

# Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette – February 2015

MPO Box 0455, Oberlin, OH 44074 (440)774-1700

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## The Civil War Home Front through Stories and Song

The Oberlin Heritage Center welcomes folksinger/storyteller **Judy Cook** in an up-close-and-personal view of the Civil War home front as seen through family letters, songs and images from the time. **On the Home Front** takes place **Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 7:15 p.m.** at Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive). Balancing history and entertainment, Judy and her husband **Dennis Cook** read from Civil War-era letters written a century-and-a-half ago by her great-great-grandparents, Gilbert and Esther Claflin. Music, as important to daily life then as now, is interspersed throughout the program; the audience is encouraged to join in on the choruses of several songs originating from the era. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org).

## Rules of Engagement: Civil War Courtship Letters

Corresponding with a caring woman at home provided an important lifeline to many a soldier surrounded by the desolation of war. In **Rules of Engagement: Civil War Courtship Letters and the 'Homefront Imaginary,'** Oberlin College Professor of History **Carol Lasser** draws on the correspondence of Oberlinians Giles Waldo Shurtleff and Mary E. Burton, as well as that of Elliott Grabill and Anna Jenney, to look at the ways in which these soldiers turned to women at home for emotional support to sustain them during the conflict. Mary and Anna responded, and eventually out of the correspondence came two long and successful marriages. The event takes place **Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.** in Moffett Auditorium in Oberlin College's Mudd Library (Room 050, 148 West Lorain Street). This program is co-sponsored with the Oberlin College Archives and the Oberlin College Department of History.

## Share Your Thoughts on Our S.W.O.T.s!

OHC wants to hear from you! Share your thoughts and fresh ideas in an exciting way as the Oberlin Heritage Center takes the initial step to develop a new five-year (2016-2020) Strategic Plan. Heritage Center members and the public are encouraged to attend one of several upcoming sessions to discuss the organization's **S.W.O.T.s** (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats). Join us for a structured set of brainstorming and discussion exercises, designed to obtain perspective from all corners of the community. The sessions are facilitated by **J.D. Britton**, retired director of the Local History Office at the Ohio History Connection, who is a highly-regarded consultant in the field of long-range planning.

**Register by Wednesday, February 25** via phone (440-774-1700) or e-mail ([members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org)) to **attend either the morning (9 a.m. – 12 noon) or afternoon session (1 – 4 p.m.) on Tuesday, March 3 at Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium** (600 Kendal Drive) or **Saturday, March 7 at the Oberlin Depot** (240 South Main Street). Plan to arrive 15 minutes ahead of your scheduled session. A follow-up is planned for Saturday, March 21 at 10:30 a.m. at Oberlin Public Library for all who attend one of the original S.W.O.T. sessions to summarize the information gleaned from these meetings.

## Resolve to be Involved in 2015!

Did your New Year's resolution involve learning something new, making new friends, or giving back to the community? If so, then being a docent at the Oberlin Heritage Center is just what you're looking

for! Our next **Introductory Docent Training Workshop** takes place on **Saturday, February 28 from 2-5 p.m.** and includes the Heritage Center's Monroe House (1866), the Little Red Schoolhouse (1836) and the Jewett House (1884). We focus on themes and stories from the community and college's founding in 1833 through the next 100 years. Volunteers receive good training, tips for working your way from beginner to veteran, and lots of friendly support along the way. There's great camaraderie in working with other docents, meeting visitors from all over the map, and even a fun annual field trip to museums in northeast Ohio to see "how others do it." Register for the workshop by sending an e-mail to Museum Education and Tour Coordinator **Liz Schultz** by February 25 ([tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org)). Training location: Monroe House (73½ South Professor Street).

### **Old Secrets/New Stories of Oberlin's Underground Railroad**

Plan to attend the **Annual Meeting and Banquet** on **Wednesday, April 1 (5-8:30 p.m.)** at the Oberlin Inn (7 North Main Street) with the Heritage Center's **Liz Schultz** (Museum Education and Tour Coordinator) and **Ron Gorman** (volunteer docent and researcher) offering an enlightening new program about Oberlin's Underground Railroad activity. The evening also includes presentations of the Oberlin Heritage Center's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Awards and a brief OHC business meeting. Circle the date on your calendar, and look for more information to be sent to members and friends in mid-February, or visit [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org) for details.

