

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette – September 2013

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History Hikes with a Twist!

History Hikes & Happy Hour is a four-week series featuring a different themed, guided walking tour **every Wednesday afternoon in September, beginning at 3:30 p.m.** Stretch your legs and explore Tappan Square, the Underground Railroad, Oberlinians' roles in the Civil War, and Westwood Cemetery. Afterward if you wish, relax and continue the discussion at a local watering hole. \$30 for entire series; \$25 for OHC members. Happy hour purchases not included. Reservations at www.oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700. What would Oberlin's Anti-Saloon League founders think about the Heritage Center's newest series of guided history walks?!!

Kid-Friendly History Walks, too!

The Oberlin Heritage Center's family-friendly history walk, **I Spy Oberlin: History & Architecture Scavenger Hunt**, is especially designed for children ages 5-11 with an adult companion and will be offered for the last regularly-scheduled time this season on **Saturday, September 7 at 3 p.m.** Participants enjoy exploring Oberlin history on this one-hour guided walk as they keep their eyes peeled for historic markers, decorative details, and Oberlin oddities. Reservations are required; fee \$3 per child. The "hunt" begins at the Monroe House (at the back of the Conservatory of Music parking lot) and takes place rain or shine. (We'll walk outside in fair weather; we'll spy inside our historic buildings if it is raining.)

"Radicals & Reformers" Round Out OHC's History Walk Season

Enjoy stories of some of Oberlin's most intriguing residents of days gone by, amidst a colorful backdrop of fall foliage, on the **Radicals and Reformers History Walk** through Westwood Cemetery offered **Saturdays, September 7, 14, 21 or 28 at 11:00 a.m.** The guided 75-minute tour promises a pleasing balance of Westwood's scenic landmarks and stories of some of the many spirited men and women of Oberlin who simply refused the status quo. \$6 per adult; free to OHC members, college students, and children under 18 accompanied by an adult. (The guided walks are recommended for children ages 9 and up.) Participants gather near the Westwood Cemetery entrance (455 Morgan Street) to begin the historic journey. Parking is available along the pathways near the cemetery entrance. Advance registration necessary; visit www.oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

Anniversary Event a Time to Celebrate "Then & Now"

The upcoming Anniversary Celebration on **Sunday, September 8 from 5-7 p.m.** brings with it a wonderful opportunity to reflect on all that the Oberlin Heritage Center's members, volunteers, Board and staff have accomplished together over the past 20 years. Do you know how many century-old bricks were cleaned by volunteers in the mid-1990s and installed to connect the grounds from the north, south, east and west? (Hint: Many more bricks than there are days in 20 years!) When was the organization's original logo designed and which much-beloved member created it? (Hint: The organization was known as "O.H.I.O." at the time, an acronym for the Oberlin Historical & Improvement Organization.) Can you guess the number of student interns who have worked at the Heritage Center since 1993? (Hint: The number corresponds with the anniversary being celebrated since the founding of the Oberlin Village Improvement Society, the Oberlin Heritage Center's early predecessor.) This festive occasion offers an inside look at OHC's own "history"

and promises to be great fun for long-time friends and newcomers alike. Each guest will receive a special booklet featuring “Then & Now” highlights from the past two decades. Reservations will be accepted through September 7, and tickets also will be available at the door. For more information, visit www.oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

OHC’s Fall Line-Up: Community Programs for All Ages

Tuesday, October 15, 7:15 p.m. *The Intellectual Triumvirate: A Look at the Alliance of James A. Garfield, Jacob Dolson Cox, and James Monroe in the Ohio Senate.* Three academics. Three progressives. Three State Senators from Northeast Ohio. Beginning in 1860, these men would call from their desks in the Ohio Senate chamber for the abolition of slavery. Garfield, the then on-leave Principal of the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute; Cox, the former Superintendent of the Warren Schools; and Monroe, a professor at Oberlin College, became the intellectual giants of the Ohio Legislature. This free community program is co-presented by **James A. Garfield National Historic Site Park Ranger Allison Powell and Site Volunteer Andrew Mizsak**. Location: Kendal at Oberlin’s Heiser Auditorium.

