

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette – November 16, 2009

The American Home Interior: Treatment and Transformation

Kerry Adams, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist at the [Cleveland Restoration Society](#), explores the ever-evolving American interior over a fascinating 100-year period beginning in the 1850s, with emphasis on trends from Greek Revival, Victorian Aesthetic Period, Arts & Crafts, Colonial Revival, and Mid-Century Modern...If you own an old house and are considering your own transformation, or if you are simply one who enjoys period furnishings, décor and styles, join us on **Tuesday, December 1 at 7:00 p.m.** to discover some inspiration for the period interior! This free, public program will be held at the Oberlin Public Library (65 South Main Street) and is co-sponsored by the Oberlin Heritage Center, the Cleveland Restoration Society, the City of Oberlin Historic Preservation Commission, and the Lorain County Preservation Network.

Thanksgiving at the Oberlin Heritage Center

Warmest thanks are sent to all of the Heritage Center's members and friends for the tremendous support you shown the organization this year. Together we are making a difference by keeping Oberlin's rich history alive for future generations. The Oberlin Heritage Center will be closed on Thursday, November 26 so that staff, interns, and volunteers may celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday with families and friends. The Heritage Center will be open from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Friday, November 27 and Saturday, November 28. Guided tours of the Oberlin Heritage Center will be offered on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

Bringing Back Julia Finney Monroe's Blue Parlor

The longest resident of the Oberlin Heritage Center's Monroe House (built in 1866) was Julia Finney Monroe (1837-1930). She was an educated, cultured and spirited lady who left her mark on Oberlin in many ways. Her home (now the Oberlin Heritage Center's headquarters) is open for tours year-round. Recent research has revealed much about the very private Julia and provides a window into what her parlor would have looked like in the 1880s. Collections Assistant **Prue Richards** and the Heritage Center's Collections Committee (including Paul Arnold, Scott Broadwell, Rob Calhoun, Bert Latran, Louise Richards, Dina Schoonmaker, Jim Underwood, Anne Wardwell, Jim White and Pat Murphy) have been hard at work on a phased plan to bring back the décor and flavor of Julia's parlor. Receipts and written accounts from family members show that Julia liked the color blue. They provide details about the wall papering, cornices, bamboo molding and other materials she selected. Beginning November 16th Oberlin Heritage Center staff and volunteers will repaint and repaper the front parlor in a tri-partite decorating scheme that recalls the Anglo-Japanese motif that was the height of fashion in 1885. A new wood chair rail made by Doren Harley will be installed and a new "bamboo moulding" will be installed as specified in Julia's records. This phase of the project should be completed by December 8th and planning for future phases is underway. If you'd like to see what's going on, please stop in and take a look. Stay tuned for further updates and details on this exciting project.

Welcome Lormet and its Great 50s Retro Redo

[Lormet Community Federal Credit Union](#) has purchased the former AAA building at 47-49 South Main Street and will soon be opening an Oberlin branch. Their exciting plans call for restoring the building's original 1958 façade and rejuvenating the building's interior in keeping with the flavor of the 1950s. Lormet CEO and President Daniel Cwalina and Architect Mark Lessner based their design for the façade on a 1958 photograph of the Peoples' Bank Building from the Oberlin Heritage Center's historic photograph collection.

A Glimpse at Recent Visitors

In the past few months the Oberlin Heritage Center's docents have welcomed many diverse groups including young visitors from Stafford Elementary in Maple Heights, Shaker Heights High School, St. Mary School in Elyria, the Urban League of Cleveland, Kelley's Island Schools, and home school families from Fremont to Tiffin. We hosted the lively Red Hat Ladies of Lodi, a class of Oberlin College students researching landmark preservation, and the Women's Senior Fellowship of Elyria. Enthusiasts of Cass Gilbert architecture from Minnesota came to town and toured the Heritage Center and the Art Museum as well as the town and even managed to sneak into Finney Chapel and Fairchild Chapel. They also enjoyed a special presentation by Jane Blodgett on historic preservation in Oberlin. A sporting group of Progressive Insurance employees joined us for one of our last history walks of the season. In just September and October we had visitors from eleven different states in addition to Australia and the United Kingdom. We can't wait to see who visits next! How about you?

Study Shows Popularity & Economic Impact of Cultural and Heritage Travel

A new study conducted by Mandala Research shows that 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers take part in cultural and/or heritage activities while travelling. These travelers spend an average of \$994 per trip and contribute more than \$192 billion annually to the U.S. economy. Cultural and heritage travelers take part in culinary activities, visit historic sites (66%), attend historical re-enactments (64%), visit art museums and galleries (54%), attend art or craft festivals (45%), visit state and national parks (41%), shop in museum stores (32%) and explore urban neighborhoods (30%). The vast majority of these travelers (65%) say they seek travel experiences where the destination, its buildings and surroundings have retained their historic character. For more information, visit <http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/>.

