Ottawa County Historical Society

www.ottawacountyhistory.org Fourth Quarter 2025

2026 Officers

President
Jim Sass
419-734-3081

Vice President
Lisa Hossler
lhossler@seolibraries.org

Secretary
Linda Huber ~ 419-702-7060

Treasurer
Doug Huber ~ 419-702-7060

Trustees
KC Cousins~ 567-377-2841
Lisa Hossler
lhossler@seolibraries.org
Linda Huber ~ 419-702-7060
Richard Norgard ~ 419-797-2917
John Starcher ~ 419-656-0095
Jannah Wilson ~ 419-271-2771
Curt Fleming
David Kimmel
Brian Porter

Past Presidents
Linda Hossler
Patrick O'Keeffe
Paul Moon
Richard Taylor

Membership Chairman
Linda Huber ~ 419-702-7060

Program Chairman
Lisa Hossler
lhossler@seolibraries.org

Corresponding Secretary, Newsletter Editor
Martha Dykes ~ 419-732-1843
martgene80@gmail.com

From the President's Desk……

To the members and supporters of the Ottawa County Historical Society, I would like to give a brief update on some of the activities of the group, since our previous newsletter and Thank You for your support, this year.

The Fall Festival was well attended and enjoyed by all. Thank you to all who volunteered and to all those that donated cornbread and/or bean soup, we had many compliments. Next year we will have General U.S. Grant to inspect the troops, will be very interesting. The November membership meeting was well attended and all enjoyed the portrayal of George and Martha Washington. We said good bye to Becky Shemenski, Suzy Wittenmeyer, and David O'Neal as Board members, but certainly hope they will continue contributing to the success of the Society by participating in events and activities. We welcome to the Board Curt Fleming, David Kimmel, and Brian Porter as new members and we all look forward to their contributions to both the Board and to the success of the OCHS in the coming years. Thank You, to all.

I am pleased to announce the sign at the Wolcott Cemetery has been replaced with a new, weatherproof one. It was funded, partially through a grant from the Ottawa Sandusky Seneca Solid Waste District. In a cooperative effort with the OCHS and Danbury Township, the Township maintenance workers removed the old sign and erected the new sign. If you are in the vicinity, take a look, it is a vast improvement.

Lastly, you will be receiving your membership letters soon, if not already. I encourage you to renew your membership, in a timely manner, the instructions are at the bottom of the letter. Also, please consider volunteering with the Society. We are always looking for docents, help with running the annex, and new ideas that can help move the OCHS forward.

Have a Blessed Holiday Season as we look forward to America's 250th Birthday.

Sincerely, Jim Sass, President OCHS

President Jim Sass awarding Becky Shememski a lovely crystal Keeper's House for her many dedicated years serving OCHS.

Fall Festival 2025
Raffle Ticket Winners

Three young children Ruby, Oliver and Evie were picked to draw the winning raffle tickets. This year's raffle ticket winners were Mary Kuehn, Anne Butcher and Ron & Diane Gerkensmeyer.

Mary won a Robert Kroeger barn painting and chose the *Nature's Mousetrap* painting. Anne won the beautiful gift basket of assorted items from the Gift Shop. Ron & Diane won a book from the Gift Shop and chose *Johnson's Island: Prison for Confederate Officers.*

Mary was especially thrilled to win the Kroeger painting as she owns a lovely century farm with a beautiful barn on Route 163. The Butchers loved all the thoughtful items that reminded them of special places along the lake.

Thanks to all for participating in this year's raffle!

2026 Membership Renewals: It's That Time of Year Again

Thank you for continuing to support the Ottawa County Historical Society. The largest segment of the Society's operating funds comes from membership dues. These operational funds are used to help bring various events throughout the year to the Wolcott Keeper's House, events like hearth cooking demonstration, musical concerts, and the always popular fall festival/Civil War encampment. Please look for your membership renewal form in the mail during the month of December. Memberships are for the period January 1 through December 31.

Gift Membership

Need a stocking stuffer for someone this Christmas? How about a gift membership to the Ottawa County Historical Society. Just fill out and return the Gift Membership form enclosed with this newsletter, and Santa will take care of the rest.

