

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette September 2019

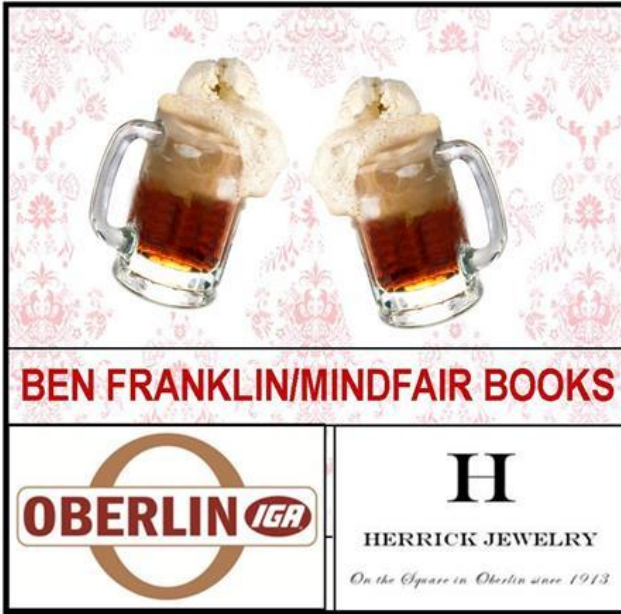
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To subscribe to the free E-Gazette, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org
or send e-mail to members@oberlinheritage.org.

Root Beer & Yesteryear

Sunday, September 8 from 1 - 4 p.m.



Join friends old and new at the Oberlin Heritage Center for this new family-friendly (and FREE!) event featuring live performances, vintage music, historic portrayals, old-fashioned games, exhibits and best of all -- root beer floats for everyone! Why root beer? Remember, throughout most of its history Oberlin was a "dry" town, meaning you couldn't buy alcohol within city limits. As a refreshing alternative, Professor Frank Jewett seemed to have a penchant for this sweet, bubbly drink, which he liked to make in his 19th century home, one of the three beautifully preserved buildings that the Heritage Center will have open for self-guided tours that day.

The entertainment schedule includes:

1:30 p.m. Performances on the Astor piano (circa 1800) by **Shangru Du** and **Zuguan Xiao**, Oberlin Conservatory students of David Breitman, Associate Professor of Historical Performance.

2:00 p.m. Conversation with **Lucy Stone**, abolitionist and women's rights pioneer, and an early graduate of Oberlin College (1847). Portrayed by **Diane Stanley** of Wellington.

2:30 p.m. **Pat Serio** of Oberlin entertains on the mountain dulcimer.

3:00 p.m. Up Close with **Sojourner Truth**, African-American abolitionist and 19th century women's right activist. Portrayed by **Inez James** of Lorain, in association with the Lorain Negro Business and Professional Women's Club.

Visitors also are welcome to view a new guest exhibit in the Monroe House from the Museum of Hispanic and Latino Cultures of Lorain (*see more about the exhibit elsewhere in this newsletter*).

All treats and activities are free and open to the public, with special thanks to these Oberlin businesses for their generous support: premier sponsor **Ben Franklin/Mindfair Books**, co-sponsor **Herrick Jewelry** and root beer float sponsor **Oberlin IGA**.

Find out more about the event, including how you can help volunteer, by visiting www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or calling (440) 774-1700.

Mexican Imagery of Our Lady of Guadalupe

MHLC Guest Exhibit Runs from September 5-21



Coinciding with National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15), this new visiting exhibit from Lorain's **Museum of Hispanic and Latino Cultures (MHLC)** features representations of the Virgin of Guadalupe, one of the most significant figures of Roman Catholicism, who also is known as patroness of the Americas. Visitors will learn about the symbolism in her portrayal and how she is tied to Mexico's religious and social history. The exhibit may be viewed during OHC's Upstairs/Downstairs tours every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., or during half-hour drop-in Sneak Peek tours between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Normal tour fees apply; for details, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700.

