

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette – October 2015

MPO Box 0455, Oberlin, OH 44074

(440)774-1700

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An Evening with Frederick Douglass

Dramatist and educator **Wesley Williams** offers a compelling first-person performance as civil rights activist, orator, and author Frederick Douglass in a program hosted by the Oberlin Heritage Center on **Wednesday, October 28 at 7:15 p.m.** Douglass was born a slave in early 19th century Maryland, escaped at age 20, and became perhaps the most recognized name in the American abolitionist movement. He was a lifelong friend of Oberlin professor and diplomat James Monroe, whose home is now the Heritage Center's headquarters and the starting point for the organization's well-received early Oberlin history tours. Williams gives his audience an opportunity to experience Douglass's life, famous speeches and a powerful interpretation of how this well-known American abolitionist's prolific words speak to humanity in the 21st century. The one-hour dramatic production takes place at Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive) and is free and open to the public.

OHC Co-Hosts Lorain County Preservation Showcase

All are invited to learn about recent and ongoing efforts to preserve Lorain County's local heritage when the Oberlin Heritage Center, in conjunction with the Lorain County Preservation Network, co-hosts the annual Lorain County Preservation Showcase on **Saturday, October 17, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Local historical societies and preservation organizations from across the area will offer mini displays in the community room of the Oberlin Public Library (65 South Main Street) to spotlight their recent preservation activity and ongoing history projects. In addition, the **Special Collections Department at Oberlin College Library** (Mudd Library, 4th Floor, 148 West College Street) will share simple solutions for preservation by demonstrating how they make archival containers for books. The department's book repair area also will be open to the public. The **Oberlin Heritage Center** will provide drop-in sneak peek tours of the first floor of the 1866 Monroe House, along with a special display of recent acquisitions showing how OHC preserves history beyond the stories told through its historic buildings and furnishings. Behind-the-scenes tours (approximately 20 minutes) of the museum's collections storage area will be available at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. All activities are free and open to the public. For more information, call (440) 774-1700.

OHC Annual Fund Campaign Underway

Thank you to 123 donors who have helped OHC raise \$16,850 (42%) toward the **2015 Annual Fund** goal of \$40,000 by December 31, 2015. Your help is especially important in a year when funding is extremely tight due in part to significant repairs that were made to OHC's museum properties. You may make a secure online contribution at <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/donation.shtml> or send your gift to the Oberlin Heritage Center, P.O. Box 0455, Oberlin, OH 44074. The Annual Fund is tremendously important to the Heritage Center's sustainable future and needs widespread participation to ensure its success. **Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference!**

Bed & Breakfast Fundraiser a Big Success!

More than \$5,000 was raised this year by 19 OHC volunteers who graciously hosted first-year Oberlin College students and their families when they arrived on campus to begin a new, exciting

chapter in their lives. The bed-and-breakfast program is one of the Heritage Center's most important annual fundraisers, and OHC appreciates so many receptive hosts, enthusiastic guests, and the energetic team of Board members **Gail Wood** and **Barb Enos**, who masterfully coordinated the undertaking from beginning to end! If you would like to become a host for next year's end-of-summer B&B event, contact Gail at ohcbnb@gmail.com.

OHC Visitor Enjoys a Homecoming

Collections Manager **Maren McKee** welcomed **William (Bill) and Bonnie Hubbard** of Colorado for a special tour of the Jewett House last month. More than 50 years prior, Bill had visited the house often (then referred to as "Two Elms") as it was the long-time residence of his grandparents, Pliny Deane and Laura Louise Hubbard. The elder Hubbards purchased the house from Frank and Fanny Jewett in 1926 and resided there on South Professor Street for the next 40 years. The Hubbards raised three sons, one of whom was William Hubbard's father, Alfred. Although Bill's last visit to the house was in 1964, as soon as he stepped through the front door, many warm memories came rushing back, and Maren busily took notes to add to OHC's knowledge and interpretation of the house's history. Did you know that Pliny Hubbard, a civil engineer employed by the New York Central Railroad, was also a weaver?! His grandson clearly remembered that an upstairs bedroom was used as a loom room! Wonderful memories, wonderful day all around! For more about the [Jewett House](#), visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org.

