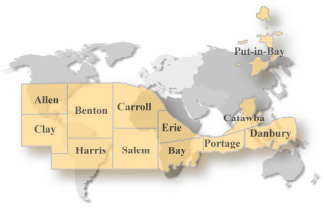

Ottawa County Historical Society

www.ottawacountyhistory.org Third Quarter 2023

1630 WOLCOTTS 2023

Members of the Wolcott family visit the Keeper's House during the 119th Wolcott family reunion.
~photo by Sheri Trusty/ Special to the News-Messenger/ News Herald

OCHS President Patrick Lawrence O'Keeffe, center, talks about the history of the Keeper's House to members of the Wolcott family. On the left is retired Ottawa Co. Judge Paul Moon.

~photo by Sheri Trusty/ Special to the News-Messenger/News Herald

Paul Moon talks about the history of the home of Benajah Wolcott, the first keeper of the Marblehead Lighthouse. Moon is a descendent of Wolcott.

~photo by Sheri Trusty/ Special to the News-Messenger/ News Herald

2023

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A PROUD HISTORY

Family of Marblehead Lighthouse's first keeper returns for reunion.

Sheri Trusty

Special to the News-Messenger/News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

MARBLEHEAD — Ottawa County is proud of its nautical history, which includes the Marblehead Lighthouse and the Keeper's House, where Benajah Wolcott, the first light keeper, lived after the structure was built in 1822.

On Aug. 5, dozens of people from around the country visited the Keeper's House because they, too, are proud of its history.

Seventy-four members of the Wolcott Family Society toured the Marblehead Lighthouse and Keeper's House as part of the 119th Wolcott family reunion. They traveled from states including Connecticut, Tennessee and New York, and as far away as Canada.

Each was a descendent of either Henry Wolcott, who arrived in Massachusetts in 1630, or other Wolcotts who arrived soon after. To be approved for membership in the Wolcott Family Society, potential members must prove lineage to a Wolcott who arrived in America before 1700.

Wolcott family members travel from Canada

"My lineage is through John Wolcott, Henry's cousin, who arrived in 1634," said Barry George, who traveled with his family from his home in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, for the reunion.

George said there are about six lines in the Wolcott genealogy that qualify for membership.

"We have done a major DNA project over the years," he said. "There were not enough records, so DNA proved the lines."

Judge Paul Moon is among the descendants

Among the Wolcott descendants was retired Ottawa County Judge Paul Moon, who hosted the Keeper's House tours. The family had lunch on the grounds catered by the Marblehead Galley, then took tours of the house, visited the nearby Wolcott cemetery and shopped at the museum and gift shop.

Benajah Wolcott was Moon's fourth great grandfather. William Kelly, who built the Keeper's House, was Moon's third great-grandfather.

"At one point, the homebuilder's son married the lighthouse keeper's granddaughter," Moon said.

Ottawa County Historical Society President Patrick Lawrence O'Keeffe shared a bit of Benajah's background with the family.

"Your cousin was an amazing guy. He was a veteran, saddle maker, fiddler, surveyor and the first lighthouse keeper," O'Keeffe said.

Rozak welcomed the group and shared points of interest

Danbury Township Trustee Dianne Rozak welcomed the group and talked about other points of historical interest in the area.

"You guys are awfully important to us, as is the Keeper's House," she told the family.

Donna Wolcott of Kent, Ohio, has attended every Wolcott reunion since 1965. She has attended reunions in many places, including Connecticut, New Orleans and Canada. She was happy to be back in Marblehead again.

"This location has a lot of Wolcott history," she said.

George said the family held a virtual reunion in 2020, but the rest of the 119 reunions were held in person.

"We move around like a convention," George said. "We've had more reunions in Ohio than any other state because there is lots of Wolcott history here."

George said Henry Wolcott traveled on the Mary and Jane, a sister ship to the Mayflower, when he arrived in America in 1630. He served as the first governor of Massachusetts.

One Wolcott signed the Declaration of Independence

"One of his offspring, Oliver Wolcott, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence," George said.

Clara Wolcott Driscoll, who was born in Tallmadge, Ohio, in 1861, was a glass designer for Tiffany Studios.

"My wife and I visited the Toledo Museum of Art and were surprised to find a Tiffany Lamp there that she designed," George said.

The Wolcott family has a unique heritage that allows them to discover family connections all over the country.

"What makes the reunions really fun is we go to places that have Wolcott history," George said. "I'm really excited to see the lighthouse and the Keeper's House."

As they learn about their ancestors like Henry, Oliver, Clara and Benajah, the Wolcotts can know they have a significant heritage in American history.

"We Wolcotts are very proud of our past and how we've helped build this country," Donna said.

Article used by permission of Sheri Trusty.