Need a gift for your favorite history buff?
Check out our selection of books About Ottawa County!
(order form on page 7)

History and Jeopardy for 250

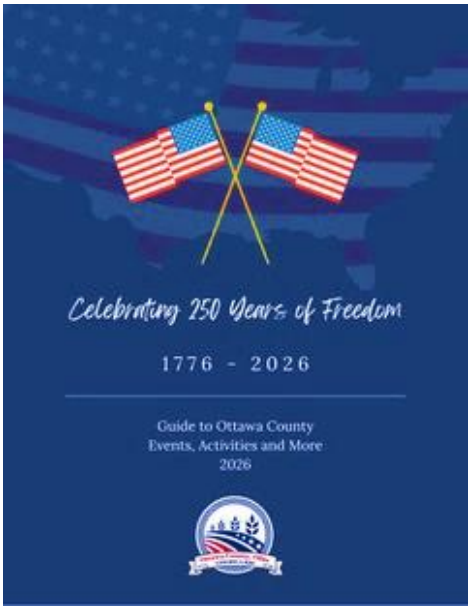
Celebrations have begun for America's 250th birthday. Dale and Nancy Fellows as George and Martha Washington were the guests of honor at the fall meeting of the Ottawa County Historical Society November 9 at the Catawba Island Club. We have it on good authority the Washingtons will return to the County summer 2026. Other Society 250th celebrations are "Day in the Life of a Lighthouse Keeper" performances June 6, 7, 8 by Brian Ellis of Fox Tales International, programs on America's Founding Documents (Declaration, Northwest Ordinance and Constitution), and a Presidents Series that will include Curt Fields as Ulysses S. Grant at the Wolcott Keeper's House annual Fall Festival/Civil War Encampment on October 10.

L-R Suzy Wittenmyer, Becky Shemenski, David O'Neal, Curt Fleming, Dale Fellows, Nancy Fellows, David Kimmel, Brian Porter

The County's America-250 Committee, other historical societies and museums, local libraries, and private organizations have organized a number of programs and activities throughout 2026 to celebrate this once-in-a-lifetime event. For complete information on countywide events, tours and exhibits, a Program Guide is available to download from the Ottawa County Historical Society America-250 website page at

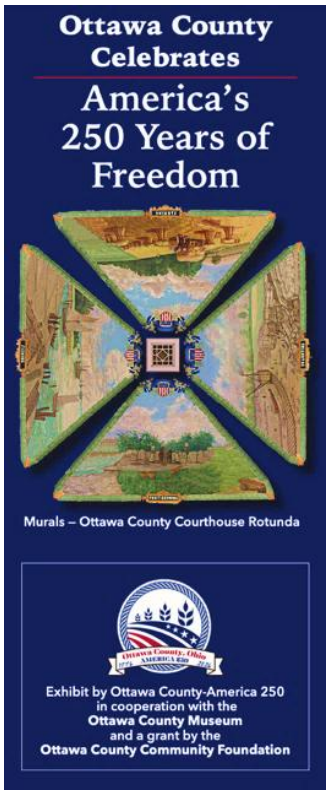
www.ottawacountyhistory.org/america-250.

The Guide will be updated January 2026 with a final update March 2026.



2026 Program Guide

On December 1 running through December 31 is an exhibit titled, "*Ottawa County Celebrates America's 250 Years of Freedom*" that will be on display at the Ottawa County Courthouse. Created by the Ottawa County-America 250 Committee in cooperation with the Ottawa County Museum and a grant from the Ottawa County Community Foundation, the exhibit tells the story of Ottawa County within the context of America.



Ottawa County Celebrates Exhibit

While on display, visitors will have an opportunity to play "*Ottawa County Jeopardy*" with a chance to enter a drawing to win several prizes---Lakeside Chautauqua summer experience package, Schedel Arboretum & Gardens family membership, and Ottawa County Chambers of Commerce gift basket. Contestant forms with game details are available at the exhibit venue. The drawing will take place in December 2026 and winners need not be present. The exhibit will travel throughout the County on display at libraries, museums, fairgrounds and senior life campuses. See the 2026 Program Guide for a complete schedule on where and when the exhibit will be on display.

