

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette – January 2013

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What a Way to Become a President!

Kicking off the Oberlin Heritage Center's 2013 community program calendar on **Wednesday, January 23 at 7:15 p.m.**, and fitting right in with this week's Inaugural festivities, **Allison Powell**, park ranger for the **James A. Garfield National Historic Site** in Mentor, Ohio, offers an inside look at becoming Chief Executive in the 19th Century. More so than today, presidential elections in the nineteenth century generated extremely high voter turnout and tremendous excitement. They were occasionally characterized by noble dignity and restraint, but more often they were filled with extravagance, excess and some of the most slanderous rhetoric ever printed! See how presidential candidates were chosen, what the expectations of these men were, and how they were elected. Free and open to the public. Location: Kendal at Oberlin Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive).

Recent Funding Supports Oberlin Heritage Center's Educational Outreach

Tours for all ages, kids' camps, and off-site history programming for youth and adults all continued to expand last year under the leadership of Museum Education and Tour Coordinator, **Liz Schultz**. We're tremendously grateful for a \$20,000 grant received in December from **The Community Foundation of Lorain County** to help underwrite history education outreach activities in 2013. Thank you to Community Foundation donors supporting the Heritage Center's proposal, including the Fred & Mary Behm, William and Pat Lindley, and Eric and Jane Nord funds. Special thanks also go to **Nordson Corporation** for its \$2,245 contribution to support a pilot project with the Oberlin Early Childhood Center next summer for the development and testing of pre-visit teacher kits for school groups. The Nordson gift also provides funding for educational supplies and scholarship aid. For more information about the Heritage Center's speakers' bureau, or to request an education program for your club, organization, school or scout group, contact Liz at (440) 774-1700 or tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org.

Save the Date: OHC's 2013 Program Calendar

Final planning is underway for the Oberlin Heritage Center's community program calendar for the New Year. Members will receive a copy of the calendar within the next month. Meantime, save the dates for these upcoming offerings:

Wednesday, February 27 at 7:15 p.m. Cultural Heritage Management Capacity Building in Libya.

Oberlin College professors **Susan Kane** and **Sam Carrier** talk about their work with the American Mission, assisting historians in Libya with the modernization of its cultural heritage records and management systems. Supported by the U.S. State Department, the Mission includes archaeological work and a series of capacity building improvement projects designed to address issues confronting the Libyan Department of Antiquities following years of neglect under the Gaddafi regime. Learn more about this fascinating transcultural historic preservation program with its many unique challenges – and rewards! Free and open to the public. Location: Kendal at Oberlin Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive).

Wednesday, March 27 at 7:15 p.m. Paradise Found: Religiosity and Reform in Oberlin.

Matthew Hintz, a former Oberlin Heritage Center intern and volunteer, presents his recently completed master's thesis in American History, Religious Studies and Intellectual Thought from Clemson University. In this illustrated presentation, Hintz discusses how religion spearheaded Oberlin's progressive push toward human rights and social reforms such as temperance, abolition and civil rights. Religious fervor ran deep in the

founding of western communities like Oberlin and Galesburg, Illinois – much more than was seen in the established East Coast cities of Boston and New York. Righteousness fused with intense spiritual revival to a greater degree on the frontier where traditions were weak, cooperation a necessity, and where egalitarian democracy reigned. Free and open to the public. Location: Kendal at Oberlin Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive).

Wednesday, April 3. Oberlin Heritage Center’s Annual Meeting and Dinner. Plan to attend this always-upbeat and fun event at the Oberlin Inn (7 North Main Street). Our program features **Charlene Connors**, from the Cleveland non-profit “Women in History,” portraying Oberlin con artist **Cassie Chadwick** in an entertaining first-person historic reenactment. The evening also includes the presentation of OHC’s **12th Annual Community Awards** (consider nominating a worthy recipient – see announcement further in this newsletter) as well as a brief business meeting and a lively look at the Heritage Center’s successes in the past year and its plans for the future. Reservations required. Details will be mailed to members in coming weeks.

Hands-on-History for Kids and Teens

Register now for one or more upcoming programs designed specifically to engage your child or grandchild by inspiring curiosity and appreciation of many different places and people, past and present. For more information, contact Museum Educator Liz Schultz at (440) 774-1700 or e-mail tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org. Mark your calendars for:

Backspace Block Print. The Oberlin Heritage Center and the Oberlin Public Library’s Community Technology Center at “**The Bridge**” (82 South Main Street) are working together to provide a free, fun program for teens during February, Black History Month. On **Thursday, February 21 at 4:00 p.m.**, students in grades 6-12 can come to the Backspace at the Bridge for a brief discussion of antislavery newspapers and historic broadsides, and then ink-up to make their own block prints. Register by contacting The Bridge at (440) 774-3820 or thebridge@oberlin.net.