OHC Needs Your Help to Solve a Mystery!

In August, an anonymous donation to OHC's collections appeared on the front porch of the Monroe House. We'd like to learn more about these eight "Plantation Colonial" ironstone plates manufactured by Mason's Patent Ironstone for Carl Forslund of Grand Rapids, MI. Forslund Company was a furniture manufacturer and also had a mail order catalog business from 1935-1991. The company was a major seller of Mason Ironstone in the U.S. Collections Manager **Maren McKee** would like to learn more about the history of these particular plates. If you have any information on this donation, contact Maren at history@oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

Pat Murphy Sends Thanks and Greetings

*It was good to hear recently from retired OHC Executive Director **Pat Murphy**, who wanted to pass this personal message to all her well-wishers:*

Dear OHC Friends: August in Oberlin for me was an amazing and overwhelming whirlwind of fun, festivities and farewells. Many thanks to everyone of you who stopped in or called to say hello, sent letters and cards, attended special events, took me out to eat, sent flowers and e-mails, and so much more. It was very gratifying to hear all your kind words and a delight to reminisce about projects and adventures we have shared. I so appreciate all you have each done to help OHC over the years and all you are doing now to assure its success on into the future. You will always have a very special place in my heart. I am especially grateful and deeply honored by all who have made contributions to OHC in my honor. Let's keep in touch. With deepest gratitude and all best wishes.

OHC Staff, Board, Volunteer and Intern News

Please join OHC in extending a warm welcome to **Mary Manning**, the new Local History Corps/AmeriCorps member for Northeast Ohio (Cleveland area) who will be based at the Oberlin Heritage Center for the coming year. Mary, who grew up near Warren, Ohio, has a BA in Art History and French from Case Western Reserve University and a MA and Ph.D. in Art History from Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ). She has internship experience in a number of art museum

settings (Cleveland Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Cleveland) and is looking forward to applying her talents and interests to the realm of history museums in the months ahead. Mary will devote about half of her time to Oberlin Heritage Center activities, including tours and developing a public program on Oberlin's World War I history, with the remaining half dedicated to assisting other history organizations in our region. Her term of service runs through August 2016.

Mary's first days with the Heritage Center were spent in the field with Executive Director **Liz Schultz** at the Pioneer Craftsman Experience at Mill Hollow in the Lorain County Metro Parks Vermilion River Reservation. Liz and Mary led a number of hands-on-history sessions about the Underground Railroad for hundreds of Lorain County 3rd – 5th graders taking part in the two-day event in late September.

Liz traveled to Indianapolis in late September for a *Principles & Techniques in Fundraising* seminar at Indiana University resulting in a Certificate in Fund Raising Management upon completion of the course.

Collections Manager **Maren McKee** welcomed quilt researchers Lorie Stubbs and Carol Born to the Heritage Center last month for an up-close look at the [1830s-era Stetson quilt](#) and several other quilts in the OHC collection. Stubbs and Born are both quilters involved with the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum in Golden, CO. **Prue Richards**, former Collections Assistant at the Heritage Center, also took part in this fun afternoon of quilt conversations and comparisons.

OHC volunteer **Melva Tolbert** recently spent a memorable day of listening, learning, discernment and reflection at the Whitney Plantation in Louisiana. The Whitney is the first museum in the nation to focus primarily on slavery and was the subject of a short [documentary](#) ("Why America Needs a Slavery Museum") produced by *The Atlantic* magazine in August. Melva's first-person account of her own experience visiting the Whitney is shared with us in her first-ever blog post [A Visit to Whitney Plantation](#), which now appears on the Oberlin Heritage Center's website.

Our most caring condolences go to Business Manager **Bethany Hobbs**, whose father Thomas R. Pulsifer passed away in early September.

