we wanted to accomplish. A large stone was placed there in his front yard with a bronze plaque on it and the inscription:

Site of the log home
Victoria Caderact

A Chippewa Indian Basket Maker

She was the last full-blooded Indian in Ottawa County. She is buried nearby at Crane Creek Cemetery on Billman Road. The Chippewa Golf Course was named for her when formed in 1927.

A ceremony was held on 30 September 2007 to dedicate her marker. One of the guests was Joe Fisher, a full-blooded Chippewa Native American, WWII veteran and a great, great, great grandson of Victoria. Long may she be remembered.

James Blum, 2015

If you are looking for a way to enjoy a leisurely drive throughout the county and pick up a little history along the way, the Society's Historical Marker Trails page is there for the viewing at www.ottawacountyhistory.com.

OTTAWA COUNTY COMING EVENTS

Keeper's House Schedule

Sunday, May 15th, 2022 @ 11:30 a.m. Annual Membership meeting at the Catawba Island Club.

Saturday, June 11th, 2022 @ 11 a.m. Hearth Cooking at the KH. Come, help out and become a pioneer chef!

Saturday, July 9th, 2022 @11:00 a.m. Return of the Rotary Perch Wagon. Music provided by balladeers Steve and Lisa Ball.

Wednesday, August 24th, 2022 @ 5:00 pm. Annual picnic pot-luck at the Keepers House.

August date and time TBD. Dedication and installation of an Ohio Historical Marker at Holy Assumption Orthodox Church, Marblehead, Ohio, celebrating the church and its role in immigration during the 19th and 20th centuries. !

Saturday, September 17th, 2022, 1:00 p.m., Ohio History Connection Open Doors Event, come and learn everything you ever wanted to know about the Keeper's House and were afraid to ask!

Saturday, October 8th, 2022, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our annual Civil War Encampment featuring the 14th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and the 73rd OVI Regiment Band, apples, cider and cornbread.

Marblehead Lighthouse Schedule

- June 6** Plein Air Painting
- June 11** Ohio State University Alumni Band after noon Concert at the Lighthouse
- June 17** Diane Rozak Photography artist signing
- June 18** Moonlight Serenaders Big Band Concert
- June 19** Mayfly Invasion...learn about mayflies
- June 22** Official 200th Anniversary birthday cake and ice cream
- June 28** Scavenger hunt at the Lighthouse
- July 2** Firelands Symphony Orchestra Evening Concert at the Lighthouse
- July 11** Plein Air Painting
- July 23** Light Keepers' Bingo at Merchants in Downtown Marblehead
Dan May Evening Concert at the Light house
- July 30** Island Song Evening Concert at the Lighthouse
- August 1** Plein Air Painting
- August 4** Coast Guard Birthday celebration with cake and ice cream

August 7 National Lighthouse Day and Moonlight Serenaders Military tribute

August 17 Geocaching

August 28 Fostoria Lake Plains Chorus at the Lighthouse

September 3 Star Party

For more information on events visit our website at: www.marbleheadlighthouseohio.org

Port Clinton Lighthouse Conservancy

August 20 - 11 a.m. -5 p.m. - Port Clinton Lighthouse & Maritime Festival

Lake Erie Islands Historical Society

May 14 -- Island Wide Garage Sale

June 22 -- North Bass Island Tour. Hosted by the museum and the friendly residents of North Bass. Ticket sales for members begin June 1. Non-members may purchase tickets beginning June 15. Rain date June 23.

August 4 -- Museum Auction at Heineman Winery. Preview starting at 2 pm. live auction at 4 pm. date.

August (TBA) -- Museum Art Auction at the Crew's Nest. Island and area artists donate artwork to be sold to benefit the LEIHS

Email director@leihs.org;Phone (419) 285-2804

Address 443 Catawba Ave Put-in-Bay, OH 43456

Mailing Address: PO Box 25 Put-in-Bay, OH 43456

Liberty Aviation Museum

June 19 - 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. - Yankee Air Museum's WWII B-17 Air Adventures

June 25 - 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Corvettes at the Museum Car Show

July 1-3 - 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - LAM's 1928 Ford Tri-Motor Ride Experiences

July 22-25 - 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. AAHF's Huey & Cobra Helicopter Rides

July 23-24 - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. - Military Vehicle Show & Swap Meet

Oak Harbor

July 18-24 - Ottawa County Fair - 7870 St. Rt. 163, Oak Harbor

Genoa

July 2-4 - Genoa Homecoming

Lighthouses and Their Keepers, Part One

By Linda Huber

The Marblehead Lighthouse 200th anniversary will be celebrated this year (2022). We will be also remembering those individuals who helped tend the lighthouse. From 1822 to 1943 Marblehead had 15 keepers with Benajah Wolcott appointed its first keeper by President James Monroe. What was a normal day like in the life of a lighthouse keeper, what tasks were required of them, and how did they accomplish those tasks. In addition to these questions, this two-part article will discuss the government's role in managing lighthouses.