New Heritage Travel Website: Gozaic

If you are interested in cultural and heritage travel, check out the National Trust for Historic Preservation's new website, www.gozaic.com, which is in the beta stage before its official release. The Oberlin Heritage Center is listed on the site thanks in part to funding from an Oberlin Area Chamber of Commerce bed tax grant.

Western Reserve Heritage Area Feasibility Study

A National Park Service-led planning team is working with history organizations throughout Northeast Ohio (including the Oberlin Heritage Center) to determine whether the historic Western Reserve of Connecticut is eligible for National Heritage Area status. For more information on National Heritage Areas, visit <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/>.

On the lookout for:

We are seeking donations of **buttons** of 1" or more in diameter or on the heavy side to make a spinning toy called a whizzer that consists of a piece of string and a button. Oberlin Heritage Center member **Bonnie Cutchner** provided this great idea. She tells us that British Revolutionary war soldiers made such toys to help pass the time. We know kids of all ages will enjoy making and playing with whizzers at Oberlin Heritage Center events and activities.

New On-Line Community Calendar

Oberlin Heritage Center member **Tom Geller** has launched a great new website that provides a calendar of activities happening throughout the college and community. Check it out at <http://www.inoberlin.com/> It is a great complement to the calendar of college and community events on the Oberlin College website. Also, remember to check the Oberlin Heritage Centers' website at www.oberlinheritage.org for the latest on all our upcoming events and news.

New On-line Exhibit on John Brown

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History has produced a new on-line exhibit:
<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/online/johnbrown/>.

Civil War 150

Statewide efforts are underway to celebrate the **150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War** in 2011. Take a look at the new Civil War Sesquicentennial website, www.ohiocivilwar150.org. It was created by the Ohio Historical Society in partnership with the Cleveland State University Center for Public History and Digital Humanities, with support from the Ohio Humanities Council.

Great Opportunity for Teachers: Summer Seminars in American History

K-12 history, social studies and English teachers are invited to apply to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History 2010 Summer Seminars. Taught by renowned historians on college campuses in the US and the UK, these one-week seminars give educators the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of topics in American history—while gaining practical resources and strategies to take back to their classrooms. **Donna Shurr** (an Oberlin Heritage Center trustee and Oberlin High School teacher) and **Maria Surovy** (Oberlin Heritage Center summer camp teacher) have both greatly enjoyed taking part in such seminars in recent years and encourage other area educators to pursue this special opportunity. For a list of all thirty-nine seminars, information about full and partial fellowships, graduate credit, and to apply online, visit: http://www.gilderlehrman.org/education/seminar_course_offerings.php

Also of Interest

Oberlin Heritage Center member **John (Jack) Vanek** is a physician and award-winning poet. He will give a reading from his new book, **Heart Murmurs**, at Mindfair Bookstore, 13 W. College Street, on Saturday, November 28th at 1:30 p.m. For more information, contact Mindfair at 774-6463. Jack Vanek kindly granted the Oberlin Heritage Center permission to reproduce this poem in the E-Gazette. It was a big hit at the reading he did for the Oberlin Heritage Center in July. Enjoy!

OBERLIN

after Carl Sandburg

Bigotry Butcher for the World,
Book and Music Maker, Stacker of Corn,
Builder of Invisible Railroads and Precious Cargo Handler;
Scrappy, wiry, peacemaker,
Town of Big Conscience:

They tell me you are hayseed and I believe them, for I
have seen your farmers' markets,
your dollar movie shows.

And they tell me you are quick to anger and I answer: Yes, it is true,
I have seen the other cheek turn
red with rage at the sight of injustice.

And they tell me you are not rich and my reply is: Wealth has colors
other than gold and green.

And having answered so, I turn once more to those who
sneer at this, my town, and give them back the sneer
and say to them:

Come and show me another town where train tracks pierce the earth
from history, tyranny, bondage, the whip, emerging
like a drowning man, sucking in all the freedom he can hold.

Come and show me another town built on the rich soil
of righteousness, where Century homes have secret rooms
connected to underground tunnels and liberty.

Come and show me another town that escorted women
and men of all colors from cornfields and kitchens
to classrooms and corporations.

Come and show me another town where the intersection
of Main Street and College really is, where music and ideas
float on the breeze from open windows.

Flinging viscous curses amid the toil of piling truth on right,
here is a sinewy scarred grappler, wrestling
with issues, unbowed before big soft cities;

Fierce when faced with a bloodhound's fangs, cunning
as a slave pitted against the wilderness,

Town-gowned,
Contemplating,
Communicating,
Composing,
Creating, breaking, remaking,

Under torch smoke of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue,
white teeth laughing through blood-crusts lips,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing
as a wise man laughs,

Laughing even as a fighter laughs who fears
neither fist nor foe,

Laughing and bragging that under his ribs,
beats the pulse of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, wiry, scrappy laughter of a Peacemaker,
unafraid of the fray, bare-chested, sweating, proud to be

Bigotry Butcher, Book and Music Maker,
Stacker of Corn, Builder of Invisible Railroads

and Precious Cargo Handler to the Nation.

—John A. Vanek © 2009

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