Shout-Outs From (and For!) OHC

Congratulations to OHC Board member and Oberlin High School Family & Consumer Sciences teacher **Donna Shurr**, who received the Education Award at the **Oberlin NAACP** banquet recently.

Applause for former Oberlin Heritage Center intern and museum fellow **Laurie Stein** (OC '06) who was featured in the "Shout Out" feature in the *Chicago Tribune* in September. Laurie was interviewed because of her work as curator at the [Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Historical Society](#), and the article includes Laurie's own nod to the Oberlin Heritage Center for getting her interested in making history a career.

A tip of the hat to the **Oberlin College Archives** whose staff and interns recently launched an ambitious and comprehensive online guide to Oberlin College architecture at www.oberlinlibstaff.com/omeka_oca. More than 190 buildings and monuments are featured on the new webpages with high-quality images, maps, detailed information, and sources for further reading. A [news release](#) introducing the new online reference tool also complimented the Oberlin Heritage Center's website as a helpful resource for those interested in town architecture.

Members' Update

Welcome to new OHC members **Denise Birkhofer & Alberto Zambenedetti, Kevin & Jill Greenwood, Bill & Bonnie Hubbard** (Minturn, CO), **Moreau Parsons, Kathy Toth-Smith** (Vermilion) and **Margie Walter**. (All are from Oberlin unless indicated otherwise.) OHC also is grateful to new Endowed Life Members **Pete & Prue Richards** (at the Aluminum level) and to **Jim Sunshine**, who increased his endowment commitment to the Aluminum level. Every member is important to the Heritage Center's sustainable future – if not yet an OHC member, [please join today!](#)

Also of Interest

Join **Marcus Rediker**, Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History at the University of Pittsburgh, for two free, public events centered on the **1839 Amistad Rebellion**. On **Monday, October 5 at 7:00 p.m.** in Hallock Auditorium (within Oberlin College's Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies at 122 Elm Street), view Rediker's film *Ghosts of Amistad* (released in 2014). Professor Rediker will attend the screening and will answer questions after the film. On **Tuesday, October 6 from 12:15-1:15 p.m.** in Wilder Hall 101 (Oberlin College's Student Union at 135 West Lorain Street), Rediker speaks on *Rethinking the Amistad Rebellion (with an Oberlin Connection)*. Both events are sponsored by the Oberlin College History Department and co-sponsored by the Bonner Center for Service & Learning. For more information, visit www.oberlin.edu or www.marcusrediker.com.

The Legacy of the Civil War: 1865 – Appomattox and Beyond is a free series of lectures, book discussions and a one-act play hosted by **Lorain County Community College** throughout the fall. Explore and discuss the historic events of 1865, the end of the Civil War, and its aftermath which continues to affect American society and culture today. For more information, or to register for any or all sessions, visit www.lorainccc.edu/civilwar or call (440) 366-4126.

The **Friends of the Oberlin Public Library** will host its bi-annual **Fall Book Sale, October 7-11** (various times), with the Friends' Pre-Sale on Wednesday, October 7 from 5-8 p.m. Stop by the library (65 South Main Street) to check out a great selection of books, music and DVDs.

The **Brownhelm Historical Association** presents *If Tombstones Could Talk...and Some Will* on **Sunday October 11 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.** The second annual autumn cemetery walk takes place at the Brownhelm Cemetery (corner of North Ridge and Sunnyside Roads, Vermilion) and features re-enactors sharing stories of the lives of some of Brownhelm's early pioneers. (Rain date is October 18.) For more information, call (440) 988-4550.

Step back in time for tales of spooky history in a very special setting at the Amherst Sandstone Village (763 Milan Avenue) on **October 24 & 25** hosted by the **Amherst Historical Society**. *By My Lantern's Light* is a one-hour living history experience with tours departing every 15 minutes from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Admission is \$3 per person (children not admitted without an adult). For more information, call (440) 988-7255 or e-mail amhersthistory@centurytel.net.

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