Lighthouse Management (1780s-1900)

The evolution of lighthouse management in America is a perfect example of how and why functions pass from local to federal control. Initially each colonial government was responsible for determining lighthouse need, financing construction and managing its operation. During America's Confederation, the original 12 lighthouses were controlled by the individual states. In signing the ninth act of the U.S. Congress, President George Washington created the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment under Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton with lighthouse control, construction and navigation aids now the responsibility of the central government.

Hamilton prepared contracts and keeper appointments for signature by the President. Aids to navigation fell under the Commissioner of Revenue. When that office was abolished in 1820, responsibility fell to the Fifth Auditor of the Treasury, Stephen Pleasonton with the administration of lighthouses on the local level done by the collector of customs. During Pleasonton's tenure, the number of lighthouses and lightships grew dramatically. With 70 across the country in 1822, by 1852 there were 331 lighthouses and 42 light vessels. Although the number of lighthouses and vessels increased, little technical progress was made under Pleasonton. The Fresnel lens invented in 1822 was not tested until he was forced to do so by Congress and was not adopted until administration of aids to navigation was assigned to the U.S. Lighthouse Board.

In Pleasonton's last years, he was criticized for the poor quality of America's lighthouses, especially the lights. In 1837, a board of Navy commissioners was appointed to study whether proposed sites were necessary, determining 32 were not. Dividing the country into eight districts (including two for the Great Lakes), a naval officer was assigned to each district. They examined the condition of current lighthouses and found them in good to terrible shape, including faulty construction, inadequate lighting, and poor physical placement. The Army Corps of Engineers in 1838 began to play more of a role with site selection, construction, and lighting.

With complaints growing more intense, in 1851 a study panel was appointed by Congress consisting of military officers and civilian scientists tasked with analyzing the current state of aids to navigation, interviewing ship's captains, and developing appropriate solutions. This led to establishing the Lighthouse Board in 1852, organizing the country into 12 districts, and assigning a naval officer as inspector with responsibility for building and ensuring the lighthouse and lens were operational. Eventually an Army engineer was added with responsibility for lighthouse construction and maintenance.

The Board swiftly implemented new technology, specifically the Fresnel lens and screwpile-style lighthouse construction consisting of a wooden keeper dwelling with lantern on the roof and the entire structure on pilings. By the time of the Civil War, all lighthouses had Fresnel lenses. The Board was mindful of advancing technology and took advantage of new types of lighthouses, buoys, fog signals, and lighthouse optics. The 1850s brought a number of changes: color schemes and standardized buoys, range lights, day markers, classification system for the nation's waterways, iron buoys replacing copper-clad wooden buoys, and a Notice to Mariners of changes made to aids to navigation. The 1886 new electrical lighting system for the Statue of Liberty was under the care of the Board and marked the beginning of the modern age in lighthouse illumination, though conversion to electrical systems came slow due to lack of direct access to power lines.

The lighthouse role for the local collector of customs declined, perhaps due to the fact that the Board added the ability to read as a requirement for keeper appointment. Instructions for keepers were detailed leaving little discretion to the keeper. To remove politics from the organization, the Civil Service Reform Acts of 1871 and 1883 made keepers civil service employees in 1896.

Day in the Life of a Lighthouse Keeper (Wolcott/McGee)

