Ottawa County Historical Society

www.ottawacountyhistory.org First Quarter 2025

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Countdown to 250: Update on Ottawa County Celebrations

On Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 11 a.m. at the County/City Government Complex Building, 1858 E. Perry Street, Port Clinton, Ottawa County Commissioners will raise America-250 Ohio (AM-250 Ohio) Community flag. The AM-250 Ohio Commission provided a flag to every designated AM-250 Ohio community. Ottawa County along with 87 counties across the state are participating AM-250 Ohio communities and receive access to resources and special information on planned statewide events and initiatives to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. This flag raising event coincides with the founding of Ottawa County March 6, 1840.

'Two Lights for Tomorrow' will be held April 18 & 19, 2025. This is a nationwide initiative to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the famous ride of Paul Revere that alerted American patriots about approaching British troops at Lexington and Concord. On April 18, every statehouse will display two lights, as will the Ottawa County courthouse. We invite lighting participation at as many locations as possible, including community centers, municipal and county administrative buildings, and private residences. On April 19, a day of service is encouraged with volunteer projects from park and cemetery clean-ups, community builds, food drives and outreach to residents of care facilities.

The Ottawa County Historical Society on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 1 p.m. will dedicate a National Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Patriot Marker at the Wolcott Keeper's House Family Cemetery in Danbury Township. The DAR Patriot Marker will be placed at the gravesite of American Revolutionary War veteran, Benajah Wolcott. In addition to Wolcott, the ceremony will honor four other American Revolutionary War veterans buried in Ottawa County. The four veterans are Isaac Ambler, John Clemons, John Green, and Israel Harrington.

The Ottawa County-America 250 Committee is working with groups across the County to plan celebratory events and activities everyone can enjoy. We'll share event information as soon as plans are finalized. In the interim, please check the Ottawa County Historical Society website for available information at www.ottawacountyhistory.org.

From the President's Desk.....

As President of the OCHS, I say Thank You for your continued support of the Society. Your dues, allow for the organization to continue to do its mission of bringing about a heightened awareness of the history of Ottawa County. In addition to the dues, you can assist the Society, by taking an active role in the workings of the organization. There are many volunteer opportunities available, from being a Docent at the Keeper's House, to helping with tours, to helping with the Spring cleanup, among others. Again, Thank You for your support and please consider volunteering your time within the Society. Please contact any of the Board members with your interest.

JIM SASS, PRESIDENT OCHS

Membership Renewal Reminder

Renewal notices for 2025 memberships have been recently mailed. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please take a moment to do so now. The Society relies on dues, donations, and grants to fund the organization's operating expenses as well as its planned events and activities.

In addition to monetary support, the Society has a number of volunteer opportunities and would be thrilled to have you spend any available time you can share with the Society. Opportunities include serving as a docent at the Wolcott Keeper's House during the summer season, providing a helping hand at special events, and assisting with various tasks associated with putting together publications. Please contact President Jim Sass at 419-734-3081 to learn more about volunteering.

Thank you for your continuing support.

2025 Spring Cleaning at the Keeper's House

WHEN: Saturday, May 10th -
Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon
WHERE: Keeper's House,
9999 Bayshore Road, Marblehead

Bring light cleaning supplies (brooms, rags, Windex, buckets, rakes, etc.). We'll be sweeping out the cobwebs inside the Keeper's House and Annex. Pizza will be served at noon. All welcome!

Questions call Dave O'Neal at 419-898-2000.
Thanks so much!!

Keeper's House & Annex 2025 Hours

The Keeper's House and Annex will be open from May 24, 2025 through September 1, 2025 from 1-4 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays.

Additional Volunteers and Docents are always welcome and needed. Please contact Becky Shemenski at 419-463-0295 (call or text) if you can lend a hand.

Orientation for all Volunteers and Docents for 2025 will be held on Saturday, May 17 at 11:30 a.m. Orientation will be prior to the DAR Marker Dedication to be held at the Keeper's House and Cemetery from 1-2 p.m. that same day (May 17).