Friday, October 18, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *Community Arts and Culture Day.* Area youngsters have no school today because of NEOEA professional development teacher workshops. The Oberlin Heritage Center will partner with local arts and culture organizations to offer free family activities for this day-off-from-school. Drop-in at several locations around town and enjoy the fun! More details next month...

Tuesday, November 26 at 7:15 p.m. *The History of the A.G. Comings and Son Bookstore in Downtown Oberlin.* Local historian and writer **Sid Comings** pays homage to his four ancestors who owned and operated Oberlin’s Comings Bookstore from 1888 to 1959. He offers insights about commerce and other bookstores in the community and shows how they served generations of citizens and students. Comings is an Oberlin College graduate, author, and lifelong Oberlinian who taught writing at Lorain County Community College and also served on Oberlin City Council. Free and open to the public. Location: Kendal at Oberlin’s Heiser Auditorium.

Tuesday, December 17 at 7:15 p.m. *Time Flies When You are Having Fun – 20 Years at OHC.* In 1993, the Oberlin Historical & Improvement Organization, fondly referred to as O.H.I.O., transitioned from the volunteer group it had been for the past 90 years, to one led by a professional staff. With the hiring of **Patricia Murphy** as Executive Director, the “sleeping giant” – known today as the Oberlin Heritage Center – began to awaken. **Mary Anne Cunningham** came on board as Assistant to the Director shortly thereafter. In this free, illustrated program, Pat and Mary Anne will share favorite stories and recollections from 20 years at OHC. The award-winning museum and historic preservation group has come a long way from those early days when Pat sometimes worked with the Monroe House front door purposely open to encourage visitors to come in! Location: Kendal at Oberlin’s Heiser Auditorium.

Smithsonian Museum Day: Free Tours!

The Oberlin Heritage Center takes part in *Smithsonian Magazine’s* 9th Annual Museum Day by providing free tour admission on **Saturday, September 28 at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.** to visitors plus one guest who present the Museum Day Admission Card available at www.Smithsonianmagazine.com/museumday. Museum Day involves hundreds of museums around the country and allows for one day only the free-admission policy of the Smithsonian’s Washington, D.C.-based properties to be emulated throughout America. Don’t miss this great opportunity to take a tour of the Oberlin Heritage Center or to visit another participating museum that day.

New Books Connect Readers with Oberlin History

In recent months, several excellent books with “Oberlin” connections have come to the attention of Heritage Center staff, and we thought you might enjoy one (or more) as a good read for the waning days of summer:

The Colors of Dignity: Memoirs of Civil War Brigadier General Giles Waldo Shurtleff by **Catherine Durant Voorhees**. A student at Oberlin College when war broke out between the North and South, young Giles Shurtleff enlisted and was elected captain of his company, the 7th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Captured early in the war and imprisoned for a year in the South, Shurtleff later was released, re-enlisted, and accepted the call to lead Ohio’s first unit of African-American soldiers taking part in the Civil War. Four of Shurtleff’s soldiers were amongst twenty African-American soldiers to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor following the war. For more, visit www.cdvoorhees.com.

Oberlin High School alumnus (and long-time OHC member), **Alvin G. Brown**, of Somerdale, NJ, recently published ***Two Tan Lions***, a biographical novel about the life and times of two long-ago African-American heroes, William Wesley Brown, a pioneering African-American businessmen in Lorain County, and Moses Fleetwood “Fleet” Walker, who attended Oberlin College and later became the first African-American major-league baseball player, sixty years before Jackie Robinson. For more, visit www.twotanlions.net.

Civil War Soldiers of Greater Cleveland: Letters Home to Cuyahoga County by **Dale Thomas**. Although only a few mentions of Oberlin are included in these pages, the book is a great read for Civil War enthusiasts. Thomas roots his story in the letters that kept ordinary soldiers, moving from battlefield to battlefield, tethered to their families and friends on the home front. For many, these letters were the only part of them to make it home again – their final legacy to a community they had helped to build. For more, visit www.historypress.net.

The Price of Freedom: How One Town Stood Up to Slavery by **Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin**. Recommended for children ages 4-10. The story of freedom-seeker John Price and the Oberlin-Wellington rescue, an inspiring tale that caught the nation’s attention in 1858, from which Oberlin later came to be called “The Town that Started the Civil War.” For more, visit www.amazon.com.