### **H is for History: The Letterpress Project**

Oberlin College Winter Term students spent the month of January in the Letterpress Studio at Mudd Library under the direction of **Ed Vermue**, Special Collections Librarian. The students learned how to operate two types of hand presses, moveable type and linoleum cuts. Looking for a special project that would add value to the intensive experience, Vermue approached the Oberlin Heritage Center to discuss ways in which a printing project might benefit OHC's history education and outreach programs. As a result, the Winter Term students created an ABC booklet tied to Ohio history that will be used by the Heritage Center with visitors to the Little Red Schoolhouse, outreach programs into the community and classroom "history kits." Coincidentally, during a January tour of the College Library, Oberlin Heritage Center member **Thelma Morris** and a group of fellow-residents from Kendal at Oberlin happened upon the Letterpress Intensive students and were delighted to see the alphabet booklet project in action. The college students were eager to show off their work, and the visitors reported to OHC that the new booklet will be a "first rate" addition to the Heritage Center's hands-on-history teaching collection. Thank you Ed Vermue and his Letterpress Printing students who donated 100 of these charming history-from-A-to-Z booklets to the Heritage Center at the end of Winter Term. In turn, each college student received a Little Red Schoolhouse lapel pin as a memento from the Heritage Center.

### **Classes & Camps for Kids**

**Home School Families:** Register now for the Heritage Center's **Hands-on-History & Cultures of the World** series for boys and girls ages 8-13. Each **Wednesday afternoon (1-3 p.m.) from February 25 - March 18** we'll explore a new culture and time period including: the Swahili Coast, the Maya civilization, the Byzantine Empire, and the land of China. Reservations needed; fee is \$45, or \$40 for children/grandchildren of OHC members. Location: Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street).

**Early Bird Special!** Registration is underway for two great new **Spring Break mini-camps** designed for boys and girls ages 8-13 and led by Heritage Center staff at the Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street). Kids can take part in either or both: **Introduction to Archaeology (March 23-24)** and **World Cultures (March 25-26)**, including East Asia, the Pacific Islands, Colombia, and New Orleans Mardi Gras. Fee: \$45 per two-day camp; \$40 for children/grandchildren of Oberlin Heritage Center members. Sign up during the month of February to receive an additional \$3 discount per camper.

**Add Your Name to the Mailing List** – Save the weeks of **July 27 (Hands-on Oberlin History)**, **August 3 (Architecture)** and **August 10 (World Cultures)** for the Heritage Center’s summer camps for kids ages 8-13. E-mail [members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org) to add your name to the summer camp mailing list.

## **OHC Staff, Board, Volunteer and Intern News**

Museum Education and Tour Coordinator **Liz Schultz** and volunteer **Ron Gorman** did considerable Oberlin-related Underground Railroad research last month in the Oberlin College Archives, the Western Reserve Historical Society and at the University of Michigan.

AmeriCorps member **Kaitlyn Goss** has been very busy lately in many corners of northeast Ohio. She is working with the Cleveland Grays Armory Museum and the Lorain Historical Society on collections-related projects, and recently began working with the Summit County, Bedford, and Lyndhurst-South Euclid Historical Societies to work together on particular sections of the American Association of State & Local History’s (AASLH) Standards and Excellence Program (StEPS) for history organizations.

Honorary Trustees **Eugenia “Geni” Poporad Vanek** and **Jean Foggo Simon** are teaming up to teach a one-day course in St. Petersburg, FL on Monday, February 2. Titled “Hidden Voices,” the lecture and group discussion highlight the poignant and personal stories of isolation of minorities and examine how the past has affected biases toward nationalities, races, and even the color of one’s skin. Geni’s segment *Racial Justice in ‘The Town that Started the Civil War’* shares recollections of women who grew up in the 1900s in Oberlin. Jean follows with “*The Colonial Experience*” and presents the hidden history of Saint David’s Island, Bermuda, settled by the British with indentured servants and Native American Indian slaves. The program is a special event in celebration of Black History Month, sponsored by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Eckerd College.