2025 OCHS Coming Events

Sunday, April 27 @ 11:30 a.m.
Spring meeting of the Membership
Schedel Arboretum and Gardens in Elmore
with a presentation by Schedel

Saturday, May 10 @ 10 a.m.
Spring cleaning Keeper's House & Annex

Saturday, May 17 @ 11:30 a.m.
Volunteer Orientation

Saturday, May 17 @ 1 p.m.
Daughters of the American Revolution
Patriot Marker dedication
at the Wolcott Family Cemetery

Friday, May 24, 1-4 p.m.
Keeper's House & Annex open for the season

Saturday, June 7 @ 11 a.m.
Hearth cooking

Sunday, June 22 @ 12 Noon
Portage River Festival table/booth

Saturday, July 12 @ 11 a.m.
Food & Music

Saturday, August 16 @ 10 a.m.
Port Clinton Lighthouse Festival table/booth

Wednesday, August 20 @ 5 p.m.
Annual Potluck Picnic

Monday, September 1
Keeper's House & Annex
Closes for the season

Saturday, October 11 @ 11 a.m.
Fall Festival/Civil War Encampment

Sunday, November 9 @ 11:30 a.m.
Fall meeting of the Membership @ CIC
Speaker TBD

Revolution Five: Ottawa County Veterans in the American Revolution

By Linda K. Huber

About This Series: This is the third and final installment of a three-part series on the American Revolution and five veterans from that conflict who are buried in Ottawa County.

Part III: Home

Ottawa County is the final resting place of the Revolution Five. Two veterans are buried in Elmore, one in Marblehead, and two in Danbury. What brought the Revolution Five to Ottawa County? The reasons for John Clemons and Benajah Wolcott most likely were quarry work and surveying the land, respectively. For Isaac Ambler, John Green, and Israel Harrington, it may be that family members were already in Ottawa County.

Other more general reasons might be the fact that thousands of people left Connecticut and New England for a new life in the west after the American Revolution ended and established the lands of the Connecticut Western Reserve. Also, perhaps, was the lure of land, new opportunities and just to 'go west young man and grow up with the country'.

Isaac Amber. Died January 31, 1818 at the age of 61. He is buried in Sackett Cemetery, Danbury Township, as are his wife, Nancy, their daughter, Rhena (Ambler) Richards and her husband, Alfred. Isaac married Nancy Skelding and had several children. A reference in the Hardesty 1874 *Illustrated Atlas of Ottawa County* places Ambler in the Danbury Township narrative, "Amongst the early settlers were E. W .Bull, Z. Wildman, Benajah Wolcottt, Thomas Pettybone (sic), Isaac Ambler, Judge Ruggles, Horace Ramsdell, Jacob Ramsdell, John Ramsdell and Valentine Ramsdell." Also listed in that same Atlas is Alfred Richards, husband of Isaac's daughter, indicating Richards came to the Township in 1816-1817 from Canada. An 1810 Stamford, Connecticut census lists Ambler along with James Skelding, father of Ambler's wife, Nancy. No conclusion is readily apparent from these records as to why or when Ambler arrived in the Township.

John Clemons, Jr. Died March 5, 1845 at the age of 81. He is buried in the Clemons Family Cemetery in Marblehead, Ohio, along with his wife and various members of the Clemons family. John and his wife, Abigail, had several children. From information in *The Clemons Family of Hiram, Maine* genealogy, Clemons farmed their land in Hiram then at the age of 54 relocated in 1817 to Sandusky, Ohio. There he quarried stone on Kelley's Island then moved to Ottawa County in 1834 at the age of 71. One of John and Abigail's many children was Alexander Clemons. In the Winter 1954 edition of *Inland Seas,* Merlin Wolcott indicates Alexander came to Sandusky in 1817 and his parents and family joined him in 1819, not 1817. Whenever John actually came to the County, there is extensive history of the significant impact the entire Clemons family had on the development of both Marblehead and the surrounding Peninsula area.

John Green. Died March 30, 1837 at the age of 80. He and his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Diana (Green) Thompson are buried in the Harris-Elmore Cemetery. John and his wife. Sarah, had several children, all born in New York. Their daughter, Diana, married Solomon Thompson. In Green's pension declaration, Solomon states he knew Green for a number of years while living in Virgil, New York. Virgil was part of the Central New York Military Tract, two million acres of land set aside to compensate soldiers of the American Revolution. Lots were drawn and assigned to settlers. It may be that Green acquired land as part of this process. At some point, John moved to Harris Township, Ottawa County, and lived with daughter, Diana, until their deaths on the 'Thompson Farm'.