Africa Is My Home: A Child of the Amistad by **Monica Edinger**. For children ages 9-12. Inspired by the true account of Sarah Margru Kinson this is the compelling story of a child who arrives in America on the slave ship *Amistad* —and eventually makes her way home to Africa. (Oberlin Heritage Center tour visitors are told Margru’s story when touring the Little Red Schoolhouse where her portrait hangs today.) This book is scheduled for release on October 8, 2013. A wonderful book review ([Review of the Day](#) /August 23, 2013) appears in *School Library Journal*’s blog titled “[A Fuse #8 Production](#).”

OHC Staff and Volunteer News

Museum Education and Tour Coordinator **Liz Schultz**, along with a team of docent volunteers, take part in the two-day **Pioneer Craftsman Experience** on **Tuesday and Wednesday, September 17 and 18** at Mill Hollow in the Vermilion River Reservation. Hosted by the Lorain County Metro Parks, the event provides engaging activities for 3rd through 5th graders that leave students with a memorable impression of how different the lives of early Ohio settlers were from their own lives today. Participants visit a number of hands-on-history stations throughout the day, including Liz & company’s session on the Underground Railroad.

Don’t miss docent volunteer **Ron Gorman**’s latest website post at <http://oberlinheritage.org/blog/>. **William T. Allan – Lane Rebel from the South** is the first in a two-part series of fascinating stories about two Southern rebels who had a tremendous impact on pre-Civil War Oberlin.

Mary Anne Cunningham attended a workshop hosted by The Cleveland Foundation on “*How to Re-energize Your Annual Fund.*” The OHC Annual Fund campaign gets underway in September and seeks to raise \$35,000 for general operating support this year.

Business Manager, **Bethany Hobbs**, recently was named to the Board of the Friends of the Oberlin Public Library.

Kudos Corner

Congratulations to OHC junior docent and volunteer, **Annalee Sekulic**, who tied for first runner-up in the Lorain County Fair’s Miniature Horse Princess contest. Anna, 15, is a sophomore at Western Reserve High School and competed with her four-year-old Dapple Grey gelding, **Zippy**.

Don’t miss Oberlin Heritage Center member **Leslie Miller’s** retrospective solo exhibition of her life’s work **now through Friday, September 27** at the [Beth K. Stocker Art Gallery](#) on the campus of Lorain County Community College (1005 North Abbe Road, Elyria). ***Old and New: Paper Painting Before Radiation*** includes 81 works on paper, including collages, monotypes and mixed media paintings that viewers will find “intensely powerful and exquisitely delicate at the same time.” The exhibit is open Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and the gallery also is also open for many Stocker Arts Center evening and weekend events. For more information visit www.lorainccc.edu/stocker+arts+center/gallery/.

Members’ Update

Welcome new members: **Margaret Baker** (Parma), **Lee C. Drickamer** (Oberlin), **Beverly Miller** (Vermilion), **Lauren Schiavoni** (Litchfield), **Carla VanDale** (Oberlin), and new business member **Meadowbrook Investment Advisors** (Livonia, MI). Thanks to a dedicated membership, the Heritage Center flourishes today, 110 years after the founding of its early predecessor, the Oberlin Village Improvement Society. Your membership today assures that OHC will continue to preserve Oberlin’s nationally significant history for future generations. If you are not yet a member, we encourage you to join today by visiting www.oberlinheritage.org.

Also of Interest

All are invited to a community gathering in honor of the **Reverends Steve and Mary Hammond**, recipients of the American Baptist Churches’ Dahlberg Peace Award, on **Saturday, September 14 from 2-4 p.m.** at Peace Community Church (44 East Lorain Street, Oberlin). The Hammonds, co-pastors of Peace Community Church, were nationally recognized earlier in the year by the **American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS)**. The award, named after Edwin Dahlberg, former president of the National Council of Churches, was first presented in 1964 to Martin Luther King, Jr. Other honorees through the years included Jimmy Carter (1979) and Marion Wright Edelman (1997).

Registration is underway for the [Ohio Local History Alliance Annual Meeting and Conference](#) – a great opportunity to network and learn from others in the history and museum world. This year’s theme is “*Connecting Treasured Pasts & Bright Futures*” and sessions will be held **Friday and Saturday October 4 and 5** at the Holiday Inn in Worthington, Ohio. For more information, visit www.ohiohistory.org.

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