Ottawa County Historical Society

www.ottawacountyhistory.org First Quarter 2026

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Ottawa County-America 250 Things to See & Do
March, April and May 2026

Programs, teas, tree planting, tours and art contest are scheduled for March, April and May to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. ***Oak Harbor Public Library*** Saturday programs feature 'Then and Now' March 21, 'Oak Trees and Boats' April 18, and 'Theatres---Film and Stage' May 23. ***Schedel Arboretum & Gardens*** will host an Edwardian Tea Party Sunday, April 19. An America-250 Ohio tree planting will take place Tuesday, April 21 at the ***Ottawa County Courthouse***. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will have an afternoon program 'Lighthouses of Lake Erie' Saturday, April 25 at ***Marblehead Lighthouse***. A trail honoring veterans, 'Call to Duty Salute', will have a dedication ceremony at ***Harris-Elmore Union Cemetery*** Saturday, May 16. ***Lakeside Chautauqua*** will showcase actress Loretta Tupper as part of the 'Ohio Goes to the Movies' festival Thursday, May 21 and a 300-foot Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be at Lakeside May 28 through June 1.

Self-drive tours are available for the ***History/Mystery Trail*** and ***Tracking the Troops.*** The traveling exhibit, 'Ottawa County Celebrates America's 250 Years of Freedom', is on display at ***Otterbein Senior Life Campus*** during March, ***Genoa Public Library*** in April, and ***Liberty Aviation Museum*** in May.

Ida Rupp Libraries will have an art contest during the month of April open to youth ages 17 and younger to design a bookmark that illustrates 'What America Means to You'. ***Elmore & Genoa Libraries*** will have a scavenger hunt starting May 18 through September 12.

Visit www.ottawacountyhistory.org/america-250/ and view the 2026 Program Guide for details on these and other events.

From the OCHS President,

To supporters and members of the Ottawa County Historical Society, it is my pleasure, as President to visit with you about upcoming events of your organization. America's 250th Birthday or Semi quincentennial, not sure of the pronunciation, will be celebrated this year 2026! There will be many opportunities to be part of the celebration, and I encourage all of you to join with us to be part of this celebration. The organization is only as strong as the members that participate.

You are encouraged to join other members in a Hearth Cooking and Yarn Spinning demonstration at the Keeper's House on Saturday, June 20. On Sunday, July 26 will be the unveiling of the Historical Marker, commemorating the Citizen Farmers of Ottawa County, being done in conjunction with the Ottawa County Soil and Water Conservation District at the Ottawa County Fairgrounds., there is still time to donate to this event. And on Saturday, October 10, is the Fall Festival at the Keeper's House, featuring General Ulysses S. Grant, Civil War re-enactors and the 73rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment Band. These are but a few of the activities planned for this coming year.

One way you can all help the OCHS is by paying your membership dues, if you have not already. Your dues are the main source of funding to allow the organization to do the events and promote the history of Ottawa County. Another way is to give of your talents and volunteer. Whether it is being a docent at the Keeper's House, helping to maintain the grounds, or attending and helping out at events, your efforts help to move the Society forward. I would like to welcome our three new Board members, Brian Porter, David Kimmel and Curt Fleming and thank them for stepping up and for their willingness to serve.

One last thing, our annual Spring member meeting will be held Saturday, May 9 at St. John Lutheran Church, in Oak Harbor, OH. Save the date, more information will be forthcoming. I hope to see you there, as we kick off this Celebration. And remember, please help us out, by sending your dues and offering to assist in any way you can. Have a great 2026 as we celebrate 250 years as the United States of America.

Jim Sass, president, OCHS

Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership

We're about 80% to our 2026 membership renewal goal. Please take a moment to complete and return your membership form or renew online. Being a member helps support the Society's mission---*to discover, preserve and celebrate the history of Ottawa County*. As a member, you'll receive the quarterly newsletter and invitations to special events. You can also renew online at Zeffy by scanning the QR code below or visit Zeffy at:

https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/ottawa-county-historical-society-memberships--2025.

Thank you for your continued support.