Israel Harrington. Died September 10, 1825 at the age of 85. He and family are buried in the Harris-Elmore Old Cemetery (aka Harrington Cemetery). Israel married Mehetebel Shippee in 1759 and together had several children. Mehetebel died in 1798 and is buried in Danby, VT. Oldest son, Israel, born in Danby, is referenced in the *First Families of Ottawa County* as settling in Harris Township about 1824 and in 1825 was elected a Trustee. It is unknown whether his father, Israel, was already living in this area or whether he relocated once his son was already living in Harris Township.

Benajah Wolcott. Died August 11, 1832 at the age of 70. He is buried in the Wolcott Family Cemetery, Danbury Township, along with several members of the family. In *Ohio Yankee: Benajah Wolcott, Revolutionary Soldier and Pioneer,* author/historian Merlin Wolcott has provided details on Wolcott's post-Revolutionary War years. Returning home, his father, William, died in 1784 and his mother, Phebe, died four years later in 1788. In 1783, Benajah married Elizabeth Bradley, after which he followed a military career and in 1793 was appointed a Lieutenant at Catskill, New York, serving in Capt. Peter Raymond Light Infantry Company, Brig. Gen. David McCarty Regiment. Together, Benajah and Elizabeth had three children. Leaving the militia in 1796, he settled his family in Danbury, Connecticut.

Of the Revolution Five, Benajah is the only one with definitive information answering the question how and why he came to the area, and that is, the Connecticut Western Reserve. Specifically, Benajah was one of the 13 members of a party to survey the 'Fire Lands', a half million acres of the Reserve to compensate Connecticut residents for property losses caused by British raids during the War. After finishing the survey, Benajah entered into a land contract with Epaphras W. Bull in 1809 for part of the land in Danbury Township where the Wolcott Keeper's House still stands today. At completion of the land contract in 1816, Benajah was deeded the property.

Call to Duty

The Congressional Research Service provides a report to Congress titled "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad" for the period 1798 to the then current report publication year. The last report completed

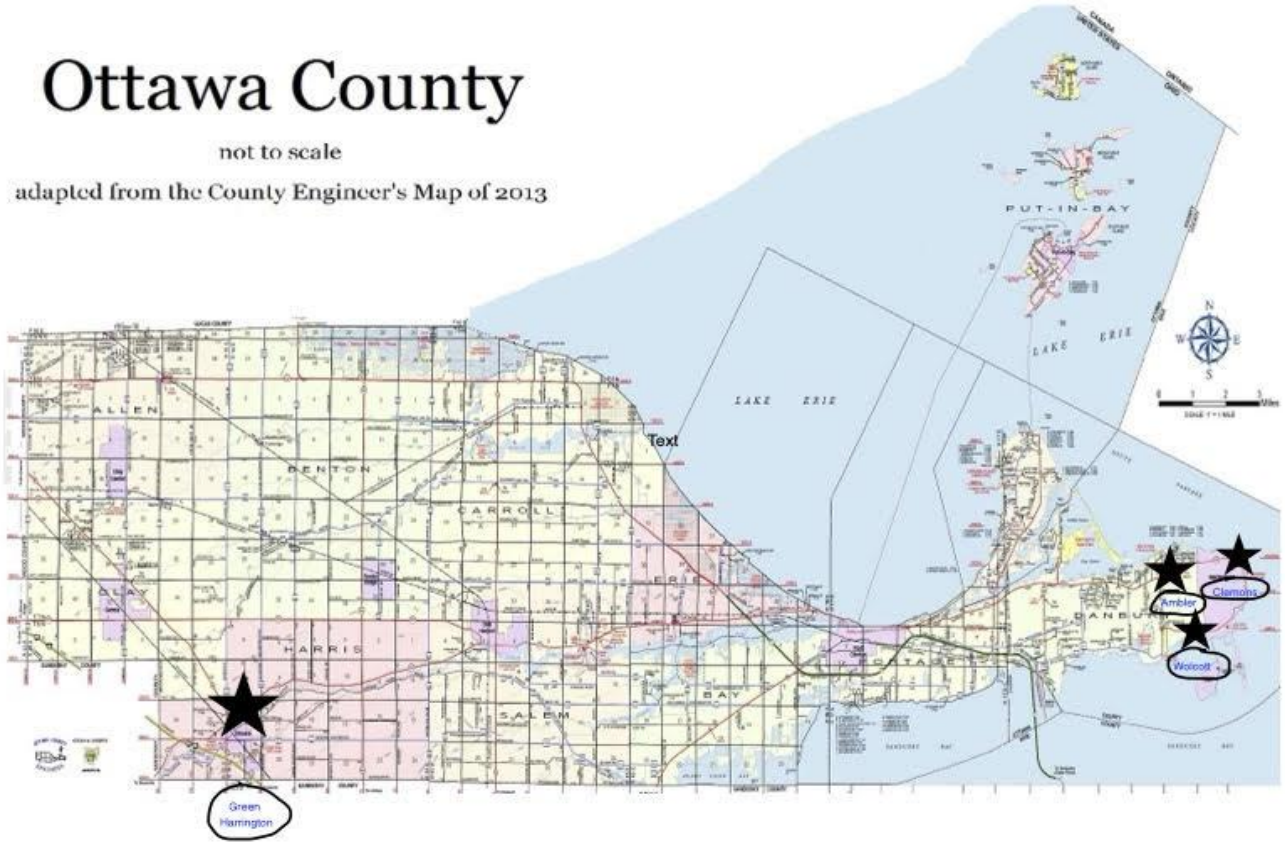
June 7, 2023 is 58 pages long and has literally hundreds of instances listed. The first notable deployment was 1798 in an undeclared naval war with France. The United States officially declared war on five occasions.