Cultures of the World: Homeschool Series. Offered at the Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street) for children ages 8-13, **Wednesdays from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., beginning February 27 and concluding March 20, 2013.** Each week participants explore diverse cultures including Incan, Viking, Indian, and Australian Aboriginal through hands-on activities and discussions of language, art, food, religion and more. Fee is \$40 for OHC members and \$45 for children of non-members. Register at www.oberlinheritage.org by January 16 and receive the early bird discount of \$5 off the fee!

Spring Break Camps. Offered in two-day mini-camps from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. for boys and girls ages 8-13. Sign up for one or both sessions: **Pony Express & Printing Press (March 25-26).** Hold the phone! Stop the presses! Find out the different ways people sent messages to each other in the past. By the end of camp you'll know how to print a newspaper, send a message on a telegraph, type on a typewriter, and record your voice. Part of camp will include a hands-on visit to a letter press studio at the Special Collections of the Oberlin College library. **Gods & Glory: Ancient Greece (March 27-28).** Enter the Olympic challenge, make a petrifying Medusa mask, examine objects of Greece right here in Oberlin, and go on an odyssey of tales of gods and glory. Together we'll explore this mighty civilization of the ancient world, from food to fashion, armor to architecture. Fee: \$45 per camp; \$40 for OHC members. Anyone who registers by March 9 receives the early bird discount of \$3 per camp (www.oberlinheritage.org).

Who Will Be the Heritage Center’s Next Community Award Recipients?

Consider nominating an outstanding individual, organization, or business whose accomplishments in serving the community are in keeping with the Heritage Center’s mission *to preserve and share Oberlin’s unique heritage and to make the community a better place to live, learn, work and visit.* Award Categories include **Community Historian** (someone who adds to the community’s knowledge of Oberlin history); **Heritage**

Guardian (an individual or group dedicated to historic preservation in our community); **History Teacher of the Year** (an educator who inspires students to learn more about history); **Community Teacher of the Year** (an educator who encourages community service); **Keep Oberlin Beautiful Award** (an individual, business or organization that enhances the aesthetics of Oberlin), and **Oberlin Heritage Center Volunteer of the Year** (someone who makes extraordinary contributions of time and talent to the OHC). Download an [entry form](#) by visiting the “What’s New” sidebar at www.oberlinheritage.org. and submit your nomination by February 1, 2013. Award winners will be announced and saluted at the Oberlin Heritage Center’s Annual Meeting on April 3, 2013.

OHC Staff and Volunteer News

Joining the Oberlin Heritage Center team for Oberlin College’s Winter Term is **Brittany Craig**, a fourth year History and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies double major. Brittany will be working part-time at the Heritage Center during the month of January, and will focus on digitizing oral history interviews and making this wonderful collection more accessible to the public. For the past two years, she has been working on her own OC Research Fellowship project, *Access and Activism: Reproductive Health at Oberlin College 1960-1980*. During this time, she’s conducted oral histories with a number of alumni who attended Oberlin College during the years she is studying, and has spent many hours doing research in the Oberlin College Archives. She looks forward to working at the Oberlin Heritage Center to gain more experience on the other side of the archives and to further enrich her research about the Oberlin community. Following graduation in the spring, Brittany looks forward to working in education, social work and activism.

Ron Gorman, a volunteer docent of the Oberlin Heritage Center, leads visitors on the Freedom's Friends History Walk. This past fall he visited Ripley, Ohio and compared the abolitionist sites and stories of Ripley to those of Oberlin. Read his interesting observations in his blog post, [A Tale of Two Abolitionist Towns](#), at www.oberlinheritage.org (look for the link in our “What’s New” sidebar).