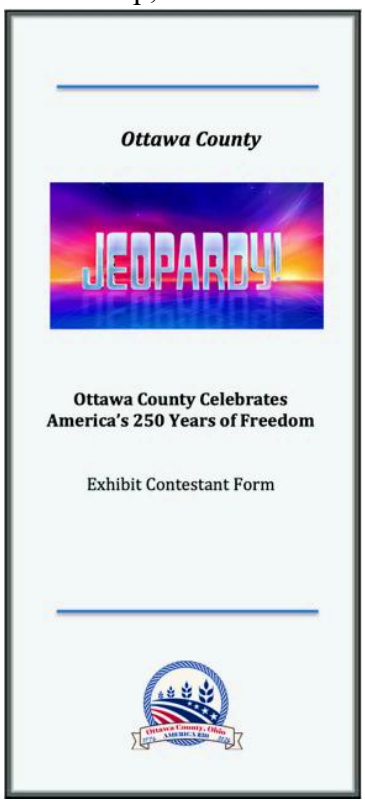


Exhibit Contestant Form

Elmore Historical Society Events

353 Ottawa St., Elmore, Ohio

New Year's Eve Sausage Drop

4 to 6 p.m.

Refreshments, Sausage Eating Contest 5 p.m.
Fireworks at 6 p.m.

Hot Cocoa Walk

January 24 – 1 to 3 p.m.

Depot Park on the North Coast Inland Trail
Scavenger Hunt, Childrens Craft, Historic Building Tours, Hot cocoa with all the trimmings

Indoor Garage Sale

January 31 – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Free Family Event
Enjoy hot homemade soup & sandwiches
11 a.m. until sold out

Innovations in Ottawa County

One of the America-250 Ohio Commission initiatives is "Ohio Trails & Tales", a series of six-themed statewide trails. The fifth recently launched is the Innovation Trail. Ottawa County Museum submitted information for inclusion as a trail venue and was selected. In fact, the Museum is the only Ottawa County venue on this fifth trail.

What got the Museum selected? The 1929 Biro meat saw and "Erie Dearie". When the Marblehead Lighthouse Historical Society decided to redo their Keeper's House exhibit area and focus exclusively on lighthouse-related history, one of the items that needed a new home was a 1929 Biro meat saw. Dick Biro of Biro Manufacturing was approached to determine if he would be willing to loan the meat saw for an exhibit at the Ottawa County Museum. Not only did Mr. Biro enthusiastically agree to the meat saw but Dick's cousin, Robert Biro, asked if the Museum wanted to exhibit an early 1900s canning stove. Both were recently delivered to the Museum. The second Innovation Trail item that the Museum will showcase is Dan Galbincea's "Erie Dearie", one of the best lures for catching walleye. As the first weight-forward spinner, the design revolutionized the fishing industry with $1 million a year in sales across the United States and Canada.

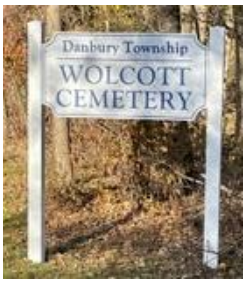
Plans are underway for both new exhibits to launch soon.

Becky Shemenski & K.C. Cousins Hearth cooking in the Keeper's House for our October event.

Grant Assistance

The Society was the recipient of several grant opportunities. Though awarded in 2024, we received an America-250 Ohio grant to purchase a Daughters of the American Revolution Patriot Marker. In May 2025 the marker was placed at the gravesite of Benajah Wolcott and was dedicated to all five American Revolution veterans interred in the County---Isaac Ambler, John Clemons, Jr., John Green, Israel Harrington, and Benajah Wolcott. The Ottawa County Community Foundation awarded a grant for much needed refurbishment of the Wolcott Keeper's House exterior windows and doors. Finally, the Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca County Joint Solid Waste District provided a grant for a recycled plastic entrance sign at the Wolcott Family Cemetery. We are grateful to have received these grants as they help the Ottawa County Historical Society continue its mission to preserve and celebrate the history of the county.

American Revolution Patriot Marker



Cemetery Marker

Keeper's House refurbished windows

OCHS 2025 Membership

Life Members ($500)

Ruth Weisenauer Doug & Linda Huber John Starcher & Holly Gast
Becky Shemenski Kathryn Orta Peggy Debien Bonnie Thomas
Dr. Mark & Tina Hablitzal Brennan & Torrie Madison Lydia Moon Barnard

Patrons ($100 +)

Spencer Andrews
John Bayliff
James Blum
Linda L. Brown
Bill & Sharon Coder
Tim Feller
Doug & Connie Focht
Ron & Diane Gerkensmeyer
Jim & JoAn Herl
Skip & Ellen Honsperger
Warren & Kathy Leonard
Richard & Catherine LeSourd
Masonry Construction
Paul & Maria Moon
Virginia Prusik
Randy & Sarah Riedmaier
Jim & Mollie Sass
Thomas & Mary Wiseman

