

# Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette ♦ February 2017

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or send e-mail to [members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org).

## Oh Freedom! Commemorating the Negro Spiritual and the Underground Railroad

Saturday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m. (Doors Open at 6:30 p.m.)



Dramatist, researcher, and educator **Wesley G. Williams, II** (pictured at far left) teams with musician and vocalist **H. LeArthur (H.L.) Wright, II** (near left) to present a special Black History Month tribute for the community. The program, which takes place at The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ (106 North Main Street), recalls in five compelling movements the struggle and

striving of individuals, families, and our nation during the tumultuous years of the mid-19th century. You may recall Williams' powerful presentation as Frederick Douglass when he brought his one-man show to Oberlin in the fall of 2015. The *Oh Freedom!* program promises to be an equally moving and memorable evening. This event is free and open to the public thanks to support from the **Community Foundation of Lorain County** and the **Oberlin African-American Genealogy & History Group (OAAGHG)**. For more information, visit [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org) or call (440) 774-1700.

## Freedom's Friends Tablet Tour FREE in February In Honor of Black History Month



Borrow a user-friendly iPad from the Heritage Center to explore the community's abolitionist and Underground Railroad history any Tuesday through Saturday between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. throughout the month of February. The tablet tour allows participants to move at their own pace through town and campus while learning about local landmarks and discovering new stories of sacrifice and freedom that occurred in and around historic Oberlin. The main tour covers about a mile with an option to go farther afield (within Oberlin) on foot or by car for those

who wish to do more in-depth exploration. Too cold for an outdoor adventure? The tablet tour can be just as engaging when browsed from the warmth of a favorite armchair. A credit card is required to secure the loan of the tablet, but no user fees will be charged. Find out more by contacting Museum Education and Tour Coordinator Amanda Manahan at [tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org).

## Music in the Home Tour

### Saturday, February 4 at 1:00 p.m.



Enjoy a wonderfully melodious tour of the Heritage Center's historic properties, featuring musical artifacts and sounds of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition to this February offering, the tour will be given at 1 p.m. on the first Saturday of March and April as well. Advance registration is recommended; the fee is \$6 per adult and is free for OHC members, children and college students. Find out more, or make a reservation by calling (440) 774-1700 or visiting [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org).

*Photo: This beautiful upright piano (circa 1880), manufactured by the Sohmer Piano Company of New York, is displayed in the front parlor of the Jewett House. Made of bird's eye maple, the piano features lovely intricate carving.*

## What's Coming Up at the Heritage Center?

### 2017 Winter / Spring Events Calendar Online

Last month, OHC members received a copy of the latest events calendar in their mailboxes. The coming months are filled with creative new programs, tours, excursions, and more -- don't miss out! If you wish to be among the first to find out about the latest events presented by the Oberlin Heritage Center, we encourage you to become a member today! For a look at the Winter/Spring Events Calendar, visit [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org) or call (440) 774-1700 and request a copy.

## Black History on Tap Hosted by the Western Reserve Historical Society

### Thursday, February 9 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.



Come check out the Heritage Center's table and activities at this upcoming event at the Cleveland History Center (10825 East Boulevard). Enjoy an evening full of food, drinks, and entertainment, while learning how the African American community has shaped Northeast Ohio and beyond. The Oberlin Heritage Center's Museum Education and Tour Coordinator **Amanda Manahan** and AmeriCorps/Local History Corps member **Mary Manning** will be there with information on Oberlin's role in the Underground Railroad, including scenario questions and stories to make people think about the difficulties and hard choices freedom seekers had to make during their travels. General admission: \$10; Students or

WRHS Members: \$7; Teachers: FREE this month only and includes a pop-up session on curriculum enrichment. Find out more, or make a reservation by calling 216-721-5722 x1502 or visiting <https://www.wrhs.org/events/black-history-on-tap-beautiful-reflections/>.