Those interested in delving deeper into the exhibit's content and context are encouraged to attend a one-hour **Parlor Chat** with MHLC President **Guillermo Arriaga** on **Saturday, September 14 at 1 p.m.** in the Monroe House. The presentation is free, although reservations are needed due to limited seating. Visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700 for reservations.

The Heritage Center first collaborated with the Lorain museum two years ago on a display that featured art and artifacts representing 19 countries.

Scanning Saturdays - Digitally Preserve Your History

September 14 and 28 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., by appointment



Family gatherings, graduations and weddings, beloved pets, grandmother's house and much more – the Heritage Center can help you preserve and share your special photographic memories. Our high quality scanners in the Monroe House Resource Center can preserve items up to 11" X 17." While the scanner is moving, Collections Manager **Maren McKee** (*at left*) will be happy to share ideas for storing and labeling your photo collection. You can scan up to 10 items for

\$1 each (50-cents apiece for OHC members) within the 30-minute time slot. Participants are asked to bring a flash drive to take the copies home. Make an appointment now by contacting Maren at history@oberlinheritage.org or (440) 774-1700.

Smithsonian Museum Day - Saturday, September 21

Music in the Home Tour offered at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.



Celebrate the Year of Music



For the 14th consecutive year, the Oberlin Heritage Center will participate in *Smithsonian Magazine's Annual Museum Day*, which involves more than 1,000 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.

The Heritage Center's tour this year is especially fitting for the 2019 Museum Day theme of *Celebrate the Year of Music*. OHC's one-hour guided tour focuses on the museum collection's musical artifacts, some of which provide tour-goers with actual sounds of the time. Participants will learn how music was used for entertainment, fellowship and teaching in 19th and 20th century homes. Receive a free tour by presenting an official Museum Day Admission Card that provides free entry for two people.

Explore which museums nationwide are participating in Museum Day or download the free Admission Card by visiting www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/museum-day-2019/.

Save the Dates

Two Especially Family-Friendly Events Coming this Autumn!

Every Good Story has a Plot

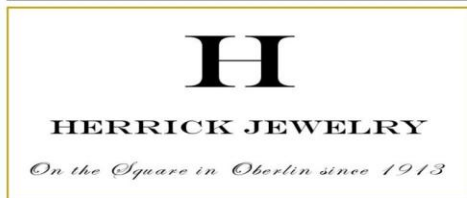


OHC Board member **Judy Cook** (at right) shared a story from **Adelia Field Johnston**, first female faculty member at Oberlin College, in the 2017 Westwood Cemetery fall tour.

Every Good Story has a Plot / Friday, October 11 at 4 p.m., Saturday, October 12 at 2 p.m. and Sunday, October 13 at 2 p.m. Enjoy a fascinating look at local history this Halloween season through a new tour of Westwood Cemetery (429 Morgan Street, Oberlin). This non-scary, one-hour guided stroll features early Oberlin business owners and trades people of days-gone-by as portrayed by costumed interpreters. You'll be introduced to innkeeper and dry goods store owner Marx Straus (aka volunteer **Dennis Cook**), tea shop proprietor Rachel Brightman Rawdon (**Judy Cook**), milliner Marie de France (**Camille Hamlin Allen**), insurance company owner Helen Gorske Sperry (portrayed by her niece **Pat Gorske Price**) and formerly enslaved 19th century civil rights advocate and entrepreneur Henry Lee (**Joseph Peek**). Tickets are \$10/adults and \$5/children (\$8 adults/\$4 children for OHC members) and advance reservations are required. Find out more by calling (440) 774-1700 or visiting www.oberlinheritagecenter.org.

Save the Date continued...