The **Heritage Center’s Westwood Cemetery** volunteers, including **Camille Hamlin Allen, Judy Conolly, Adam Freas, Rich Fredrickson, and Steve Johnson** have begun documenting GPS coordinates for gravestones throughout the cemetery. They meet bi-weekly and identify longitudinal and latitudinal points at the rate of about 15 markers per hour. The long-range plan is to cover the entire cemetery, and make the information accessible via the internet to genealogists and others interested in gravesite research and preservation.

**Pat Murphy** (Executive Director), **Liz Schultz** (Museum Education & Tour Coordinator) and **Maren McKee** (Collections Manager) welcomed a group of museum administrators and educators from Libya at the end of January and enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to share insights with one another on topics of historic preservation, educational practices and collections management. The visit was arranged by Oberlin College professors **Susan Kane** and **Sam Carrier**, who have been working with the Libyan Department of Antiquities for the past decade through the Cyrenaica Archaeological Project, a partnership between American and Libyan archaeologists. The visitors were in Oberlin as part of a month-long learning program under the auspices of the US Department of State’s Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. They also spent time at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and at the Smithsonian and the US Parks Service in Washington, DC.

## **Vineway Buzz: Bright, Beautiful and Back to Life!**

Renovations continue at OHC's Vineway Building on South Main Street, home to **The Bridge, Lupita's** and the **Mandarin Restaurant**. OHC acquired this property in 2010 and has now accomplished a major renovation of the building’s storefront along with numerous other improvements designed to better serve its tenants and the community. Today, after removing vinyl siding and a circa 1980 entrance marquee, undertaking extensive brick and mortar cleaning and repair, and installing new windows, the front of the building more closely resembles its original 1929 appearance as an auto show room and garage and

creates a more welcoming and attractive presence within the downtown historic district. The most recently completed improvements include the installation of new signs in keeping with the city's sign ordinance and a weatherized, insulated new set of entryway doors. The community feedback has been tremendously positive and encouraging, such as this comment received from an OHC member: *"Wow! The Vineway building is absolutely beautiful! What a perfect transformation. I certainly appreciate all the thought, hard work, planning, and creativity in making over this landmark and turning it into such a bright spot for downtown Oberlin. Great, great job. Thank you for seeing the importance and historical significance of this building and bringing it back to life."* OHC's Vineway Building is governed by its own volunteer Board headed by **Walt Edling**. Stop by and check it out and be on the lookout for future enhancements.

## **OHC's Calendar of Events – Keep it Handy!**

The Heritage Center recently sent members the new [2015 Spring & Summer Events](#) calendar. Keep it handy so you don't miss the great line-up of free community programs, guided tours, history walks, kids' activities and more to be offered in coming months. You can also find the calendar on the OHC website ([www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org); click on "Events & News" in the main menu bar), or call (440) 774-1700 to request one be sent to you. Don't miss all the good things happening at OHC!

## **OHC Members Update**

Welcome new members: **Mary Clare Beck** (Oberlin), **Laine Berger** (Wellington), **Jen Graham** (Cleveland), **Tacie Hampton** (Lorain), and **Daylon Mason & Family** (Oberlin). Welcome new business members: **Mack & Sons Service, Inc.** (Wellington), and **The Ohio Educational Credit Union** (Oberlin). And hats off to **Benjamin and Elizabeth Kuperman** (Oberlin) who became new Endowed Life Members at the Copper level last month. We appreciate the generous support of all of OHC's members! If you are not yet a member, give yourself a sweet reward this Valentine's Day and [join](#) the Heritage Center – you'll *love* being part of this great community nonprofit that helps keep Oberlin history alive for future generations. (And we'll love you, too!)

## **Also of Interest**

What fun it was to hear the Heritage Center's audience of more than 150 joining voices together in Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium to sing the title song, "[Who Hauled Hall on Top of Hall?](#)" at OC Professor of Chemistry **Norm Craig**'s recent program on the legacy (and wanderings) of Charles Martin Hall. The 1954 student-written song was performed by **Ann Williams Craig** '55 accompanied on piano by classmate **Helen Thompson Taylor**. For a copy of the music (delightful lyrics and melody reminiscent of a Gilbert & Sullivan libretto) check out Hall's Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/charlesmartin.hall](http://www.Facebook.com/charlesmartin.hall).