## Spring Series Looks at Oberlin and World War II

### Please Share Your Own Oberlin Stories and Photos



*Photo: Celebrating the students' good work and saying farewell to OHC's super team of Winter Term interns. From left: Steve Johnson, Amanda Manahan, Xun Zheng, Chris Mueller and Karen Weiner.*

Steve Johnson, OHC Trustee, will present two free community programs this spring at Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium that focus on Oberlin during World War II. *Oberlin Reacts to World War II* takes place on Tuesday, March 14 and looks at Oberlin's home front before, during, and after the war. You can help him prepare by sharing any information, anecdotes, and photographs from that era. On May 9, Johnson presents *Oberlin Serves in World War II*, which will center on the experiences of local men and women who served in the Armed Forces. Again, any information that you can share about Oberlin servicemen and women will be helpful, including occupations before and after service, branch of service, rank, where stationed, military occupation, combat experience, and citations or medals awarded.

Three Oberlin College Winter Term students helped with World War II research at the Oberlin Heritage Center during the month of January under Johnson's guidance and that of Museum Education & Tour Coordinator **Amanda Manahan**. The hard-working team of **Chris Mueller** (OC '18), **Karen Weiner** (OC '20), and **Xun Zheng** (OC '18) gathered more than 800 names of Oberlinians who served in the war or were active in relief efforts and also documented the community's reactions to the war.

If you have information to share, please contact Johnson directly at [sjohnson3@oberlin.net](mailto:sjohnson3@oberlin.net) or by mail c/o Oberlin Heritage Center, Box 455, Oberlin, OH 44074.

## Save the Date for OHC's Annual Meeting and Community Award Presentations

**Wednesday, April 5 from 6-8:30 p.m. (Social Hour begins at 5 p.m.)**



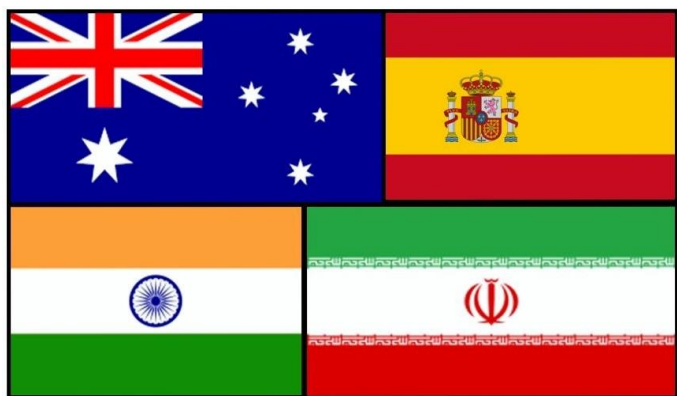
*Allen Memorial Hospital, circa 1946.*

Join us for an upbeat evening of history and fellowship at The Hotel at Oberlin (10 East College Street). Our keynote speaker, **Joseph Sober**, President of Mercy Allen Hospital, offers comments on the history and future of Oberlin's community hospital. **Dr. W. Jeanne McKibben**, OHC honorary trustee, will display materials and videos from her chronicling of the medical history of Oberlin. A perennial favorite, the Heritage Center's Community Awards, also will be presented. Invitations with further details will be

mailed to OHC members later this month. All are welcome. Not an OHC member? Add your name to the Annual Meeting mailing list by sending an e-mail to [members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org).

## Camps & Classes for Kids

### World Cultures Programs Build Bridges across Time and Distance



The Heritage Center's *Hands-on-History & Cultures of the World* series for home school families takes place Wednesday afternoons March 1, 8 and 15 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. This year's itinerary takes us to West Africa, Iran and Spain. Spring Break mini-camp offers a lively hop around the globe as we explore a variety of different cultures through games, hands-on activities, photographs and cooking. A few of the lands and traditions include Arctic Peoples, Australia, West

Africa, and India. **Around the World in 3 Days** takes place Tuesday through Thursday, March 21-23 from 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Register by March 1 and receive a discount!

These original children's programs are geared to boys and girls ages 8-13 and are held at the Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street). To reserve a space at the camps call (440) 774-1700 and request a camp registration form or visit [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org).

**Teachers, scout leaders, camp counselors and families:** The Heritage Center presents many other options for making history come alive in ways that capture a child's imagination and encourage further learning. Ask Museum Education & Tour Coordinator Amanda Manahan ([tourinfo@oberlinheritagecenter.org](mailto:tourinfo@oberlinheritagecenter.org)) about scheduling a field trip to the Heritage Center, booking a group program at your site or ours, or borrowing a themed history kit.