Kudos to One of Our New Members

One of our newest members has quickly brought her many skills into serving the historical society. KC (Katherine) Cousins is a seamstress and is promoting period clothing for old and new members. She has made several garments and has altered others. You will notice her gifts in the clothing some of our members are now wearing. The new curtains covering the storage shelves and the cute little valence on the door in the Annex is also KC's lovely work. KC also is an artist and has a painting of the Keeper's House displayed in the Annex (not for sale) but postcards and note cards with this likeness are for sale. KC's helpfulness whenever needed is greatly appreciated. Please welcome KC into our ranks when you meet her.

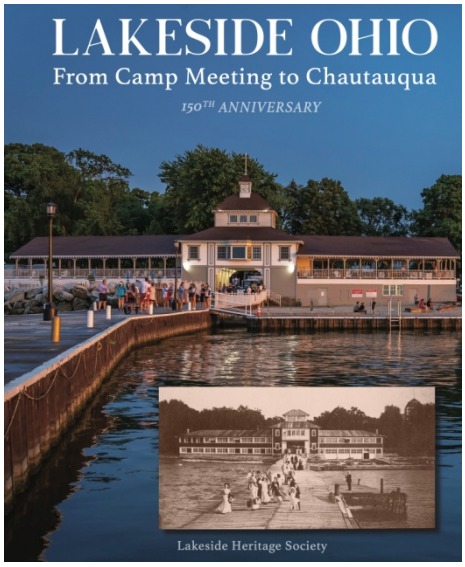
BECKY SHEMENSKI

Annex News

This season and last I have had a marvelous new addition to those staffing the Annex: Martha Dykes. Martha has managed several gift shops, so she is experienced, whereas I had no previous experience prior to being ask to manage the Annex a number of years ago. As a result of Martha's suggestions we have added new items: three different glass ornaments painted by a local artist depicting (1) the Keeper's House (2) the Marblehead Lighthouse and (3) the Port Clinton Lighthouse. We have added to our book inventory by carrying two books on Johnson's Island. We also have added a book on round barns published by Robert Kroeger, the same artist who has painted the picture in our raffle this year and who has donated several other of his paintings to help with fund raising for the Scholarship Fund. Martha has helped freshen our displays and keeps a better inventory than I ever did!! It is wonderful to have Martha work with me for these reasons and so many more. Please stop by for your Christmas shopping or just to browse. You may also order by mail using the order form insert in the Newsletter.

BECKY SHEMENSKI

Lakeside Ohio: From Camp Meeting to Chautauqua



Although Lakeside has been 150 years in the making, the 150th anniversary book took considerably less time, only a year and a half. *Lakeside Ohio: From Camp Meeting to Chautauqua* is now available for purchase ($50) at the Lakeside Heritage Society Archives and online at:

www.lakesideheritagesociety.org.

If you have ever wondered 'What Is Lakeside' this beautiful coffee-table hardcover book will answer that question and more. You'll learn about two very American movements, camp meeting and Chautauqua, and how those two blended together to form the Lakeside community we know today.

The book is about 300 pages, includes hundreds of photos, and was researched in detail to provide a broad perspective about one significant community contributing to Ottawa County's rich history.

LINDA HUBER

Fall Membership Meeting

November 12 at 11:30 a.m.
At the Catawba Island Club
Cost: $25 per person

Our speaker, Jody.(Jon) Brausch, will talk about the Tin Goose Ford Tri-motor airplane. The talk will discuss three principal topics. We will explore the important, and often overlooked, role that Henry and Edsel Ford played in the early days of commercial aviation. The second part of the presentation will look at the Ford Tri-Motor and its relationship to the Lake Erie Island region, the role that Island Airlines played in the everyday life of island residents, and how the "Tin Goose" become an important symbol of life on the islands. Finally, we will bring attendees up to date on the efforts of the Tri-Motor Heritage Foundation and our progress toward restoring the Island Airlines Ford Tri-Motor.

Liberty Aviation Coming Events

November 11th - Veterans Day at Liberty Aviation Museum Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. FREE Admission for all service members, veterans, & their families! Special sales in the museum gift shop!

December 9th & 10th - Open House at Liberty Aviation Museum Saturday & Sunday! FREE Admission for everyone!! Special sales in the museum gift shop!

December 17th - Breakfast with Santa at Liberty Aviation Museum Sunday: 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Pricing TBA

December 17th - Santa Fly-In at Liberty Aviation Museum Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. FREE Event for children to watch Santa fly in & to visit with Santa in the museum main hangar! Special sales in the museum gift shop!

Civil War Encampment

Saturday, October 14
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.

Our annual Civil War Encampment will feature the 14th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Period music provided by Allan Howey with cornet, bugle, banjo and guitar. This is our fall festival with historic military displays, and music. Apples, cider, bean soup & cornbread available. Samplings of apple pie at the Hearth Cooking station.