Sustaining ($50)

Nancy Beadle & Ron Hart
Dave & Susan Blankenbeker
Lee & Natalie Bredbeck
Cheryl Brown
Kathleen Brunt
Bob & Anne Butcher
Richard Celek
Diane DeVries
Larry Fletcher
John & Mary Jane Gibson
Marlene Gulas
Joel & Kim Hirt
Don & Marcia Jess
Nyle Kardatzke
Linda Kresser
Paul & Carol Lehmann
Richard Martin
Karin Messner
Bill Moon
David Moon
Oak Harbor Public Library
Margaret Phillips
Karen Russo
Allen Salyer
Richard & Susan Taylor
Janet Traub & Jim Toppin

Members

Dick & Jan Batke
Denise Bell
Jacqueline A. Bird
Jim & Judy Brower
Patty Burkey
Frank Butwin
Susan & Dennis Charvat
Katherine Cousins
Esperanza & Jordan Davenport
E. LaVonne Dodge
Richard Dunham
Theo Dunham
Cheryl Grissinger Dunn
Martha Dykes
Dean Fick
Curt Fleming ‘26
Dr. David & Pat George
Kathleen Giesler
David & Debra Grimm
Bob & Cindy Grimm
Dr. Michael & Catherine Hablitzel
Edward Hartung
David & Jan Hirt
Sue J. Homsy
Jim & Lisa Hossler
Marilyn Huber
Barbara Jensen
Kyle Johannsen
Craig S. Koerpel
Donald & Mary Kuehn
Ken Landon
John & Sharon Liske
Donna Lueke
Todd Marsh
George McCormick
Jane L. Milholland
John & Marilyn Miller
Ralph Moon
Janice F. Netcher
Bill & Jean Nicholson
Rich Norgard & Suzy Wittenmyer
Patrick & Karen O'Keefe
David O'Neal
Virginia Park
Barb & Gary Phillabaum
Linda Price
Dianne Rozak
Donna M. Schell
Linda E. Schlievert
Carlton & Judy Schwan
Richard & Mary Smith
Susan M. Smith
Carolyn Staib
Robert & Annette Textor
Lois Ann Turk
Sally Heximer & Rich Vedell
Mary Vogtsberger ‘26
John M. Williams
Jannah Wilson
Sandra L. Zenser

Scholarship Fund

Nancy Dunham Memorial Gifts

Susan & Richard Taylor
Becky Shemenski

Darrell Opfer Memorial Gift

Susan & Richard Taylor

Robert Diehl Memorial Gift

Becky Shemenski

Carroll "Tex" Barron Memorial Gift

Becky Shemenski

Wolcott Keeper's House Donors

Diane DeVries
Sue J. Homsy
Sally Heximer & Richard Vedell
(in memory of Sharon Coder)
Paul & Maria Moon
Thomas & Mary Wiseman

Memorial Gifts

Sharon Coder Gift

Edward & Rose Markel
Richard & Susan Taylor
Jeffrey & Cynthia Reitzel

Warren Leonard Gift

Richard & Susan Taylor
Bill Coder

OCHS General Fund

Don & Marcia Jess
Ron Hart & Nancy Beadle
Dave & Jan Hirt
Sue J. Homsy
Linda Schlievert
John Bayliff
Laura Womack
Thomas & Joanne Hancock

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

Gift Membership

Need a stocking stuffer for someone this Christmas?
How about a gift membership to the Ottawa County Historical Society.

OTTAWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GIFT MEMBERSHIP– Membership year January 1 through December 31

Levels and Dues: (check one)

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

Gift Membership For:

Name_____

Address_____

Phone Number_____

Email_____

Gift Membership From: **Date:**_____

Name_____

Address_____

Phone Number_____

Email_____

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

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

Thank you for your support. Wishing you a Happy Holiday Season.

Order Form

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*	$15.00	$4.00	$1.33		
Book	Volume X: *Careers and More*	$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	*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		
Book	*Great Black Swamp II* by Jim Mollenkopf	$12.00	$3.00	$1.05		
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.	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		
					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/Zip _____

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

Inside…

History & Jeopardy for 250
From the President's Desk
Fall Festival 2025 Raffle Winners
Elmore Historical Society Events
Celebrating 250 Years of Freedom
2026 Membership Renewals
Gift Memberships
Innovation in Ottawa County
Grant Assistance
Gift Membership Form
Merchandise Order Form
2025 Members & Donors

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