## OHC Visitors: By the Numbers

### Tours, Programs and More Make OHC a Busy Hub in 2016!

**15% INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR**

Tour attendance **2266** visitors came from **36** states **2016**

**10** foreign countries **43%**

represented among visitors of tours led by volunteer docents  
**9469 total visitors**

The number of tour visitors increased in 2016 to 2,266, a new high total in recent years and a 15% increase over tour visitors in 2015.

Although walk-in and history walk tour visitation saw a slight decline in attendance, the Heritage Center's group tours and special event tours increased.

About one-quarter of all tour visitors came from nearby communities in Lorain County, and another one-third came from Cleveland. Oberlin residents comprised 10% of annual

tour visitors. Travelers came to the Heritage Center from 35 states (plus Washington, DC) as well as ten foreign countries, including Austria, China, Iraq, Romania, and Turkey.

OHC is grateful for volunteers who are the backbone of the docent team and who serve as fine ambassadors for the community. Volunteers led 43% of tours in 2016, with the rest being led by student interns/AmeriCorps members and staff.

## **OHC Visitors: By the Numbers continued...**

The number of community programs for adults *almost doubled* over those offered the previous year (20 in 2016; 11 in 2015) and program attendance increased by 15%. The number of requests for outreach programs also were up this past year.

September saw the highest number of visitors last year due to a combination of group tours and community programs, followed by March, April and November.

The Heritage Center tracks all sorts of visitor statistics -- by tour or program type, by age groups, by days and times visited, by home place of visitors -- and much more. This careful documentation helps in planning to meet the interests and needs of future visitors.

## **Will You be the Heritage Center's 100<sup>th</sup> ELM?!!**

### **Endowed Life Members Create Lasting Legacy at OHC**



Like Oberlin's Historic Elm tree, the Heritage Center's ELMs (Endowed Life Members) are deeply rooted in their support of the organization. These members contribute (or pledge to contribute over a period of time up to five years) an amount of \$2,000 or more to the Heritage Center's Endowment. They no longer are asked to pay annual membership dues since their endowment gift generates yearly income for the organization in perpetuity.

The Endowed Life Member program was created in 1998. That year, 18 Heritage Center members stepped up to comprise the first circle of ELM supporters. As the name implies, once someone becomes an Endowed Life Member, they are an ELM for life. In 2017, the ELM circle has grown to 99, including 11 of the original founding members.

Consider becoming an ELM yourself this year -- you can do this in any number of ways, from a one-time gift to a five-year pledge with regular payments by check or credit card (these can be broken down to installments as low as \$35 per month!) You'll be in the good company of 99 other friends who care deeply about Oberlin history and who are making a lasting impact on the organization. For more information, contact Executive Director Liz Schultz at (440) 774-1700 or [director@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:director@oberlinheritage.org).

## **Listen in to Oberlin Oral Histories**

### **WOBC Hosts Heritage Center in Two Community Conversation Hours**



Over Oberlin College's Winter Term break, the Heritage Center took to the airwaves on Oberlin College's radio station WOBC (91.5 FM) presenting live oral history interviews of several individuals who grew up in Oberlin. Shared stories included early childhood memories of family and neighborhoods, mid-twentieth century downtown Oberlin, and the changes in the lives of Oberlinians and the town's

*Pat Ives, left, and Scott Broadwell, center, are interviewed live on-air by OHC's Amanda Manahan.*



## Listen in to Oberlin Oral Histories continued...

physical structures over the last few decades. If you were not able to tune in during the live broadcasts, we're happy to offer you another opportunity to listen. Listen to the interview with **Linda Gilmore** and **Sue Meyer** at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2GM9nyPiXE4WEIYZmNCSVhTNGc/view>. Listen to the interview with **Scott Broadwell** and **Pat Ives** at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2GM9nyPiXE4Q181RVJqZHMMyY0U/view>

(If an interview doesn't play immediately upon clicking the link, then download and proceed.)

