

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette – March 2015

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Women's History Month Programs: Lessons Learned from Our Foremothers

Oberlin native and ordained minister **Beth Marshall** brings to life Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825-1921) in a free public program at Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive) on **Thursday, March 26 at 7:15 p.m.** Blackwell studied theology at Oberlin College, became the first female minister of a recognized denomination in the United States and was a champion for women's rights, temperance, abolition of slavery and other causes. In *An Evening with Antoinette Brown Blackwell* Marshall brings "Nettie" to life with an up-close-and-personal view of the world in her own words as seen through the pages of her letters, sermons and lecture notes. Find out what one modern minister has learned from an important foremother in this eloquent and thought-provoking first-person portrayal. The event is cosponsored with the Kendal Third Thursday Lecture Series.

On **Sunday, March 29 at 2:00 p.m.**, celebrate Oberlin's early feminist leaders by experiencing *One Step More: A Walking Tour of Women's History in Oberlin*. Inspired by the 1834 pledge made by Oberlin "founding father" John J. Shipherd to "elevate the female character through education, this 75-minute tour in and about downtown Oberlin acquaints you with stories of powerful 19th and early 20th century Oberlin women. Hear how they used Shipherd's promise to shape what it meant to be a woman in Oberlin and in the United States. OHC's former AmeriCorps member **Jen Graham** (OC '12) created the tour and will be your guide. Register in advance [online](#) or call (440) 774-1700. Fee is \$6 for adults; free to OHC members, college students and children accompanied by adults (most likely enjoyed by ages 9 and up). Please make a reservation even if you are eligible for a free history walk.

Spring Break Camps offer Out-of-the-Ordinary Experiences

Boys and girls ages 8-13 can unearth a whole new world in one or both of the Heritage Center's new Spring Break mini-camps. Delve into the past in the **Introduction to Archaeology** (**Monday/Tuesday, March 23-24**) or travel the globe in our **World Cultures** camp (**Wednesday/Thursday, March 25-26**) to explore the lands and traditions of Colombia, the Pacific Islands, East Asia and New Orleans Mardi Gras. The camps run from 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day and are held at the Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street). Space is limited and the fee is \$45 per two-day camp; \$40 for children and grandchildren of OHC members. Reservations may be made via www.oberlinheritagecenter.org (follow the links from the "What's New" box on the home page) or call (440) 774-1700 for more information.

OHC Annual Meeting Salutes Past and Present Local Champions

Join us **Wednesday, April 1 from 5:00-8:30 p.m.** for the Heritage Center's annual meeting and banquet at the Oberlin Inn (7 North Main Street). This year's program, featuring OHC's own **Liz Schultz** and **Ron Gorman**, highlights extensive new research on Oberlin's Underground

Railroad activity. The 14th Annual Community Awards will honor **Danielle Camino** (Community Teacher of the Year), **Ron Gorman** (Community Historian), **Sheila Hicks** (History Teacher of the Year), **Beverly Miller** (OHC Volunteer of the Year), **Mary Louise VanDyke** (Heritage Guardian Award) and **Oberlin College's Community Service Work-Study Program** (Business Leader Service Award). Special guest will be former OHC intern/museum fellow **Laurie Stein** (OC '06) who is the Curator of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society in the greater Chicago area. Laurie's return to Oberlin is part of the 20th anniversary celebration of Oberlin College's Community Service Work-Study Program. The evening of merriment and celebration is a fast-paced and feel-good opportunity to meet other Heritage Center supporters, review progress of the past year, look ahead to plans for the future, and take part in a very brief business meeting. Reservations may be made [online](#); or call (440) 774-1700 for more information. Reservations are required by March 26; receive an "early bird" discount on tickets purchased by March 20.

OHC Tour/Outreach Feedback: "Done in an Outstanding Manner!"

Nearly 2,100 visitors participated in an Oberlin Heritage Center tour last year, traveling from near and far to learn more about Oberlin's nationally significant history. OHC staff and volunteer docents enjoyed welcoming guests from 32 states, the District of Columbia, and 10 foreign countries. The total number of groups who visited the Heritage Center increased 36% over the previous year. Walk-in visitation grew by a similar percentage, while youth outreach programs increased by a whopping 73% in 2014. More than 1,900 children were engaged in history education activities through tours and history walks, OHC staff visits to school classrooms, loaning of History Kits, kids' camps, Lessons in the Past schoolhouse experience, and the like.

Information gleaned from post-tour evaluations indicated that many people visited Oberlin primarily to take the OHC tour and learn about Oberlin history. A number of those visitors also specifically mentioned an interest in shopping and dining locally, which is great for Oberlin's economy. Tour feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and 100% of responding visitors stated that they would recommend the tour to others. Comments clearly showed that OHC docents are talented, knowledgeable and successful in engaging and informing visitors and are the biggest strength of the tour program.

If you haven't yet participated in an OHC tour, plan to take part in 2015! The Upstairs/Downstairs tour of the Heritage Center's three beautifully preserved historic buildings is offered every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. (walk-ins are welcome). Themed history walks are scheduled regularly in warm-weather months (June through September). All tours and history walks are available to groups at other times by appointment. For more information, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or contact **Liz Schultz**, Museum Education and Tour Coordinator, at tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org (440-774-1700).

