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Explore Historic Oberlin during College's Commencement Weekend

The public is invited to explore historic Oberlin and the Oberlin Heritage Center as part of Oberlin College's Commencement/Reunion Weekend Friday through Sunday, May 24-26. Whether visitors have a free afternoon or only a half-hour to spare, the Heritage Center offers guided tours and history walks for a wide range of interests and schedules. Advance reservations are required for most Heritage Center guided tours and may be made online at www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or by visiting the OHC office in the Monroe House at 73½ South Professor Street. Free parking is available accessible from 20 West Vine Street in Oberlin.

The Oberlin Heritage Center's main site features three beautifully preserved buildings including the Monroe House (1866), the Little Red Schoolhouse (1836), and the Jewett House (1884). Together the buildings and the stories they hold within offer visitors a glimpse into Oberlin's past and the nationally significant impact of both community and college from their beginnings in 1833 through the next 100 years. Guided mini-tours of the first floor of the Monroe House will be offered every half hour from 1 to 5 p.m. on Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday (with the last tour beginning at 4:30 p.m. each day) Walk-ins are welcome. Admission is \$3 per adult; free to OHC members, college students and children.

A one-hour guided walk and conversation about the first Oberlin Conservatory building, Warner Hall, will take place on Friday afternoon, May 24, at 3 p.m. *A Peek through the Portal* is led by Oberlinians Sid Comings (Oberlin College Class of 1969), Kitty Denny-Smith and Bruce Colbert, who share stories of the people, structure and artwork associated with the original Conservatory building. The tour begins at the northwest corner of Professor and College Streets, the location of that original Warner Hall, which was replaced in the early 1960s by the present-day Conservatory building across the street. Although this tour is free, participants should register in advance.

Reservations are required for the thematic neighborhood history walks led by Oberlin Heritage Center docents throughout the weekend. The *Oberlin Women's History Walk* will be offered on Saturday, May 25 at 11 a.m. This guided walking tour features powerful stories of 19th and early 20th century Oberlin women who helped shape what it meant to be a woman in a small town and across America.

The ***Freedom's Friends History Walk*** includes stories of abolition and the Underground Railroad in Oberlin as visitors travel through the square and end at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. This history walk will be offered Saturday, May 25 and Sunday, May 26 at 3 p.m. If you miss taking part this weekend, the history walk will be offered on Saturday mornings at 11 a.m. beginning in June and continuing through the end of August.

An ***Oberlin Architecture History Walk*** through campus and downtown occurs on Saturday, May 25 at 5 p.m. Tour-goers will discover how the town and gown landscape has changed over the past two centuries, learn about several renowned architects who came to work in Oberlin, and find out which architectural styles were applauded and which were criticized by the community.

The ***Scholars & Settlers History Walk*** focuses on the early history and architecture surrounding Oberlin's downtown 13-acre campus of Tappan Square. This guided walk will be offered Sunday, May 26 at 5 p.m.

History walks are \$6 for adults; free to OHC members, college students and children accompanied by adults (please note that even when walks are free, reservations still must be made in advance). The Heritage Center's guided walks are 60-90 minutes and most likely enjoyed by ages 9 and up. In case of heavy rain, the history walks will be cancelled and refunds provided.

The weekend also is an ideal time to experience the Heritage Center's self-guided tablet tours that are convenient and adaptable to individual interests. Simply borrow an iPad from the Oberlin Heritage Center after 10 a.m. and return it by 5 p.m., and learn about Oberlin in a "do-it-yourself" format. The ***Freedom's Friends: Underground Railroad/Abolition*** tour allows participants to move at their own pace through town and campus to learn about local monuments and discover new stories connected to Oberlin's early civil rights history. The ***Picture the Past: Historic Downtown Oberlin*** tablet tour covers a one block radius extending from the corner of Main and College Streets and is filled with fun facts, historic photographs, and more. The fee is \$5/hour or \$20/day per tablet, with a 20% discount for OHC members.

The Heritage Center's Museum Store will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout the weekend offering a variety of Oberlin-themed and history-related mementos and gifts.

For more information about the Heritage Center Commencement/Reunion Weekend schedule or its summer calendar of tours, kids' camps, and community events, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org, or call (440) 774-1700 or e-mail members@oberlinheritage.org.

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