## **Lucy Bagby: The Last Fugitive Slave** **Highlights from November Performance in Oberlin**

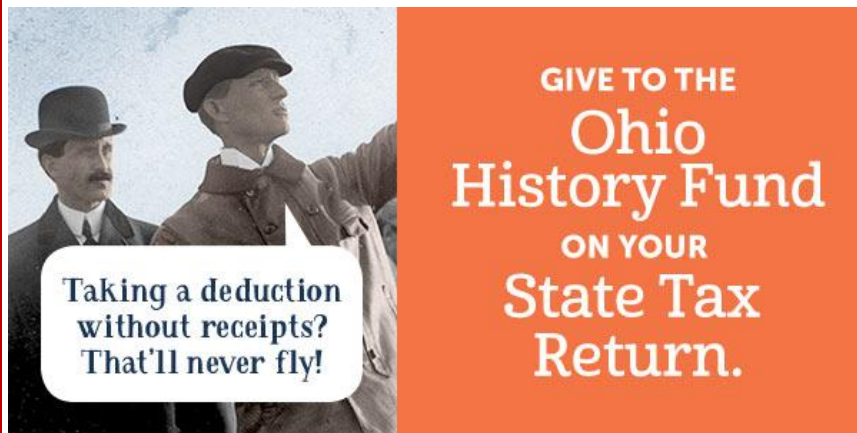


If you missed the story of Lucy Bagby in the community performance of *The Last Fugitive Slave*, presented by the Cleveland nonprofit **Kulture Kids**, at The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C. last fall, you can view some of the program's highlights by clicking the link below. You can also see a live version of Kulture Kids' Founding Artistic Director and Lead Performer Robin Pease presenting an excerpted, one-woman version of *The Last Fugitive Slave* at the Black History on Tap event hosted by the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland on Thursday, February 9 (see announcement above in this newsletter). View the video at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxtHzNee13o#action=share>.

## **Your Ohio Tax Return Can Make History**

### **Look for “Ohio History Fund” on your Ohio Tax Return (line 26c) and Designate a Dollar Amount**



As you may know, the Ohio History Fund is one of the few grant programs in the state just for history projects and it is almost entirely funded directly from Ohio taxpayers' contributions on their state tax returns. Since the Ohio History Fund started in 2012, it has made 47 grants in 32 counties for a total of \$448,000. Small donations make a big difference: For just \$9 -- the average donation -- you can help

repair a roof, preserve rare color film footage, or stage a historical reenactment.

Not receiving a tax refund? You can still help: buy an Ohio History mastodon license plate at <http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/vr-sp-organization.aspx>. Twenty dollars from the sale of each set of plates benefits the History Fund grant program. You can also make a donation directly to the Ohio History Connection for the History Fund. Your tax-deductible donation in any form will strengthen local history throughout Ohio! Learn more about the Ohio History Fund at <https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/local-history-services/historyfund>.

## Membership News

A brief membership survey is being sent to all Heritage Center members this week. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on membership benefits and suggestions about how OHC can improve its offerings and community impact. If you are a member who did not receive a survey, please let us know by sending an e-mail to [members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org) or by calling (440) 774-1700.

The Heritage Center warmly welcomes new members **Wendy Grieve**, **Linda Huber** (Lakeside), **Alexia Hudson-Ward** (Westlake), **Kaye Palacios** (Avon Lake), **Erika Pilisy**, **Jeremy Smith**, and **Christy Perry Tuohey** (Syracuse, NY). Special thanks to new ELMs, **Laurel & Rhys Price Jones**, **Suzanne McDougal** (Alexandria, VA) and **Grover Zinn**, each of whom stepped up to the Copper Level of Endowed Life Membership. We appreciate you! (Members are from Oberlin unless indicated otherwise.)

We mourn the recent passing of Endowed Life Members **Emiko Custer** and **Jean Schaal**. Their long-time support and friendship meant so very much to this organization.

Every member makes a difference at the Oberlin Heritage Center. Not only do members receive free tours and history walks, discounts on programs for which there is a fee, and invitations to special "Members Only" events, they also connect with wonderful people who share an interest in local history. Your membership is of great importance in carrying out the good work of this small nonprofit with a big community impact!

