

Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette

August 2020

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The Oberlin Heritage Center Receives Highest National Recognition



The Oberlin Heritage Center has again achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition afforded the nation's museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. OHC was initially accredited in 2005. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review to maintain accredited status.

“We were thrilled to receive the news, particularly in a challenging year. This is a huge achievement and credit goes to OHC’s members, passionate volunteers and interns, dedicated board, engaged supporters, and amazing colleagues, past and present,” said Executive Director Liz Schultz. “But we won’t rest on our laurels — we’re always striving to be better.”

Alliance accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for more than 45 years, the Alliance’s museum accreditation program is the field’s primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable in order to provide the best possible service to the public.

Of the nation’s estimated 33,000 museums, more than 1,070 are currently accredited. The Oberlin Heritage Center is one of two accredited museums in Oberlin, and one of approximately 40 in Ohio.

Accreditation is a very rigorous but highly rewarding process that examines all aspects of a museum’s operations. To earn accreditation, a museum first must conduct a year of self-study, and then undergo a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM’s Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, considers the self-study and visiting committee report to determine whether a museum should receive accreditation.

“Accredited museums are a community of institutions that have chosen to hold themselves publicly accountable to excellence,” said Laura L. Lott, Alliance president and CEO.

“Accreditation is clearly a significant achievement, of which both the institutions and the communities they serve can be extremely proud.”

AAM's Accreditation Commission had the following to say about the Oberlin Heritage Center. "With its small staff, engaged board, and modest budget, the museum's accomplishments are many and impressive. We particularly commend the institution's dedication to the historic structures, but also its recognition of the access challenges — both real and perceived — of its historic properties, and its commitment to hosting programs in locations that offer better access and accessibility. We also commend the museum's commitment to diversity among the board of trustees; its Collections Plan; and its dedication to maintaining relevance to today's audiences by connecting historic events in Oberlin's past to modern day events."

Summer Tour Options at the Heritage Center



- Advance Registration is required
- 30-Minute “**Oberlin Origins**” Tours in the Monroe House: Tuesday, Thursday, & Saturday at 10:30am & 1:30pm. Tours are \$3/adult; free for members, college students, and children under 18.
- **Outdoor 60-minute History Walks:** June-August. History walks are \$6/adult; free for members, college students, and children under 18.

- Saturdays at 11:00 am - **Freedom's Friends: Abolition & the Underground Railroad** (begins in front of The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C.)
- July 11 & August 8 at 3:00 pm - **Oberlin's Responses and Reactions to Issues of Race** (begins in front of The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C.)
- July 25 & August 22 at 3:00 pm - **Architecture Walk** (begins at Flagpole on Tappan Square at intersection of Main & College Sts.)

Please note: all history walk dates for August are booked.

Please ask about our waiting list!

- Tablet Tours are available through the rental of an OHC-owned device during museum open hours. Currently, OHC offers two self-guided tablet tours: *Freedom's Friends: Abolition & the Underground Railroad* and *Picture the Past: Downtown Oberlin*.

Please call (440) 774-1700 to reserve your tablet in advance. Tablet rentals are \$5/hour or \$20/day; 20 percent discount for OHC members. Make your reservations and payments for tours by registering online at <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/events.shtml> or by calling the museum at (440) 774-1700. The museum is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am - 3pm.

All visitors or household groups must complete a COVID-19 screening survey. All visitors and tour participants are required to wear face coverings if they are physically able to do so. Disposable masks

are available at the museum, as supplies last. (Donations are greatly appreciated to help offset the cost of providing this service.) We also encourage visitors to take advantage of our hand sanitizing station and/or restroom for hand washing before and after the tour. We ask all museum patrons to follow social distance guidelines by standing 6 feet apart from individuals not in their immediate familial or familiar group. Visitors who do not follow our safety protocols may be refused service and asked to leave.

September Tours Include:

- Every Saturday at 11:00 am - **Freedom's Friends: Abolition & the Underground Railroad** (begins in front of The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C.)
- September 12 at 3:00 pm - **Oberlin's Responses and Reactions to Issues of Race** (begins in front of The First Church in Oberlin, U.C.C.)
- September 26 at 3:00 pm - **Architecture Walk** (begins at Flagpole on Tappan Square at intersection of Main & College Sts.)