Community Trivia Night



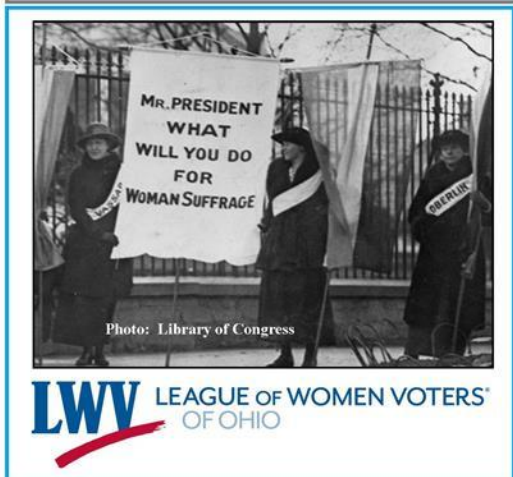
Trivia Night / Friday. November 15, 6-8:30 p.m. (doors open at 5:30 p.m.) This friendly competition tickles your brain cells with a variety of categories including sports, pop culture, science and much more. The event is held in the Fellowship Hall of The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C. (106 North Main Street) and there's plenty of food, side games, raffles, prizes and team spirit for all who take part! Tickets are \$12/adults and \$6/children in advance; \$15/adults and \$7/children at the door. Start gathering a team together and ponder a clever name for your entry! Can your group de-throne the two-time reigning champions -- the "Lightning Rods" of Oberlin's Ben Franklin/Mindfair store?

A special salute goes to local businesses **Herrick Jewelry** and the **Ohio Educational Credit Union (OHECU)** for being co-sponsors of this event. We welcome other sponsors as well – If you are a local business owner or an individual who could

also help sponsor this widely-publicized and well-received community event, OHC would love to have you join in the fun! Contact OHC Executive Director **Liz Schultz** for details at (440) 774-1700 or director@oberlinheritage.org.

Make a reservation for Trivia Night at www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700.

FOLLOW-UP: Moon Memories & Women's Suffrage Reading List Learn More about Themes Presented in Recent OHC Programs



Earlier this summer our nation observed the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing, and OHC Executive Director Liz Schultz presented a mini-program on the historic event and its Oberlin connections at the Vintage & Vintner gathering in July. To commemorate the occasion the Heritage Center also invited individuals to share their moon landing memories. Thank you so much to **Ellen Broadwell, Catharina Meints Caldwell, Neal Dorenkott, Julie Hill, Richard Schmidt, Linda Schultz, Mary Worthington**, and two more individuals who wished to remain anonymous. If you'd like to read more, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org and click on "History Features and Blog" under the *Research and Learn* main menu tab, then scroll down to 20th Century Oberlin history to find the *Moon Memories* feature.

Last month, AmeriCorps member Riley Thomas presented a public program on the Women's Suffrage Movement in Oberlin. In anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the national ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women

Follow-up: Women's Suffrage Reading List continued...

the right to vote, the League of Women Voters of Ohio is distributing an "All-Ages Reading List." Emerita Professor of History at Oberlin College **Carol Lasser** (also an Oberlin Heritage Center Honorary Trustee) was part of the team who put together these recommendations for learning more about many aspects of women's suffrage through books and films for adults plus age-appropriate versions for toddlers to teens. To download the reading list, go to https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/suffrage_reading_list_-_final.pdf.

History Minute

Liz Schultz Looks Back at the Beginnings of Oberlin's Bright Future



Editor's Note: Thank you to OHC member Janet Van Doren for prompting this research with her question about electricity in Oberlin and for sharing with the Heritage Center an image of a 1904 bill from The Oberlin Gas & Electric Company.

One of the first newspaper notices referencing electricity being used in Oberlin was an 1864 advertisement for Mrs. C. P. Chapman, M.D., who offered electricity and electro-thermal baths as part of her homeopathic and hydropathic medical practice on College Street. Other early users or producers of small amounts of electricity were telegraph companies and science professors or inventors, such as Elisha Gray (telephone) and Charles Martin Hall (aluminum production).