If you are not yet an OHC member, please join today by visiting [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org) and clicking on the "Join Now" button at the top of the home page.

## Board, Staff & Intern News

Board member **Ron Gorman** was the guest speaker last month as the Quincy Gillmore Civil War Round Table celebrated the milestone of its 50th meeting. Ron's spoke about "*Ohio's USCT Infantry Regiments in the Civil War*," covering the political and military histories of the 5th U.S. Colored Troops and 27th U.S. Colored Troops infantry regiments from their recruitment in Ohio in 1863 through their muster out in 1865.

AmeriCorps member **Mary Manning** presents the theme *Black Activism in Oberlin History* within the Heritage Center's February postings on Facebook and in a display on OHC's South Main Street Kiosk. If you are not yet an OHC Facebook friend, please "Like" us today to learn more about civil rights activism on issues ranging from the abolition of slavery to fair access to services and employment.

Mary also has spent time in the region working on various projects with history organizations in Cleveland, Lakewood, Medina County and Vermilion. The AmeriCorps/ Local History Corps position is designed to assist the host organization (i.e., OHC) as well as other history groups across a seven-county region in northeast Ohio.

Congratulations to Oberlin Heritage Center college student intern **Olivia Hay** (OC '17) who was selected as one of 8 new Shansi Fellows for 2017. Following graduation, Olivia will spend two years living and working in Madurai, India at Lady Doak College.

## Also of Interest

### Tracy Chevalier at the Hudson Library & Historical Society

Internationally bestselling author Tracy Chevalier discusses her latest book, *At the Edge of the Orchard*, on **Wednesday, February 1 at 7 p.m.** The book, set in Northwest Ohio, tells the story of a pioneer family living and struggling on the American frontier. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing. The library is located at 96 Library Street in Hudson. For more information or to register, call (330) 653-6658 or visit [www.hudsonlibrary.org](http://www.hudsonlibrary.org).

### The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C. Offers Planned Giving Session

On Sunday, March 12, at **11:15 a.m.**, all are invited to an informative session to discuss three important topics: (1) Why it is important to have a will no matter how old or young you may be, (2) The advantages to creating a charitable gift annuity -- to your charity, to your taxes, to your future income, and (3) Using the 401K rollover provision to support your favorite charitable cause and to avoid paying taxes on tax-deferred assets. The program will take place in The First Church's John Frederick Oberlin Room (106 North Main Street). Speakers include: Lynne Hansen, Associate for Legacy Gifts of the Office of Philanthropy and Stewardship at the United Church of Christ, and Laurel Price Jones, former Vice President for Development, The George Washington University. The event is free and open to the public.

### Siebert UGRR Collection now Available Free Online

The Underground Railroad-related materials gathered through decades of research by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert (1866-1961) of The Ohio State University are now accessible online at no cost to the user. Prior to 2017, researchers could only access the materials by subscription. Among many fascinating items in the collection are transcripts of letters by well-known abolitionists such as John Brown and John Rankin; a letter to Siebert from Frederick Douglass; and documents that demonstrate the critical role Ohioans played in the abolitionist movement. To explore the collection online, visit [ohiomemory.org/siebert](http://ohiomemory.org/siebert). You can also delve into the original materials in their non-virtual paper form by visiting the third-floor Research Room at the Ohio History Center (800 East 17th Avenue) in Columbus.

### Modern-Day Monuments Woman to Speak in Cleveland

Dr. Laurie Rush, a cultural historian with the U.S. Army, is the featured speaker at the Cleveland Restoration Society's 2017 Community Luncheon on **Thursday, March 2 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** at The Westin Cleveland Downtown (777 St. Clair Avenue, NE). Dr. Rush is an international expert on the protection of cultural heritage during times of armed conflict. She has been called a modern day Monuments Woman because of her work related to protecting heritage sites in the Middle East. Tickets are \$75 per person (of which \$40 is tax-deductible); reservations must be made by February 24. For more information or to make a reservation visit <http://www.clevelandrestoration.org/> or call (216) 426-1000.