The Murder of John Wood and George Bishop

On Friday, May 21, 1819, twenty-one years before Ottawa County was formed from portions of Erie, Lucas, and Sandusky counties, three members of the Ottawa tribe went on trial in Norwalk for the murders of John Wood and George Bishop. Three days earlier, on May 18, in the court of common pleas in Norwalk, a grand jury returned an indictment against Negosheek, Negoneby and Negossum for murder.

The saga that ended in Norwalk first began early in April of that year when four men organized a hunting and trapping expedition along the "Carrying River," which the Portage River was then called. The four were John Wood, a tavern keeper in Venice, near present-day Sandusky; George Bishop, a sailor and resident of Danbury, and Abiather Shirley and Barnabus Meeker.

Bishop had come to Danbury in 1809 as a hired hand in the employ of Benajah Wolcott and his family. Abiather Shirley settled in Danbury with his wife, Abigail Ramsdell, in 1811.

The four men made camp in a small cabin about twelve miles from the mouth of the Portage, near present-day Oak Harbor. About mid-April,

Shirley and Meeker left camp and returned home. Wood and Bishop stayed behind and accumulated a considerable bounty of muskrat pelts.

A group of Native Americans belonging to the Ottawa tribe were camped on the Maumee River at that time. Three of its members—Negosheek, Negoneba, and Negossum—decided to travel by canoe to the mouth of the Portage River. Negossum was a boy of about seventeen. Along the way, they noticed Wood and Bishop's camp with its collection of furs and equipment. The group camped at the mouth of the river for a day or two, the two older men getting drunk and plotting the murder of Wood and Bishop, and theft of their possessions. The boy did not want to take part in the adventure, but went along out of fear of the leader, Negosheek.

The group started back upriver. On the morning of Wednesday, April 21, about two hours before daylight, Negosheek and Negoneba pushed aside the blanket covering the door to the cabin and slipped inside. Seeing Wood and Bishop asleep on the floor, the two Ottawas swung their tomahawks and killed both men. They then called Negossum inside and compelled him to strike one of the deceased men in the leg with the handle of a tomahawk so that he would feel he was a party to the crime and keep it a secret. Then they plundered the camp, hid much of what they'd taken on the west side of Crane Creek, sold the skins to a French trader named Guy, and headed for the Ottawa camp on the Maumee.

Their undoing came when they divulged their secret to a half-breed named Chazee. Shortly thereafter, Chazee went downriver and found the slain men in their cabin. He continued downriver and reported the deaths to Constable Charles C. Tupper. Tupper, in turn, went to Truman Pettibone, justice of the peace for Danbury Township, obtained a warrant, traveled to the Ottawa camp on the Maumee and arrested the three men.

On April 30, after a long and tedious journey followed, Tupper presented the men to Justice of the Peace Pettibone. In subsequent questioning, with a French trader named John B. Flammond acting as interpreter, Negosheek and Negoneba confessed to the crime. Negossum protested his innocence. Constable Tupper then transported the men to Norwalk where they were confined to a cabin owned by Daniel Raitt, there being no jail in town at that time. Despite the fact that a number of men were standing guard, the three prisoners managed to escape. Negosheek sustained multiple bullet wounds and was recaptured not long afterwards. Negoneba and Negossum made their way back to the Ottawa village. A party of men who went there to get them. The Ottawa chief was persuaded to give them up when one of the men in the party posed as the governor of Ohio!

The courtroom was packed on that Friday. The men demanded to be tried separately. Guilty verdicts were returned on both Negosheek and Negoneba. When it came time to try Negossum, the testimony was so greatly in his favor that the prosecutor declined to proceed. The court ordered him discharged and the boy returned to his tribe on the Maumee. The two convicted men were executed by hanging in Norwalk on July 1, 1819. When asked if had anything to say, Negosheek confessed to killing six other white men prior to killing Wood and Bishop.

These were the first important criminal trials in Huron County and the first executions in Norwalk.