By 1889, some residents were frustrated that the city contracted gas street lighting for only 20 nights a month. As Albert A. Wright wrote to the local newspaper, "Who provides for the remaining ten or eleven? We cannot get a contract with the moon..." Even so, Wright and others felt that taxes had "already become a burden grievous to be borne" and thought it better to spend limited funds on street paving and sewage improvements rather than new electric lights. That same year, in anticipation of future demand, Albert H. Johnson sought a charter to distribute electricity and transformed his Oberlin Gas Light Company into the Oberlin Gas and Electric Company. Conversations continued about cost and whether a municipal plant should be formed, but in 1893 it was Johnson's private company that first began supplying electricity to arc lights on the streets, and soon after to a few private homes in the community. A Sanborn fire insurance map from that year shows an engine and dynamo in his plant. The company changed ownership several times after Johnson's tragic death in a railroad accident in 1899. By the 1920s, the electrical supply was coming from outside of Oberlin. (*If you have interest in researching this transition and the nuts and bolts of Oberlin's early power plant, let us know.*) After years of disproportionately high local commercial rates, the city broke from then-owner Ohio Electric Power and formed the Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System, which went into production in 1934. Today, OMLPS retains generators as backup, but most electricity is purchased, approximately 80% of which is from renewable sources.

Thank you to Doug McMillan and OMLPS for sharing Robert Tufts' Oberlin College 1940 thesis on this topic. Other sources used include: Lorain County News August 10, 1864; Oberlin Weekly News June 13 and November 28, 1889; Wilbur Phillips' book Oberlin Colony page 163; Aaron Wildavsky's book Leadership in a Small Town pages 72-73; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; 2019 City of Oberlin Climate Action Plan.

Kudos Corner



Congratulations to **Maren McKee** upon completing five years as the Heritage Center's Collections Manager. Maren recently returned from Philadelphia where she attended the annual meeting and conference of the American Association for State & Local History (AASLH) and enjoyed the opportunity to explore and discuss many of the latest trends and issues relating to museums and collections management.

How exciting to see the Heritage Center's former AmeriCorps member **Mary Manning's** featured article in the most recent edition of *Pathways*, a publication of Ohio Humanities. Take a few moments to read ***From Montpelier to the Midwest: A French Botanist Consults Ohio Wine Experts*** (<https://digitaleditions.gpublishing.com/pathwaysfall2019/> -- click through to page 15 to begin). Cheers!

Join the OHC Team

Looking for Friendly, Organized, Service-Oriented People to Fill Two Key Posts

The Heritage Center seeks a **Communications and Development Coordinator** to work 35 hours a week, beginning January 3, 2020. Applications are due by September 10. Responsibilities include communicating electronically and in print with OHC membership and the public. This person also coordinates the Heritage Center's membership program and oversees fundraising logistics for the Annual Fund and other campaigns. For full details about this opportunity, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org and click on "About" in the main menu tab, then scroll down to "Work Opportunities."

OHC also is looking for a **Front Desk Receptionist**, a paid position that has been funded in the past through **VANTAGE Aging's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** supported by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Ohio Department of Aging. VANTAGE is a statewide organization that offers job training and placement to low-income adults age 55 and older. Find out if you are eligible to work about 20 hours per week in the community by visiting <https://vantageaging.org/programs-and-services/workforce-solutions/> or contacting the Elyria office at (440) 324-3588.

Volunteer at the Heritage Center

Help Occasionally or on a Regular Basis -- It's Up to You!

Root Beer & Yesteryear Volunteers: Room supervisors are needed in Jewett House and Monroe House to help oversee the collections in each room and direct visitors as they take part in self-guided tours. **Docents** also are needed to provide history background to visitors. Contact **Liz Schultz** (director@oberlinheritage.org or 440/774-1700) if you can help for a 90-minute shift on Sunday September 8 between 1-4 p.m.

Cookie Bakers: Will you bake 2-3 dozen cookies to share with guests at the Root Beer & Yesteryear event (September 8) or the Trivia Night get-together (November 15). Contact **Mary Anne Cunningham** at members@oberlinheritage.org or (440) 774-1700 if you can help.

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Volunteer Needs continued...

**Volunteers
Needed!**



**OBERLIN
Heritage
CENTER**

Upstairs/Downstairs Tour Docents: If you enjoy taking guided tours and exploring historic places, wouldn't you like to learn how to give a tour of your own? A free **Upstairs/Downstairs Tour Docent Training Workshop** will be offered **Thursday, October 3 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.** Learn how to present an engaging 75-minute tour through the Heritage Center's three historic buildings while sharing stories of the community and college in its first century (1833-1933). Register by September 25 by contacting Museum Education & Tour Coordinator **Amanda Manahan** (tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org) (If you've never experienced a tour, arrange with Amanda to take a free tour in advance to see what it's all about.)