No records were found that answer why the Revolution Five chose to enter service. No matter the reason. It is important we remember and honor these five as well as every service person who has chosen to answer that Call to Duty.

The National Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) created a special Patriots Marker for America's 250th anniversary to honor those who served in the American Revolution. The Ottawa County Historical Society applied for and received a grant from the America-250 Ohio Commission to help defray the cost of a DAR Patriot Marker. Since submitting the grant, the Society confirmed Ottawa County has a total of five veterans of the American Revolution buried in the County, i.e., the 'Revolution Five': Isaac Ambler, John Clemons Jr. , John Green, Israel Harrington, and Benajah Wolcott. On May 17, 2025 the DAR Patriot Marker will be dedicated and placed at the Wolcott Family Cemetery in Danbury Township in honor of all five veterans.

The DAR Patriot Marker and this three-part series are the first efforts to honor those who have answered the Call to Duty. A multi-phase project is under discussion to collectively recognize all veterans interred in Ottawa County who served in America's armed forces. To learn more about this multi-phase project and volunteer, please contact Linda Huber at abhawkins57@me.com or David Barth at drb360@gmail.com.

Final resting places of the Revolution Five in Ottawa County



ONE LOCAL FAMILY'S
CIVIL WAR CONNECTION
By Linda Higgens

Among the numerous historical items of local interest in the Ottawa County Museum is a large framed American flag from the 19th century. The handwritten note attached to the flag itself announces:

"This Flag Presented to Post 113
by John D. McRitchie
last surviving member of
Geo. R. McRitchie Post
of G.A.R."

This is not a Civil War battle flag but a presentation flag, and it represents an important piece of McRitchie family history.

George R. McRitchie was born in 1839 to John and Elizabeth Richardson McRitchie, originally from Scotland and among those shipwrecked on Port Clinton's shores in 1836. (A description of the shipwreck is presented in an earlier article, written in October of 2022.) John D. McRitchie, born in Bay Township in February of 1845, was a son of David (brother to John, George's father) and Jane Yule McRitchie, who were also involved in the shipwreck. John D. and George R. McRitchie were, therefore, cousins and both fought in the Civil War.

John volunteered for service in October of 1864, taking the place of his brother-in-law, Charles Darr, who had been drafted, but had family obligations. John, in Company E, 64th Regiment, OVI, Third Brigade of the 2nd Division of the 4th Corps, fought at Lookout Mountain and Chattanooga, among other battles, until October of 1865.