From the 1890s to the 1930s, **Professor Wilbur H. Siebert** of The Ohio State University tracked the history of the Underground Railroad in Ohio and elsewhere. He became the leading expert of his time on the subject – much of what we know today about the covert network that aided fugitives from slavery to freedom is thanks to his pioneering work. This month, you can explore Siebert's huge collection of letters, photos, stories, notes and other Underground Railroad-related material online, through an Ohio History Connection database that normally requires a subscription, but which is being made fully accessible at no charge February 1-28, 2015, in commemoration of Black History Month. The Siebert collection is available at <http://www.ohiomemory.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/siebert>.

**Lincoln at Cleveland** is a four-month commemoration of the 16<sup>th</sup> President on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in April 1865 and his final visit to Cleveland where his body lay in state at what is now Public Square on April 28<sup>th</sup> 1865. A free exhibit opens at the Cleveland Public Library beginning on February

2 and running until May 2015. Several more events are planned throughout the spring. For more, visit [www.lincolnatcleveland.org](http://www.lincolnatcleveland.org).

**Milt Hinton: The Making of a Musician** will be presented by **Sid Comings** at the Oberlin Public Library (65 South Main Street) on **Saturday, February 7, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.** Learn about the early life (and Oberlin connections) of jazz double base Hall-of-Famer Hinton. Sid (an OHC member) will be assisted by Cory Todd, Oberlin College double bassist. The event is hosted by the Oberlin African-American Genealogy & History Group in celebration of Black History Month.

**Bringing Home the Five-Legged Cow: Sherman E. Lee's Collecting of Chinese Painting**, presented by **Noelle Giuffrida**, assistant professor of East Asian art at Case Western Reserve University, takes place in the Allen Memorial Art Building, Classroom 1 (91 North Main Street) on **Thursday, February 5 at 5:30 p.m.** Learn more about the former Cleveland Museum of Art director and his relationships with German expatriate collector-dealer Walter Hochstadter, Cleveland collector Helen Wade Greene Perry, and Japanese dealer Setsu Inosuke, each of whom played a key role in facilitating Lee's acquisition of important Chinese paintings for Cleveland during the 1950s and 60s.

The **Santa Elena Project of Accompaniment (SEPA)** hosts its annual **Guatemalan Dinner** on **Saturday, February 14 at 6 p.m.** at First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C., benefitting scholarships and teachers in the Guatemalan communities of Santa Elena and Copal AA. Tickets: \$10/individual or \$25/family (2 adults & children under 12) and can be purchased at Oberlin's Ben Franklin (13 West College Street) through February 10. For more information, call (440) 774-8220.

Congratulations to OHC members **Cecilia H. Render** (Executive Director of the Nordson Corporation Foundation) and **Rex Engle** (General Manager, Oberlin Inn) who are among this year's honorees at the **Difference Makers Gala** hosted by **Leadership Lorain County** on **Friday, February 20**. Applause all around as Cecilia is recognized with the Eric Nord Award for Excellence in Leadership, and Rex receives an Excellence in Leadership Award. Visit [www.leadershiploraincounty.com](http://www.leadershiploraincounty.com) for more.

**Your Ohio Tax Return Can Make History!** Donating to Ohio History on your state tax return is a simple way for you to support local history projects around Ohio. Funds generated from the **Ohio History tax check-off** go directly to a grant program for local communities and organizations throughout Ohio. Small donations make a big difference: For just \$8—the average donation—you can help repair a roof, preserve rare color film footage, or stage a historical reenactment. Look for "Ohio Historical Society" on your Ohio tax return and designate a dollar amount – that's all there is to it! Your tax-deductible contribution will strengthen local history throughout Ohio.

**Save the Date:** The Ohio History Connection partners with other likeminded organizations to commemorate the State of Ohio's founding and celebrate **Statehood Day** on **March 4, 2015**. Be an advocate for Ohio History and plan to attend this year's Statehood Day event at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium (1 Capitol Square in Columbus) from 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Find out more at [www.ohiohistory.org/statehoodday](http://www.ohiohistory.org/statehoodday)

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