Postscript: Abiather Shirley and Barnabus Meeker both testified at the three trials, as did Constable Tupper and Chazee. Truman Pettibone was married (in 1814) to Phoebe Wolcott, daughter of Benajah Wolcott, who was appointed the first keeper of the Marblehead Lighthouse in 1822.

RICH NORGARD

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

OCHS 2026 Calendar of Events

A fun season is planned for the membership and public. Here is the planned calendar of events at the Wolcott Keeper's House, 9999 E. Bayshore Road, unless otherwise noted:

Saturday, May 9 @ 11:30 a.m. – "Spring Luncheon Meeting". OCHS membership and public welcome at St. John Lutheran Church in Oak Harbor. The 1797 Northwest Ordinance was enacted by the Congress of the Confederation of the United States and created the Northwest Territory between British North America and the Great Lakes to the north and the Ohio River to the south. American Public University professor, Janet Rozick, will speak on the history of the Northwest Ordinance, its impact and the Land Act of 1796. Reservations required; cost $25 per person; check payable to the Ottawa County Historical Society and mail by Monday, May 4 to OCHS, P.O. Box 385, Port Clinton, OH, 43452.

Saturday, June 20 @ 11 a.m. – "Pioneer Day". Come and see how frontier cooking was done using a hearth fireplace. Members of the Black Swamp Guild of Northwest Ohio will demonstrate spinning yarn.

Saturday, July 18 @ 11 a.m. – "Summer Food & Music". Enjoy music provided by balladeers Steve and Lisa Ball with food from Kansha Hibachi Express.

Wednesday, August 19 @ 5 p.m. – "Annual Potluck Picnic". Fellowship with members and guests enjoying summertime favorites.

Saturday, October 10 @ 11 a.m. – "Fall Festival/Civil War Encampment". This annual festival will celebrate America's 250th anniversary with an appearance by U.S. Grant. Re-enactor Curt Fields will share Grant's experience as military commander during the Civil War. Program begins at 1:30 p.m. Throughout the day, music by the 73rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment Band and re-enactors of the 14th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Bean soup, corn bread, and cider will be available.

Sunday, November 8 @ 11:30 a.m. – "Fall Luncheon Meeting". Annual business meeting of the Society with election of officers at Catawba Island Club. Rounding out the America-250 celebrations, John King will join as Abraham Lincoln. Mr. King is with "We Made History-Cleveland" and will share Mr. Lincoln's experience as 16th President of the United States serving during America's Civil War. Reservations required; cost $25 person; check payable to Ottawa County Historical Society and mail by November 2 to OCHS, P.O. Box 385, Port Clinton, OH.

Stop by the OCHS information table at the Portage River Festival on June 28 and Port Clinton Lighthouse Festival on August 15.

2026
Other Coming Events

Saturday, March 21 @ 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Big Spring Indoor Garage Sale
Elmore Historical Society
EHS Barn, 353 Ottawa St., Elmore

Saturday, April 11@ 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Craft Show & Sale
Elmore Historical Society
EHS Barn, 353 Ottawa St., Elmore

Saturday, May 16 @ 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Spring cleaning Keeper's House & Annex

Saturday, June 6, 1-4 p.m.
Keeper's House & Annex open for the season

Saturday, August 15 @ 10 a.m.
Port Clinton Lighthouse Festival table/booth

Monday, September 7
Keeper's House & Annex
Close for the season

Volunteers Needed
May 16, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Let's get the Keeper's House spiffed up for the summer events. Come and join the scouts of Danbury Troop 331 for their yearly service to the Keeper's House. Bring cleaning supplies such as dusters, brooms, window cleaner, containers of water, extension cords, sweepers. Cleaning is a blessed endeavor! And then pizza at noon!

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 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 **NEW!***	$12.00	$3.00	$1.05		
Book	*Great Black Swamp II* by Jim Mollenkopf ***NEW!***	$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

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P.O. Box 385
Port Clinton, OH 43452

OTTAWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2026 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_____

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 #_____ or online (see below)

☐ 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 check to *OCHS, P.O. Box 385, Port Clinton, OH 43452* or
Pay online via Zeffy by scanning QR code or at
https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/ottawa-county-historical-society-memberships--2025