Monroe House Shines Inside and Out

Last month we welcomed back **Straus**, OHC’s much-loved, cast-iron stag Victorian era lawn ornament, after a one-year absence being repaired and restored by our good friends at **McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory**. You may recall that in the fall of 2011 Straus suffered damage after being knocked over by vandals from his place of honor on the front lawn of the Monroe House. The stag returned triumphantly in mid-December just in time for the holidays. What a sight to behold as the almost one-ton Straus was lifted from the back of a red pick-up truck (no, not a red sleigh – ho, ho, ho!) by a huge Cat fifty-foot boom, six-ton telehandler and repositioned in place by Robert Lodge, Emmet Lodge and Curtis McCartney while Heritage Center staff and volunteers watched with glee. For the [full story](#) and [photos](#) of dear Straus’s return, visit www.oberlinheritage.org (click on Events & News/Press Releases as well as the Flickr link in the “Act Now” sidebar).

The Monroe House’s front parlor is looking splendid with beautiful new curtains sewn by OHC Collections Assistant and seamstress extraordinaire, **Prue Richards**. Two lovely 19th century carved-walnut ladies’ chairs presently are displayed in the parlor, on loan from Oberlin College’s Special Collections. The chairs originally were purchased in the 1870s by the Oberlin Ladies’ Literary Society as seating for the organization’s principal officers. (For more on the Ladies’ Literary Society, read further in this newsletter.) A solid black walnut chest of drawers, once belonging to Charles G. Finney, second president of Oberlin College, now graces “Mr. Monroe’s” second floor bedroom. The dresser, on loan from the Oberlin College Archives, came to OHC with a delightful accompanying story – the gist of which is that although the dresser originally was made for Finney, he later gave it to Mr. Leander Cole Preslar in payment of a bill for milk and farm produce.

The Ladies Literary Society of Oberlin College

Recent research by the Oberlin Heritage Center's **Richard Donegan** provides us with a little background on a very popular 19th century community organization. Oberlin's Ladies Literary Society (LLS) is recognized as the first collegiate women's literary and debate society in the United States. Formed in 1835 as the Young Ladies Association, with a name change to the Ladies Literary Society in 1850, this group provided a forum for women to practice public speaking and debating, two skills not included in the Ladies' Course curriculum associated with Oberlin College. The group typically met once a week during school semesters in which ten women read aloud their positions on a given issue such as equality of genders, married life vs. single life, women proposing marriage, politics, slavery and religion. By 1859, young women of the organization read their essays to members of the general public. The group had a large membership, presumably extending beyond female college students to any young woman in the community, and for many years met on the second floor of Sturges Hall on South Professor Street. The group disbanded in 1952 when members and alumni voted to dissolve the organization stating that "the purpose for which the literary societies were created have been fulfilled; their work is done."

On This Day in Oberlin History

Don't miss the newest feature on the Oberlin Heritage Center's **Facebook** page. "Like" the Heritage Center to receive daily fun facts about Oberlin History such as this: *On January 3, 1867 villagers expressed satisfaction that Oberlin had no grog shops, billiard halls, or bowling alleys. Villagers owned 150 pianos and no town in Ohio of Oberlin's size could claim that many.* Visit www.oberlinheritage.org and click on our Home Page Facebook link.

Welcome New Members

The Oberlin Heritage Center extends a warm welcome to new members **Melanie Bernhardt, Kathy Earle** (LaGrange), **Gayle Pinderhughes** (Washington, DC), **Don & Barbara Reeves**, and **Amy Winnicki** (Medina). (Members are from Oberlin unless indicated otherwise.) An extra special thank you to **Edward W. & Gail F. Hubbard** (Centreville, VA) and **Max & Muriel Morgan** who became new Life Members at the Oberlin Heritage Center as the year came to a close. The Heritage Center ended 2012 with 744 individual, family, business and organizational memberships, including 88 Life Members. That's an extraordinary circle of friends, and we look forward to keeping in touch with you throughout the New Year!

2012 Annual Fund Helps Stretch Lean Operating Budget

Thank you, thank you, and thank you again to **250** Annual Fund donors who helped raise **\$34,500** for the organization's general operating account. While this result is just a hair short of the Heritage Center's \$35,000 goal for 2012, it represents a strong commitment from more than one-third of OHC's members and 100% of the Board and staff. We cannot say too many times how much each and every one's support means to the ongoing work of the Oberlin Heritage Center.

Also of Interest

The Buck Starts Here: Fundraising Workshop for Historic Sites and Non-Profits. This two-day conference, taking place in Columbus **February 25-26, 2013**, provides an interactive environment to train board, staff and volunteers on how to develop case statements worthy of funding and how to move your membership campaign into a more effective annual campaign to reach major gifts. For more information call Heritage Ohio at (614) 258-6200 or visit www.heritageohio.org

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