History Walk Docents: Volunteers are needed especially as guides for the Freedom's Friends Underground Railroad & Abolitionist History Walk. This is a wonderful opportunity to delve more deeply into Oberlin's history and learn to share it with others. Training can be scheduled at convenient times, and new volunteers receive lots of support from OHC staff and seasoned docents as well. Contact Museum Education & Tour Coordinator **Amanda Manahan** at tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org or call (440) 774-1700.

Grounds Care Helper: The Heritage Center welcomes hands-on help with autumn clean-up of the grounds, including weeding and preparing flower beds for winter, picking up black walnuts that rain down upon the grounds this time of year, and raking leaves. Contact **Liz Schultz** at (440) 774-1700 or director@oberlinheritage.org if you can lend a hand.

Craftsperson: OHC needs someone to repair worn sandwich board signs (or make new ones). These are used daily to direct visitors to tours and special events. We'd also love to have someone make us a simple wooden bike rack to replace one that is beyond repair. To discuss further, contact **Liz Schultz** at (440) 774-1700 or director@oberlinheritage.org.

Grow OHC's Membership

Preserving Local History Depends on YOUR Support

With all that the Heritage Center is able to offer each year in terms of community programming, heritage tourism, and making local history more accessible to varied audiences, you may be surprised to learn that OHC membership actually has *declined about 8%* since 2012. If you're not a member, yet have an interest in local history, please join today. Memberships directly support the daily operations of the Heritage Center, and a solid membership base also generates additional funding from grant makers who like organizations that demonstrate strong community support.

What does a membership provide YOU in return? -- Heritage Center members receive free admission for tours and history walks, as well as two guest passes each year; invitations to special members-only events; and discounts in the Museum Store and on programs and workshops for which there is a fee. Members also can use their OHC membership to receive reciprocal benefits at more than 300 other history-based museums and organizations across the United States.

Join the Heritage Center today at www.oberlinheritagecenter.org (click the JOIN NOW) button at the top of the home page) or call (440) 774-1700.

Staff, Intern and Volunteer News



A big shout-out goes to Murray Ridge Center volunteers Noah, Eric, David and Christy, who together with supervisor Kimberly Stevens-Johnson spent a morning at the Heritage Center last month making the grounds more attractive for visitors.

Museum Education & Tour Coordinator **Amanda Manahan** led three weeks of summer camps for kids along with a team of helpers that included volunteers **Anne Montoya** and **Emily Winnicki** and student interns **Ruby Denneen** (OHS '19/OC '23) and **Jennifer Gallagher** (OC '21). New this year were two Archaeology camps, both filled to capacity, which featured a dig site just north of the Jewett House barn. The young preservationists unearthed some interesting items, among them a 19th century smoking pipe -- an unexpected find in a community that frowned upon tobacco in any form at that time! Some pieces from the OHC archaeological site will be accessioned into the museum's collection to help enlighten future researchers about life in early Oberlin.

Executive Director **Liz Schultz** participated in a panel discussion on Cultural Preservation as part of the Bonner

Center's Community Engagement Institute that took place during new student orientation last month on the Oberlin College campus. The full day of introducing new students to local organizations included a hands-on component in which small groups of students rolled-up their sleeves to volunteer at nonprofit sites around town. At OHC, a hard-working crew provided great help with museum grounds and building clean-up.

Oberlin College Bonner Scholar and OHC volunteer intern **Wesley Patterson** has researched and written a new history feature on another Oberlin innovator -- this time one who invented a musical instrument called the Telharmonium. Find out more about this progressive (but not-always-practical) thinker when you visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org and click on "History Features and Blog" under the *Research and Learn* main menu tab, then scroll down to *Oberlin Inventors* to find the feature on **Thaddeus Cahill: The Start of the Electronic Music Era**.

