



Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette

February 2020

PO Box 0455, Oberlin, OH 44074 (440)774-1700

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or send e-mail to members@oberlinheritage.org.

A History of Race & the Right to Vote in Reconstruction

Saturday, February 1 at 11 a.m.

The right to vote, perhaps more than any other symbol of equality, has sparked some of the most significant Civil Rights struggles in American history. **Ric Sheffield** discusses how African Americans, even in Ohio, literally risked life, limb, and livelihood to claim their places at the polls. His presentation takes place in the Community Room of the Oberlin Public Library (65 South Main Street) and is free and open to the public. The event is a collaboration between OHC and the **Oberlin African-American Genealogy & History Group (OAAGHG)**.



Ric Sheffield is Professor of Legal Studies and Sociology at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. In addition to having served as Associate Provost of the College, he is the Director of Kenyon's Law & Society Program and the John Adams Summer Scholars Program in Socio-legal Studies. His research has focused upon the relationship between law and issues of gender, race, and ethnicity. He has lectured widely on race and law, as well as on African-American life in rural Ohio. This event is supported by the Doug & Shirley R. Johnson Endowment Fund and **Ohio Humanities**, the state-based partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Salute Those Who Make Oberlin Special by February 1

Do it today! This is your chance to recognize those who make it happen!



Take a few minutes to nominate someone who is doing good work in local history, historic preservation or service to the community. The Heritage Center's Community Awards program, now in its 19th year, recognizes individuals, businesses, or organizations whose accomplishments are in keeping with OHC's mission to preserve and share Oberlin's unique heritage and to make the community a better place to live, learn, work, and visit. Categories include:

- **Community Historian**
- **Keep Oberlin Beautiful**
- **History Teacher of the Year**
- **Community Teacher of the Year**
(who encourages student service)
- **OHC Volunteer of the Year**
- **Business Service Leader**
- **Youth Community Service**
- **Heritage Guardian**

Nominations may be brief and you're likely to discover that the process of writing a paragraph or two about someone who inspires you is rewarding in itself -- try it and see! Award recipients will be honored at the Heritage Center's Annual Meeting, which takes place at The Hotel at Oberlin on Wednesday, April 1, 2020. Find out more or download a nomination form at www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700.

The Oberlin Sanctuary Project

The Cleveland Public Library – Langston Hughes Branch will host a public program related to the Oberlin Sanctuary Project on Saturday, February 22 at 2 p.m. Held at the library, 10200 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, this project documents the history of Oberlin's efforts to provide sanctuary, safe haven, and assistance for those in need. This history includes stories of Oberlin residents and Oberlin College students and faculty members assisting runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad before the American Civil War, providing opportunities for Japanese American students to attend college during World War II, and helping Kent State University faculty and students cope with the deaths of four students on May 4, 1970. Stories of aiding refugees from the 1970s to the 1990s will also be featured.

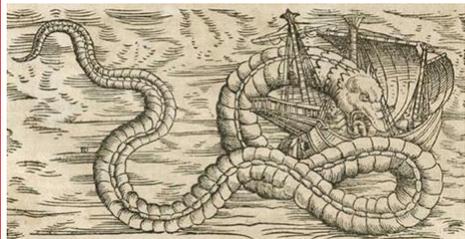
The program will include presentations, a reception, and a traveling exhibit and is free and open to the public. For more information about the Oberlin Sanctuary Project visit:

<https://sanctuary.oberlincollegelibrary.org/> . After February 22, please visit go.oberlin.edu/sanctuary to view the revised website.

Sponsored by the Oberlin College Libraries, Cleveland Public Library – Langston Hughes Branch, and the Oberlin Heritage Center, with support provided by the Council of Independent Colleges.

Legends, Mythology, Folklore and Fairy Tales

Kids Spring Break Camp Uncovers History in Favorite Traditional Stories



There may be a bit of truth and history in our world's greatest legends. Boys and girls ages 8-13 will have a fun opportunity to explore fables, myths and folk tales and learn about history along the way during the Heritage Center's three-day spring break camp. Registration is now underway for the hands-on-history fun, which takes place **Wednesday through Friday, March 25-27 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Campers

will experience a variety of stories and their main characters through readings, skits and performances, and other creative activities. At camp's end, family and friends are invited to see the children perform a puppet show of their favorite stories.

Camps are taught by Museum Education and Tour Coordinator **Amanda Manahan** and held at the Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street). Register by March 1 for an early bird discount. Scholarship assistance is available for those who qualify for free or reduced- school lunches. **Call 440-774-1700 or <http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/whatsnew/>**

OHC Members Update

The Heritage Center welcomed a new Endowed Life Member (ELM) this month. As this circle of OHC friends grows, so too does the endowment! Our heartfelt gratitude to **Cheryl Mees** for joining the ELMs. "My mom and dad, as well as brother Steve, have been closely involved in OHC for a long time. I love Oberlin." We're thrilled to welcome Cheryl as the Heritage Center's 101st ELM!

If you are not yet an OHC member, make it your New Year's resolution to join! You'll enjoy being part of a great community organization -- and the Heritage Center will make sure you know how much you are

appreciated! Visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org (and click the "Join Now" button at the top of the home page) or call (440) 774-1700 for more information.

Giving Made Simple and Convenient with Insta-Charge Tailor Charitable Contributions to Best Fit Your Budget and Calendar

You believe in OHC, and you show that with your membership and annual giving support. But did you know that donors to the Oberlin Heritage Center can sign-up for automatic credit card payments to handle membership renewals, Annual Fund giving, and other contributions so that the gift is made at the most convenient time of year? Become a sustaining member—it's easy and your gift will have a lasting impact.