George attended Oberlin College for one term then taught at the Hineline school near Mud Creek from 1860 until he enlisted in August of 1861. He served in Company G, 100th Regiment, OVI, until June of 1861. He was driving rebels when he stopped with his men to eat near Marietta, Georgia. He moved from behind a tree to let his men know that the food was ready when a hidden rebel shot and killed him. His men wrapped him in his blanket and placed him in a casket they had made of cartridge boxes. They buried him under a tree near a road about six miles outside Atlanta, Georgia. The members of the G.A.R. Post in Port Clinton eventually named the local post in his honor.

After the war, John married Sarah Leggett on Christmas Day 1866 in Port Clinton. They lived in Bay Township on the James Leggett farm, and had eight children: six daughters and two sons. John farmed, but also held local offices as constable, assessor, trustee and township clerk. He served as an officer of the G.A.R. McRitchie post for a time. *In 1891 the family moved to 111 Laurel Avenue in Port Clinton, then in 1928 to 418 Monroe Street. Sarah died that same year and their oldest, a daughter, and youngest, a son, died before John did.*

John D. McRitchie was the last of Port Clinton's Civil War veterans when he died after a fall in his home at age 87 in May of 1932. According to the *Ottawa County News,* May 20, 1932, he'd been "looking forward to the Memorial Day observation when he would be the lone representative of the Grand Army of the Republic, yet he realized that to be present would mean a tax on his strength." American Legion Post No. 118 carried the flag-draped casket from his home to Lakeview Cemetery, where a "firing squad fired a volley and a bugler sounded taps." He was buried with military honors.

No doubt there are countless other stories of Port Clinton's Civil War soldiers, as told by their families. And most of those families' names would be familiar to local citizens today because these descendants serve the community. The museum also holds some of these families' items that help tell their stories.

Over 15 Tons of Nuts Produced At Herbert's Nut Company

February 1937
newspaper article

Over 15 tons of nuts were roasted, salted, sacked and distributed from the Herbert Nut Co. on State street during 1936, according to Mr. Herbert.

The majority of these were consumed by Ottawa county people, although Mr. Herbert's business has grown until today he distributes nuts as far south as Zanesville, as far west as Napoleon and Bryan and east to Norwalk.

A check of his records disclosed the interesting fact that 16,500 lbs. of peanuts, 4,650 lbs. of pecans, 6,650 lbs. of cashews, 2,585 lbs. of Brazil nuts & 500 lbs. of English walnuts were sold from the local factory during the past year.

After learning the business in Wisconsin, he returned to Port Clinton, in May 1931, when he first started business in Port Clinton's first school building of the old post office.

The business expanded until he was forced to seek larger quarters. February 1, 1936, the company was moved to the present State street address where 7 large rooms are utilized.

When he first began making a living roasting and distributing nuts, he was the sole distributor. Today he employs a salesman who operates the company trucks and distributes nuts in this county, Toledo, Pemberville, Bowling Green, & other towns in this district.

Besides the local factory & shop, he has agents in Sandusky, Norwalk, Mansfield, Zanesville, Tiffin and two in Toledo.

Today, Herbert's Nuts can be found in many of the prominent stores & taverns in Ohio. Port Clinton is becoming famous for its nuts!

The local Company has also had requests in neighboring states, but has not gone into foreign fields as yet.

Eleven different sacks of nuts are shipped from the local factory. They are Brazil, jumbo peanut, almond, pistachio, Spanish peanut, cashew, burnt almond, pecan, filberts, French peanut & English walnut.

Although most of the nuts are purchased from an importer, the Brazil nuts come from South America; almonds from Spain; cashews from India; pistachios from Syria; walnuts from California & peanuts are obtained from Georgia & Virginia.

The nuts are shipped in large 100 lb. bags, or as in the case of cashews, they come in 25 lb. vacuum packed tin cans. The best season for the sale of nuts is from Decoration Day to Christmas, according to Mr. Herbert.

The big selling cashew nuts were discovered by a missionary in India only 12 years ago. Today, they lead the American market in some places, surpassing peanuts in favoritism. The cashew nuts grow on the end of pears in their native India. The pears are plucked, the nuts separated, then are broken open, blanched, & sorted by natives. Even the pear is now used being in demand for making wine. The cashew nut shells are gray & very tough.