Opportunities Abroad: *Examining the Experiences of Four Female African-American Oberlin College Graduates in Western Europe*

On Tuesday, August 4 at 6:00 p.m., AmeriCorps Member **Katrina Walker** will present her research into **Edmonia Lewis, Anna Julia Cooper, Ruth Anna Fisher, and Mary Burnett Talbert**. This illustrated presentation will examine the success that four African-American Oberlin alumnae had in the art, academic, activist, and archival worlds in Europe. Their achievements in various fields are often contrasted with the barriers they faced in the United States. These racial barriers came even from within their own educational communities or activist circles, and in some instances Oberlin itself.



This free 30-minute presentation, plus a Q&A session, will be presented via Zoom. Participants must register in advance and will receive the invitation link a few days before the program. Please register at the link below:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEKdeiuqD4sGNC3pXKQ_sDZx1a_Pbg4iqmP.

Ohio Women Vote — Free Exhibit September 8-19

The Oberlin Heritage Center is delighted to host “**Ohio Women Vote: 100 years of Change,**” a traveling exhibit of 12 informational banners that was curated and designed by the Ohio History Connection and funded by Ohio Humanities. These banners feature photographs, quotes, and biographies of Ohioan leaders in the suffrage movement, along with stories of political victories, racial barriers within the cause and to the ballot box, and the ongoing fight for equal rights.

The exhibit will be on view in OHC's Monroe House at 7 3 ½ South Professor Street, along with some additional displays and takeaways that tell more Oberlin-focused stories about women's suffrage. Visitors can come any time during OHC's open hours, although please note that only one family or visiting group will be allowed in the building at a time, so there may be a brief waiting period. OHC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. If you would like to save yourself the wait, please call ahead (440-774-1700) or email

tourinfo@oberlingeritage.org to ask about viewing

availability. This exhibit is free to see, but donations are very much appreciated. Please remember that masks are required.



School groups and clubs can make arrangements with Museum Education and Tour Coordinator Amanda Manahan about a virtual presentation or how to safely visit the exhibit. Please call (440) 774-1700 for more information.

History Minute: The Extraordinary Life of John Mercer Langston



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Did you know that John Mercer Langston was one of three brothers to attend the Oberlin Collegiate Institute? Or that he was the first African American admitted to the Department of Theological Studies at Oberlin College, as well as the first African American graduate of that same course of study? You can learn more about Langston — from his groundbreaking term as the clerk of Brownhelm Township (one of the first African Americans elected to a government position in the nation) to his work with the Freedman's Bureau during the Reconstruction Era — in a new History Feature authored by Jacob Selent, a Leadership Lorain County Intern at OHC.

Selent, who is a student at Miami University, took over the research project on Langston, which was originated by Isaiah Krugman of Williams College (a former OHC intern), with contributions from Emily Innes, Alexandra

Nicome, and Lauryn Countess (Oberlin College) and Julia Elrod (Oberlin High School).

A native of Brownhelm Township, Selent felt a tangible, personal connection to Langston, who also was the first African American to buy a farm and live in the township. Selent used archival materials found in the OHC repository, including Langston's autobiography and a book written by Oberlin College graduate Linda Salisbury, as well as archival sources from the U.S. House of Representatives archives and the Oberlin College Archives to conduct his research.

When asked what he hopes his deep dive into Langton’s life will accomplish, Selent says: “I would hope [people] will better understand the life and mission of a great abolitionist, one that rivals Frederick Douglass, in my opinion, and how he affected positive change during one of the most tumultuous times in our nation’s history.”

You can read Selent’s paper by going to the Oberlin Heritage Center’s website, clicking on “Research and Learn” on the top navigation bar, selecting “History Features and Blogs,” and then looking under the “19th Century Oberlin” sub header.



Thank you Oberlin Rotarians!

Thank you to the members of the Oberlin Rotary club for taking time out of their busy schedules to spend a morning practicing “service above self” while weeding the pathways of the Oberlin Heritage Trail. The grounds look beautiful!