We bid farewell at the end of August to AmeriCorps member **Riley Thomas** following her year of service. Be sure to see the new South Main Street kiosk display on *Oberlin Festivals and Celebrations* completed by Riley as one of her final projects at the Heritage Center. (OHC's newest AmeriCorps member arrives in late September; meet her in next month's E-Gazette!)

Volunteer **Xiaojia (Nancy) Li** helped put together two tablet tours in Chinese, one that focuses on the three historic buildings on the OHC site, and the other that introduces visitors to the history and architecture of the buildings around Tappan Square. Nancy also coordinated two groups of Chinese parents of Oberlin College students to visit the Heritage Center and experience the tours. This project is part of the Heritage Center's ongoing work to make Oberlin history more accessible to diverse audiences.

Thank you to several OHC members and friends who offered to make their homes available as bed-and-breakfast accommodations for incoming Oberlin College students and their families during first-year orientation. Volunteers included **Barb & Craig Enos, Anita & Tom Lock,**

Continued on next page...

Staff, Intern and Volunteer News continued...

Cathe Radabaugh, Liz Schultz, Pat Serio, and Gail & Reid Wood. And OHC is grateful to **Margie Walter** who operates a local bed-and-breakfast year round, for donating her proceeds from new student orientation reservations to the Heritage Center. This annual B&B Fundraiser helps provide much needed general operating support for the Heritage Center. Those interested in being bed-and-breakfast volunteer hosts in the future may contact **Gail Wood** at ohcbnb@gmail.com.

Also of Interest

Thursday, September 12 at 5:30 p.m. All are invited to the **George A. Abram Memorial Pavilion Dedication Ceremony** (273 South Main Street, Oberlin). This covered pavilion and rest stop adjacent to the bike path in Oberlin honors the late George Abram's commitment and service to the community and to the Oberlin Underground Railroad Center project. For information, contact Diane Ramos, Administrative Coordinator of Communications for the City of Oberlin at DRamos@cityofoberlin.com or (440) 775-7217.

Thursday, September 19 from 6 - 8 p.m. Oberlin's Indigenous Peoples' Day Committee hosts a viewing of the documentary **The Business of Fancy Dancing** (2002) written, directed and featuring poetic works by Sherman Alexie. The film focuses on Spokane Reservation best friends Seymour and Aristotle whose lives take different paths following high school graduation. The 103-minute drama examines several issues that contemporary Native Americans face, including cultural assimilation (both on the reservation and in urban areas), difficult stereotypes, and substance abuse. Free and open to the public. Location: Oberlin Public Library Community Room (65 South Main Street). Questions? Contact Jean Foggo Simon at foggo@oberlin.net.

Saturday, September 21 from 10 a.m. - 12 noon. The **Lorain Historical Society** hosts a **Storytelling Workshop** at the Carnegie Center (329 West 10th Street, Lorain). Learn how to build your own stories to share with family and friends. Come prepared to participate in creative activities, idea journaling, and participatory exercises to develop and hone your ability to tell your stories. The program is supported by a grant from The Nord Family Foundation and is presented in association with Firelands Association for the Visual Arts. \$5 registration fee. Space is limited; reservations recommended at info@lorainhistory.org or (440) 245-2563.

Thursday, September 26, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. The **Lorain County Historical Society** hosts **Victoria Woodhull: Shattering Glass Ceilings**, a new program created by Eden Valley Enterprises. Hear the remarkable story of this fearless female who spent her life doing things that women in her time didn't do, including being the first woman to run for President - in 1872! This free public program is held at the Lorain County History Center (284 Washington Avenue, Elyria). For more information, call (440) 322-3341.

Sunday, September 29 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. **The Southern Lorain County Historical Roadshow Tour** is a collaborative effort of 6 local historical societies representing Belden, Huntington, LaGrange, Penfield, Pittsfield and Wellington. Bring the entire family to learn about each participating museum, its stories and treasures. Start your tour at any location with a map found at www.pittsfieldtownshiphistoricalsociety.com/uploads/3/7/8/2/37821551/2019flyer.pdf.