It will be October sooner than you think!

Becky and Kathy are looking for volunteers to contribute bean soup and cornbread for the Lighthouse Festival & Civil War Encampment at the Keeper's House on October 14th. We also need volunteers to help serve.

Your favorite bean soup recipe will help make our glorious mix of flavors to be served over an open fire to all comers. We will have butter and honey on hand. Call or text Kathy at 419-512-1741 or Becky. at 419-463-0295 It will be a great day of fun and good music. We hope to hear from you!

NOVEMBER 5TH

Growing up in Ottawa County

I have a rose-colored picture of my childhood in Ottawa County. It was always summer, and I always had a good time. My favorite memories involve the water that make up such as large part of the county.

My earliest memories include Sunday afternoons at a packed Crane Creek State Park—AKA "the beach." The water was a dark brown and full of silt, but what kid doesn't like to play in dirty water? We took an old blanket where the adults dozed while simultaneously keeping an eye on the kids. After a few hours in the water, I made my way back to our blanket for a snack. Then I had to stay out of the water, because "safety first," of course. No swimming after eating.

Then one year we stopped going to Crane Creek. Lake Erie was unsafe for swimming.

So I took my swimming adventures to the chlorinated water of the local public pool. I took my first swimming lessons there and later learned to dive. As a teenager, I fell into a crowd that included a lifeguard, which got me into the pool after hours. There is something magical about swimming after dark in the glow of the street lights.

My dad worked on a road crew, so we never took summer vacations, but we made things happen. One year my friends and I managed to go to East Harbor State Park every day for an entire week. It was now the 70s, and the Clean Water Act was going strong. The water quality of Lake Erie had improved no longer considered dangerous. But I scorned my childhood playground, Crane Creek for the very cool East Harbor. And instead of going with my parents, I went there with older kids (ok, my brother and sister and their friends. But still, I was there).

If you're going to live in Ottawa County, you're going to fish. And I fished. The white bass was back thanks to the improved water quality, and so were the fishermen. The Portage River was right across the road from my house and I could fish daily. We rowed the boat out into the middle of the river and cast our lures in search of a bite. More often, we sat on the bank and used worms as bait. The neighbor boys would walk down the middle of the river in search of catfish they could spear.

I was the grandchild of farmers, and spent a lot of time exploring the farms. Farmers are hoarders by design--many of the farm implements in the Annex were in Grandpa's outbuildings. Nothing was ever thrown out, just moved to another building. Even the outhouse was a storage bin for old catalogs. The attic had old clothes and the basement had old furniture and a broken TV. There was an old wood burning stove and kitchen table left over from the 50s. My grandparents raised chickens (mean little creatures), and my siblings would steal an egg, running as if the chickens were chasing. We took the stolen egg down the lane, inevitably breaking it. The point of this excursion was apparently to run, scream, and break the egg.

Years later, when the chickens were gone and I didn't run everywhere, I noticed lane posts down the lane—not a typical farmer's posts, but hefty square posts with arrows carved into them. I asked my grandpa about the posts. This was the first time I heard about the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge that had taken over his farm. A couple of years later my class took a field trip to the refuge. After walking for a while in the woods, we came to a clearing. I looked up and there was the back of my grandpa's barn.

I look back at my childhood as a magical time. I spent so much of my time outdoors exploring. I continue to explore it today. I feel very blessed to call Ottawa County home.

LISA HOSSLER

Catawba Island Historical Society Coming Events

September 19, the museum will host an event for the Historical Society's 158 Lifetime Council of Nabagon Members. It is a thank you for their support of our efforts at Union Chapel Museum, an occasion for us to summarize activities during our operating season, and an opportunity for guests to ask about our future plans. The evening reception will be held at Gideon Owen Winery.

The annual business meeting, scheduled to begin at **5:30 p.m. on October 18,** will be held at the Catawba Island Community Hall. It is for all our members. Basically, it is the Historical Society's State of the Union Address. It will be followed by a guest speaker at 6:00 p.m. The speech is part of our biannual cultural lecture series and is free and open to the public. This year's talk will be about the peach industry and will be given by Mr. Brad Schwan, owner of Schwan's Peach Orchard on Catawba Island.