Unfortunately, we have no records for the early keepers of the Light. We do know that Pleason-ton in 1835 issued the following instructions to keepers of lighthouses within the U.S. As Benajah had passed by this time, these instructions would have applied to both the second and third keepers, Rachel Wolcott and Jeremiah Van Benschoten, respectively.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE KEEPERS OF LIGHT HOUSES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES: (1) You are to light the lamps every evening at sun setting, and keep them continually burning, bright and clear, till sun rising; (2) you are to be careful that the lamps, reflectors, and lanterns, are constantly kept cleaned, and in order; and particularly to be careful that no lamps, wood, or candles, be left burning anywhere as to endanger fire; (3) in order to maintain the greatest degree of light during the night, the wicks are to be trimmed every four hours, taking care that they are exactly even on the top; (4) you are to keep an exact amount of the quantity of oil received from time to time; the number of gallons, quarts, gills &c, consumed each night; and deliver a copy of the same to the Superintendent every three months, ending 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December, in each year; with an account of the quantity on hand at the time; (5) you are not to sell, or permit to be sold, any spirituous liquors on the premises of the United States; but will treat with civility and attention, such strangers as may visit the Lighthouse under your charge, and may conduct themselves in an orderly manner; (6) you will receive no tube-glasses, wicks, or any other article which the contractors, Messrs. Morgan & Co., at New Bedford, are bound to supply which shall not be of suitable kind; and if the oil they supply, should on trial, prove bad, you will immediately acquaint the Superintendent therewith, in order that he may exact from them a compliance of this contract; (7) should the contractors omit to supply the quantity of oil, wicks, tube-glasses, or other articles necessary to keep the lights in continual operation, you will give the Superintendent timely notice thereof, that he may inform the contractors and direct them to forward the requisite supplies; (8) you will not absent yourself from the Lighthouse at any time, without first obtaining the consent of the Superintendent, unless the occasion be so sudden and urgent as not to admit of an application to that officer, in which case, by leaving a suitable substitute, you may absent for twenty-four hours; and (9) all your communications intended for this office, must be transmitted through the Superintendent, through whom the proper answer will be returned. Fifth Auditor and Acting Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasury Department, Fifth Auditor's Office, April 23d, 1835

George McGee served as keeper from 1873 until his death in 1896 when his wife, Johanna, became the second female keeper of the Marblehead Light serving until 1903. Records of their service are available and provide a good picture of not only the keeper's tasks but weather conditions and everyday life on the peninsula.

- 30-Jan 1886: Capt. John Youngs, ex-collector of customs and stepfather of the writer (i.e., George) died in Sandusky, Ohio, aged 71 years and 9 months
- 2 & 3-Dec 1886: Terrible wind and snow yesterday and last night; thermometer down to 3 above 0 this morning; 12 above 0; Sandusky Bay covered with ice 6 inches; the lake is ice covered over; steamer *Ferris & Cook* made last trip on the 2nd.
- 9-Dec 1886: The light at this station was discontinued this morning; the bay and lake have been frozen over since the 2nd.
- 30-Dec 1886: *American Eagle* made last trip today.
- 5-Jan 1887: 4 pm to 4 pm to Sandusky to visit friends.
- 26-Jan 1887: *American Eagle* commenced running today.
- 23-Mar 1887: Green Island lit up tonight
- 20-Aug 1895: Twenty two years ago today I took charge of this station. Geo. H. McGee
- 31-Jan. 1896: The keeper has been confined to the house since November 28, 1895
(Similarly worded monthly entries until the following entry)
- 30-Jun 1896: The keeper, Geo. H. McGee, died at this station June 17, 1896, age 45 years
- 9-July 1896: Mrs. Johanna (sic) McGee has this day been appointed Keeper of this Lh Station.
- 17-May 1903: Green Island: visible; South Bass: visible: Cedar Point: bright: Cedar Point Range: bright; Wind: NE; Weather: rain; Events of the day: Started on new journal. **(Last entry in journal)**

PART TWO IN NEXT NEWSLETTER

Source: National Archives-Department of Treasury Lighthouse Service 1792-1852

House of Rep May 1st 1822

The undersigned have the honor to inform
the Secretary of the Treasury that they
have examined the papers on the subject
of keeper of the light house at Sandusky
Bay, and recommend the appointment
of Benajah Wolcott

Approved
James Monroe

J. Sloane
J. Vance

May 1, 1822, letter from House of Representatives J. Sloane and Joseph Vance to
William Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury under President Monroe,
recommending Benajah Wolcott as keeper.

Marked "Approved James Monroe".

Papers of James Monroe, University of Mary Washington.

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 VIII: <i>Milestones and Memories</i> NEW!! | \$15.00 | \$4.00 | \$1.33 | | |
| Book | Complete set of Oral Histories: Volume I through VIII | \$120.00 | \$8.00 | \$8.96 | | |
| Book | <i>Combined Atlas of Ottawa County - 1874 & 1900</i> NEW PRICE | \$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 | <i>The Keeper's House</i> - children's coloring/activity book | \$3.00 | \$2.00 | \$0.35 | | |
| Book | History of Ottawa County Historical Society | \$7.00 | \$3.00 | \$0.70 | | |
| Book | <i>Hearth Cookbook</i> | \$5.00 | \$3.00 | \$0.56 | | |
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| 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 | | |

Note: if books are being picked up do not include shipping/handling charge.

TOTAL

Please, recalculate 7% tax based on the item price only.

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OTTAWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2022- ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES - due in January of each year
(If your address label does not say 2022 or Life Member it is time to pay dues.)

Single \$15_____ Family \$25_____

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

Scholarship Fund \$ _____ Keeper's House \$ _____ OCHS \$ _____

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I am interested in volunteering.