Welcome to our Newest Board Members

OHC welcomes the following individuals onto our board. New members will serve a three year term, ending in 2023.

Meisha Baker
Lori Ebihara
Jiyul Kim

Edward Wardwell
Father Brian Wilbert

Memorial Minute



The staff members of the Oberlin Heritage Center extend their condolences to the families of Ann Livingston, Shirley Shubert, Donna Shurr, and all others who have lost their loved ones this year.

OHC Receives Ohio History Fund Emergency Grant

The Oberlin Heritage Center received a \$3,000 Ohio History Fund COVID-19 Emergency Grant from the Ohio History Connection. This temporary grant program helps history organizations address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. OHC plans to use the funds for expenses incurred between March 14 and November 30 of this year. Awardees can use the money to cover operational expenses that cannot otherwise be met because of COVID-19 related losses of revenue and increase in expenses, or to adapt or create programs for audiences affected by stay-at-home

and social distancing orders. OHC plans to use the grant to enhance virtual offerings for its members, and to ensure the safety and well being of the staff with increased cleaning and workspace safety measures.

OHC's Most Recent Annual Report Now Available on Website

The Heritage Center's 2019 Annual Report is expected to be in members' mailboxes by now. You may also view it on our website under "Events and News." Just scroll down to "Annual Reports" and you'll find the most recent version there. (Or follow this link:

<http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/platform/cms/files/Annual%20Reports/2019%20OHC%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.) The report provides a marvelous overview of the organization's progress in the past year and salutes all the people who supported it so generously as donors and volunteers. We hope you enjoy looking over its pages.

Please Welcome Our Newest Staff Member



Sue Angell recently joined the OHC staff as the Communications and Development Coordinator. Sue is a long-time Oberlin resident, as well as a graduate of Oberlin College and fan of all things historically Oberlin. Sue spent the last 11 years working in the College's Office of Development, and is happy to continue her relationship with Oberlinians — albeit in a different role. If she isn't at the Monroe House, you can find her running in the Arb or visiting the Ginko Kittens.

Also of Interest: *The Legacy of African American Textile Art*

On Saturday August 15, from 1 - 2:30 pm, the Artists Archives is proud to present *The Legacy of African American Textile Art* with Cynthia Lockhart, a virtual presentation Zoom.

Please register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cLhadCR4Sb-Wxl3wwMkieg.

Lockhart, an exhibiting artist in *The Ardent Thread* and Emerita Professor at Cincinnati University describes, "Perhaps more than any other art form, textiles reflect the pulse of the African American Culture. Symbolism of the cloth has been one of our connections to our African roots. The fiber artwork and quilts in the presentation will celebrate the resilient and creative spirit of our African Ancestors."

This 45-minute illustrated lecture will feature seminal national artists such as Sam Gilliam, Romare Bearden, Faith Ringgold as well as regional fiber artists like Myrya Johnson and Lockhart's own work. These powerful creators draw inspiration from Slavery through Emancipation, Reconstruction, Civil Rights, Black Life Matters, "Hands Up", and present-day protests in honor of Mr. George Floyd.

The Legacy of African American Textile Art is free and open to the public courtesy of a matching grant from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. To attend, please register on artistsarchives.org.

About Cynthia Lockhart: Cynthia Lockhart's fiber art is infused with a kaleidoscope of diverse influences such as nature, fashion, music, dance, travel, and African and cultural arts. As an award-winning artist, Lockhart continues to be an active contributor in the design and art community from a local, national, and International perspective. Her work was on exhibit at the Taft Museum of Art, "Journey to Freedom," December 2019 - March 2020. In addition, her art is located in Gallery 708 on Hyde Park Square, Cincinnati, Ohio. www.gallery-708.com.

CARES Act Support

Are you considering making a donation to show your support of the Oberlin Heritage Center? The recently passed CARES Act allows up to a \$300 charitable donation to be tax-deductible on your 2020 taxes, even if you don't itemize. Consult with your tax advisor if you have any questions regarding this deduction.

* Visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org and use the "Make a Gift" link to donate today on your credit card or mail a check to: Oberlin Heritage Center, PO Box 455, Oberlin, OH 44074.

Please know your gift is much appreciated as we negotiate this uncertain time in history.



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