JANE SPRIESTERSBACH, CURATOR

Johnson's Island Cemetery Tour
September 9, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

The Johnson's Island Preservation Society will have our annual Johnson's Island cemetery tour on September 9 , 2023 at 1:00 PM. The public is invited to attend. There is no charge. There is a $2 toll to cross the causeway, however (dollar bills only). If you have any questions please contact me via email or phone: 419-626-3579 or cell # 567-219-0398. Thanks. Don Young Johnson's Island Preservation Society PO Box 1865 Marblehead, Oh 43440 DON YOUNG

OCHS Annual Potluck Enjoyed by All

photos by Kathy Leonard

Barns of Ottawa County

OCHS Fundraiser at Port Clinton Arts Barn

~Linda Huber

The first fundraiser for the OCHS Scholarship Fund was held on Friday, June 2 at the Port Clinton's Art Garage. Author/artist Robert Kroeger was the featured guest. Throughout the day, Bob completed a demonstration painting of the Ward Otte family barn on Rte. 51. The painting is first prize at our annual raffle to be held at the Wolcott Keeper's House Fall Festival/Civil War Encampment on Saturday, October 14. We raised a little over $2,000 for the Scholarship Fund which included a generous donation from OCHS members Skip & Ellen Honsperger.

Otte family barn painting by Robert Kroeger

As part of Bob's visit, we provided a tour of several barns within the County. He is completing 14 paintings and images will be part of a 2025 'Barns of Ottawa County' calendar. We plan to have the calendar available for purchase in time for the summer 2024 season.

Perry County Round Barn by Robert Kroeger

In addition to the 14 wood-framed paintings, Bob has provided 3 paintings plus a poster of selected barns from his *Round Barns of America* book. All 17 paintings and poster will be made available as part of an online auction mid-2024 for the benefit of the OCHS Scholarship Fund. Bob's *Round Barns* book is available for sale at the Keeper's House Annex Gift Shop.

LINDA HUBER

Please mail me the following items.

Item	Description	Price each	Shipping/ Handling each	Tax each	X Quantity	Total
Book	*Along the Highways & Waterways of Ottawa County*	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Book	*History of Ottawa County - the First 175 Years*	$35.00	$5.00	$2.80		
Book	Volume I: *How We Got Here, What We Did*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume II: *Recollections and Voices*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume III: *Across the Townships*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume IV: *Threads and Textures of a Tapestry*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume V: *Ottawa County Through Their Eyes*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume VI: *Memories and Adventures*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	VolumeVII: *The Stories Continue*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	VolumeVIII: *Milestones and Memories*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Complete set of Oral Histories: Volume I through VIII	$120.00	$8.00	$8.96		
Book	*Combine Atlas of Ottawa County 1874 & 1900* - **OUT OF PRINT**	Online version avialable at Ohio History Connection website under "Historic Maps & Atlases" www.ohiohistory.org				
Book	Historic Driving Tour Guide: *Historic Railroads of* ***Western*** *Ottawa County*	$4.00	$2.00	$0.42		
Book	Historic Driving Tour Guide: *Historic Railroads of* ***Eastern*** *Ottawa County*	$4.00	$2.00	$0.42		
Book	*The Keeper's House* - coloring/activity book	$3.00	$2.00	$0.35		
Book	*History of Ottawa County Historical Society*	$7.00	$3.00	$0.70		
Book	*Hearth Cookbook*	$5.00	$3.00	$0.56		
Book	*Marblehead Lighthouse on Lake Erie* by James Proffitt	$21.95	$3.00	$1.75		
Book	*Lights at the Portage* by Richard J. Norgard	$10.00	$3.00	$0.91		
Book	*Lake Erie's West Sister Island* by Martha Dykes	$10.00	$3.00	$0.91		
Book	*My Island Home* by Gladys Curd McMeans	$10.00	$3.00	$0.91		
Book	*Johnson's Island: Prison for Confederate Officers*	$18.00	$3.00	$1.47		
Book	*I Fear I Shall Never Leave This Island: Life in a Civil War Prison* ***NEW!***	$18.00	$3.00	$1.47		
Book	*Round Barns of America* by Robert Kroeger ***NEW!***	$35.00	$5.00	$2.80		
CD	*Skirmish on the Peninsula* ***NEW!***	$15.00	$3.00	$1.26		
Tote	Keeper's House Tote Bag	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
T-Shirt	Keeper's House T-shirt - heather gray ***Circle Size: M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL***	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Mug	Keeper's House Coffee Mug	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Misc.	Cat's Meow Keeper's House	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Misc.	Cat's Meow Port Clinton Lighthouse ***NEW!***	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Misc.	Cat's Meow Marblehead Lighthouse	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
					TOTAL	

Note: if books or merchandise are being picked up do not include shipping/handling charge.
Please, recalculate 7% tax based on the item price only.

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Ottawa Co. Historical Society

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Through purchases you make:
Through Kroger supermarket, designate your charity as Ottawa County Historical Society, a portion of your purchase will be donated to the Society

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES – Membership year January 1 through December 31

Levels and Dues: (check one)

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Address_____

Phone Number_____

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Additional Donation: You may also use this form to make a separate donation. You may select from the following funds. Please specify the amount of your additional donation.

____OCHS General _____ Scholarship _____ Wolcott Keeper's House

Total enclosed_____ Date_____ Check #_____

☐ I am interested in volunteering.

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

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