OHC members who have chosen to step up their giving to become Endowed Life Members (ELMs) without feeling a "pinch" to their budgets make a small monthly donation via automatic credit card payments as the perfect way to make a sizeable gift over several years. It's easy, secure and saves time and money for both the donor and recipient. For more information, contact OHC Business Manager Bethany Hobbs by e-mail at ohcbiz@oberlinheritage.org or by calling (440) 774-1700.

Clean up at Jewett House

Time to clean up for the start of 2020

Volunteers and staff spent a Saturday in January making changes in the Jewett House. Thank you to Joshua, Jack, Katrina, Amanda, and Maren for their hard and careful teamwork replacing an old rug pad and organizing supplies for OHC's educational programs. To view a time lapse video of the rug pad replacement be sure to visit OHC's Facebook page.



Heritage Center Staff, Intern and Volunteer News



OHC's newest staff addition is Veronica Vanden Bout, who takes the reins as Mary Anne Cunningham heads off to retirement. As the Communications and Development Coordinator, Veronica will be the person staying in touch with all of you.

Veronica has worked in fundraising with multiple nonprofit organizations for more than 20 years. "History and its place in our community is vital to understanding where we are going in the future," she said. "I look forward to serving as an ambassador for OHC."

A long-time resident of Brownhelm Township, Veronica served in the United States Marine Corps. An avid quilter, she is also active with a local community theater behind the scenes. Travelling to new and exotic spots continues as she adds stamps to her passport, and works on her goal of visiting all 50 states. Just six to go!

Trailblazing Teachers

February is Black History Month and in honor of the work accomplished by amazing women, this month's kiosk exhibit **Trailblazing Teachers; Spotlight on African-American Female Educators of the 19th Century** highlights the brave women who became educators, activists and more after attending Oberlin College. Few professional opportunities were open to women at the time these women graduated, so it is unsurprising that many



discovered their calling as teachers. The women featured made an impact inside and outside their classrooms, as advocates for education, civil rights, and more.

One such woman is Fanny Jackson Coppin (1837 – 1913), pictured here at a young age. She was born into slavery and her freedom was purchased by her aunt when she was 12. As a student and beyond her own studies Oberlin College, she taught an evening course for free African Americans in reading and writing, and graduated in 1865. She was the first black teacher at the Oberlin Academy, the college's preparatory department. In 1865, Fanny Jackson accepted a position at Philadelphia's Institute for Colored Youth as principal of the Ladies Department. In 1869, she became the principal of the Institute, making her the first African-American woman to be a school principal. She later briefly served as the first African-American superintendent of a school district in the nation. She writes extensively about her life in her 1913 autobiography, *Fanny Jackson Coppin: Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching*. Check out our kiosk on Main Street and our Facebook page for more mini-biographies and quotes from these trailblazing teachers throughout February.

MLK Day of Service-AmeriCorps News

Katrina Walker, Oberlin Heritage Center's AmeriCorps Member, spent a day with fellow volunteers in Rendville, the smallest incorporated city in Ohio. While there, the Corps members hung drywall in a building that will be dedicated as a museum on completion of the renovations, and digitized documents for the future site.

Katrina is the second from the right; standing next to former OHC AmeriCorps member and now program coordinator Sara Fisher.



Also of Interest

Lorain County Historical Society's Annual Valentine Tea **Petticoat Justice: Votes for Women** will be held at The Hickories, 509 Washington Ave., Elyria. Get ready for some Petticoat Justice! As we officially enter the year of the 19th Amendment centennial, grab your "Votes for Women" sashes and buttons and join us for a rousing afternoon full of good friends and great food. Celebrate the strong women who paved the way for women's rights! Tea seatings are: Friday, February 7 @ 11:30 AM; Saturday, February 8 @ 11:00 AM and @ 2:00 PM; and Sunday, February 9 @ 12:30 PM.

Tickets are \$30 per person (\$27 for LCHS members). The shuttle service from Washington Avenue Christian Church will be available. For more information, contact the office at lchs@lchs.org 440-322-3341. Visit the Historical Society's website to purchase Tea tickets online.

Next Stop, Freedom! Stories from Ohio's Underground Railroad—Come hear the stories of Ohio's Underground Railroad when the Elyria Arts Council, 336 Broad St. in Elyria presents NEXT STOP, FREEDOM! Monday, February 10th at 6:30 p.m. Ohio was a hotbed of activity on the Underground Railroad and Elyria was a part of it. This is a free program and open to the public. For additional information, please call the Council at 440-328-3025.

Amherst Historical Society presents **The President's Dinner** on Saturday, February 22nd from 5-10p.m. at the Amherst VFW, 165 Cleveland Ave, Amherst. Dinner includes a presentation and General and Mrs. Dwight David Eisenhower will be there, along with music by *Swing City Big Band*. Dress in 1950's attire

and dance the night away! Order tickets online at: www.amhersthistoricalsociety.org. Make your reservations by February 17th!

The African-American Family History Symposium, held on March 14th from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., will help attendees begin, expand or enrich their genealogical journeys! This free program is sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in partnership with The African American Genealogical Society, Cleveland; The Oberlin African-American Genealogy and History Group, and underwritten by Benesch Friedlander, LLP. Keynote speaker at this event will be Sharon Gillins, an instructor at the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research. Register online at www.aafhs2020.eventbrite.com or phone 216-215-0373. Registration closes on March 10th.

Watch for your invitation to
The Oberlin Heritage Center's Annual Meeting
to be held on Wednesday, April 1 from 6-8:30 p.m.



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