The filberts are generally imported from Italy, although some are grown in Washington & Oregon. The American filberts are smaller than those grown in Italy.

Unlike most other businesses peanuts & other nuts cannot be prepared in advance, but must be prepared when orders come in, so that the nuts will not become stale. The nuts are packed in moisture proof cellophane packages and are placed on cards. On the cards are pictures of beautiful ladies, & as the nuts are sold off the card, the countenance of the lovely ladies lure the buyers on.

All modern equipment is used at the local factory. The nuts are places in hot cocoanut butter in a large vat, where they are roasted. The cocoanut butter is odorless & tasteless, thus does not affect the natural flavor of the nuts.

After roasting, the nuts are pulled in their container across a pulley tract to the cooler & dried. In this bin, which appears similar to a large sieve, cold air is forced over the nuts, cooling them, & the butter drips through into containers below. The nuts are then salted.

After being made ready for the consumer, the nuts are weighed & sacked in cellophane sacks, placed on cards, & sent to the consumer somewhere in Ohio.

The Spanish revolution is causing a hardship in Port Clinton, believe it or not. A scarcity of almonds is reported from the Herbert Nut factory, as the almonds are produced in Spain.

Besides his agents, a distributor, three girls are employed by Mr. Herbert in his fast growing Port Clinton nut factory. Another Port Clinton man has used his intuition & intelligence in a new field and has been highly successful. *Eat More Nuts, Keep Port Clinton People Employed*, would be a good slogan for Port Clinton.

CONTRIBUTED BY PEGGY DEBIEN
OTTAWA COUNTY MUSEUM

Item	Description	Price each	Shipping 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	Volume VII: *The Stories Continue*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume VIII: *Milestones and Memories*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	**Volume IX: *Century Farms and More* *NEW!!***	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	**Volume X: *Careers and More* *NEW!!***	$15.00	$4.00	$1.05		
Book	Complete set of Oral Histories: Volume I through X	$150.00	$10.00	$11.20		
Book	Driving Tour Guide: *Historic Railroads of **Western** Ottawa County*	$4.00	$2.00	$0.42		
Book	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*	$18.00	$3.00	$1.47		
Book	*Round Barns of America* by Robert Kroeger	$35.00	$5.00	$2.80		
Book	*Lakeside, Ohio: From Camp Meeting to Chautauqua*	$50.00	$5.00	$3.85		
Book	~~*Great Black Swamp by Jim Mollenkopf*~~	$12.00	$3.00	$1.05	out of stock	
Book	*Great Black Swamp II* by Jim Mollenkopf ***NEW!***	$13.00	$3.00	$1.12		
Book	*Great Black Swamp III* by Jim Mollenkopf ***NEW!***	$14.00	$3.00	$1.19		
Tote	Keeper's House Tote Bag	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Mug	Keeper's House Coffee Mug	$15.00	$4.50	$1.37		
Misc.	2025 Barns of Ottawa County Calendar	$10.00	$3.00	$0.91		
Misc.	Cat's Meow Keeper's House	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Misc.	Cat's Meow Port Clinton Lighthouse	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68		
Misc.	~~Cat's Meow Marblehead Lighthouse~~	$20.00	$4.00	$1.68	out of stock	
					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.

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City/State/Zi _____

Please, make your check payable to the Ottawa County Historical Society or OCHS and mail it to:

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

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

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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: 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

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES – Membership year January 1 through December 31

Levels and Dues: (check one)

____Single ($20) ____Family ($35) ____Sustaining ($50) ____Patron ($100 or more) ___Lifetime ($500)

Name_____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number_____

Email_____

In addition to the above membership dues, I/we make the following donation(s):

____ General Fund
____ Scholarship Fund
____ Wolcott Keeper's House

The newsletter is sent quarterly via email. If you prefer a **paper** copy via US mail, please indicate here:

____ Yes, send a paper copy via US mail

Total enclosed_____ Date_____ Check #_____

☐ I am interested in volunteering.

The OCHS is a non-profit organization. Your donation may be tax deductible.
Duplicate membership payments are considered a donation to the General Fund.

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