Join the National Park Service and OHC in Ringing "Bells across the Land"

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. On **April 9, 2015** the National Park Service staff at Appomattox Court House, Virginia will commemorate the anniversary of General Robert E. Lee's surrender by ringing a historic bell at 3:00 p.m. The ringing will coincide with the moment the historic meeting came to a close between General Ulysses S. Grant and Lee in the McLean House at Appomattox Court House. While Lee's

surrender did not end the Civil War, the act is seen by most Americans as the symbolic end to four years of bloodshed in which 750,000 Americans perished. After the ringing at Appomattox, the NPS encourages bells to reverberate across the country. **Churches, schools, city halls, public buildings, historic sites, and others are invited to ring bells precisely at 3:15 p.m. for four minutes (each minute symbolic of a year of war).** Curriculum materials are available for schools interested in participating (contact: Amy_Bracewell@nps.gov). For more [information](#) on the “Bells across the Land” event, visit www.nps.gov.

Heritage Center Volunteer Opportunity

Docent Training for Freedom’s Friends History Walk (Saturday, March 14 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.) beginning at the Monroe House, 73½ South Professor Street, Oberlin. Learn about Oberlin’s role in the history of abolition and the Underground Railroad and how to present it in the format of a 75-minute walking tour. Docents are asked to lead at least four tours or history walks per year. Training is free; registration requested by March 9. For information, contact **Liz Schultz**, Museum Education & Tour Coordinator, at tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

OHC Staff, Board, Volunteer and Intern News

Please help us welcome new student intern **Ava Nicolai** (OC ’16) who is a double major in Environmental Studies and Studio Art from Seattle. Ava comes to OHC with a lot of solid experience as a research assistant, and will be very busy helping with various research-related projects.

OHC Intern **Alexandra Nicome** (OC ’17) recently was the featured speaker at an Allen Memorial Art Museum’s **Sunday Object Talk**. Alexandra, an Art History major, discussed the museum’s 1874 sculpture "Bust of James Peck Thomas" by the artist Edmonia Lewis.

New Blogs Posts! **William Yin** (OHS 2009) shares more about the projects that are keeping him busy as a volunteer at the Heritage Center in his [blog post](#) on the OHC website. Docent/researcher **Ron Gorman** added a thoughtfully written and documented [blog response](#) to a question posed by historian Jon Grinspan in a recent *New York Times* op ed piece: “Was Abolitionism a Failure?” Ron also will speak on “The Fugitive Slave Law in Ohio” at the Monday, March 2 (6:30 p.m.) meeting of the Quincy Gillmore Civil War Round Table (at Lorain County Community College).

In our first Hands-On History program of the spring we explored traditions of the "Swahili Coast" of East Africa. Volunteer **Elizabeth Kuperman**, who has lived in Kenya for several years, brought in fabrics and clothing typically worn by Muslim women, particularly during Ramadan. Elizabeth also guided students through the process of making tasty chapattis. Check out the colorful photos on the Oberlin Heritage Center’s Facebook page (and “Like” us!) at www.facebook.com/oberlinheritagecenter).

OHC Members Update

We welcome new OHC members **Ron & Chris Price** and **Sharon Schwenk** (all from Oberlin). We note with sorrow the passing of Endowed Life Member **Molly Anderson**. She and her husband David were long-time supporters of the Oberlin Heritage Center and donated an 1890 Mason and Hamlin Company harmonium to OHC years ago, which is now a focal point in the

rear parlor of the Jewett House. (At one time, the harmonium was used by the Oberlin College Physics Department for a class in musical acoustics.) Member benefits include free tours and history walks and discounts on events which have a fee – *members save 15% when making their reservations for the upcoming [Annual Meeting](#)*. Please [join](#) OHC today!

Also of Interest

The Oberlin Rotary Club presents its annual **All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast** on **Sunday, March 1 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** at Oberlin High School (281 North Pleasant Street). Adults: \$6; kids 5 and under eat free! All proceeds benefit the Rotary Club's International Projects.

Oberlin College America Reads Program hosts **Dr. Seuss Day**, a community event designed to promote literacy for kids in Lorain County, on **Sunday, March 1 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** at the Oberlin Public Library (65 South Main Street). The event is free and features activities, performances, crafts, book giveaways, and special readers.

History of Lake Erie Navigation – from Canoes to 1,000 Footers will be presented by Dr. Charles E. Herdendorf, Professor Emeritus of Geological Sciences at The Ohio State University, on **Tuesday, March 10 at 7:00 p.m.** This Sheffield Bicentennial Commission event takes place at the Joyce Hanks Community Center, 4574 Lake Road, Sheffield Lake.

Friends of the Vermilion River Watershed presents its 9th annual Open House (featuring a free live wildlife exhibit) on **Saturday, March 21 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.** at the Vermilion on the Lake Historic Community Center (3780 Edgewater Blvd, Vermilion).

Civil War Living History Day (Saturday, March 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) All ages will enjoy experiencing the Civil War Living History Day that will be held in Youth Services (4th Floor) of the Cleveland Public Library's main campus (325 Superior Avenue). The event is in conjunction with the Lincoln at Cleveland exhibit at the library. Experience what it was like being a soldier during the Civil War. Stations will be set up about a soldier's life, women's roles, and a scavenger hunt. Participants will be from the 29th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Company G., Living History Association, the James A. Garfield Camp, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and the Cuyahoga County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument.

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