



Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette

March 2021

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

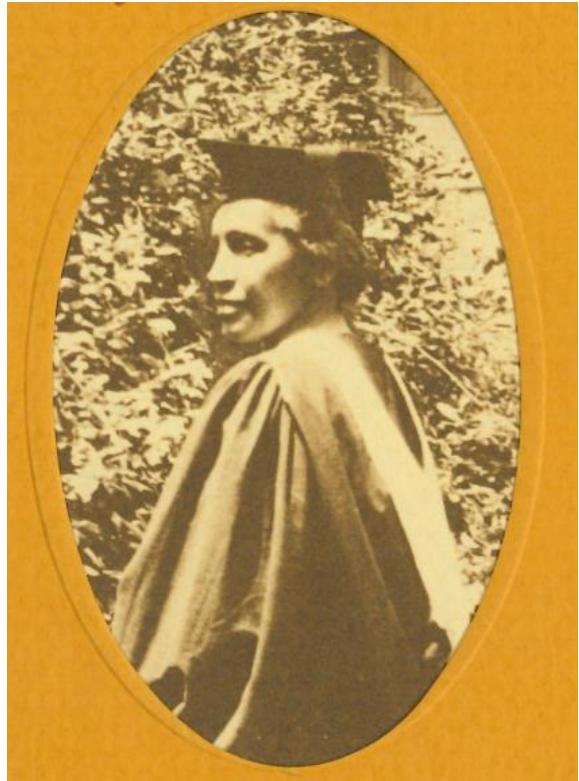
To subscribe to the free E-Gazette, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or send e-mail to members@oberlinheritage.org.

March's History Minute: *She Persisted —The Story of Mary Elizabeth Johnston*

If there ever was a person who embodied the word “persistence,” it would be Mary Elizabeth Johnston.

Mary Elizabeth Johnston was born in Sandusky, Ohio on August 22, 1890 to David and Mary Johnston. Her father passed away when she was just eight years old, and her mother—who had attended the Oberlin Academy prior to her marriage—moved Mary Elizabeth, her brother Byron, and her sister Ruth back to her old hometown. Mary Elizabeth graduated from Oberlin High School in 1908, and began her undergraduate studies in English literature at Oberlin College in 1910. However, she was unable to maintain good academic standing while supporting herself as a maid, and left the College in 1912 with the intention of returning later to finish her degree.

During her tenure at Oberlin College, Mary Elizabeth had been employed by the Monroe family, in the house that now holds the offices of the Heritage Center. Julia Finney Monroe took an interest in Mary Elizabeth’s education, and tutored her in handwriting and rhetoric. She also helped her find a teaching position at a boarding school in North Carolina. For the next 26 years, Mary Elizabeth taught at St. Augustine’s Episcopal School, returning to Oberlin in the summer months to continue her studies. In 1937, she graduated from Oberlin College, keeping the long-ago promise she had made to her mother that she would one day walk across the stage at Finney Chapel and receive her degree. But Mary Elizabeth didn’t stop there—she continued working during the



academic year and attended to her studies in the summer months. In 1952, she graduated with her Masters of Library Science from Kent State University.

In 1956, she returned to Ohio and spent the remaining years of her life in Cleveland. Her retirement was far from quiet, though—Mary Elizabeth actively supported and was involved with the Karamu House, the Cleveland Public Library, and the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio. She was also a great supporter of education for African Americans, and—in a gesture of unparalleled philanthropy—funded a scholarship for minority students at her alma mater, in addition to donating funds to purchase books on Black Studies for the library and African art for the Allen Memorial Art Museum’s collection. Mary Elizabeth died on January 30, 1982, but her legacy and lessons live on through her students, her philanthropy, and her generosity of spirit. All because she persisted!

OHC Remains Closed to the Public until Further Notice



OHC remains closed to the public, both for the safety of the staff and community. Although we can't welcome visitors to our campus right now, we look forward to seeing you virtually. We encourage you to connect with us on social media, or sign up for one of the new online programs that will be debuted this coming year.

To learn more about upcoming events and online resources, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org.

Behind the Basement Door Program Offers Two Sneak Peeks into the OHC Collection This Month



Join OHC's Collection Manager, Maren McKee, for a special look at some of OHC's rarely seen collections items. In honor of Women's History Month, this program will highlight a few of the amazing Oberlin women represented in the collection.

March 12, at 3:30 p.m. – *Oberlin Women's Clubs*: Explore the history, records, and photographs of Oberlin's many women's clubs.

March 26, at 3:30 p.m. – *Oberlin Women in the Arts*: Celebrate Oberlin women in the arts and view pieces from the fine art collection.

This program will be broadcast live on OHC's Facebook page in two 15-minute parts. You don't have to have a Facebook account to be able to view the Oberlin Heritage Center's page and watch this event. Just go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/oberlinheritagecenter> at the time of the program. (If Facebook asks you to join, you can just select "Not Now.")

Painting by Rebecca Nicodemus Kinney.

Oberlin Women's History Walk offered FREE for Women's History Month

Saturday, March 20 at 1:00 p.m.

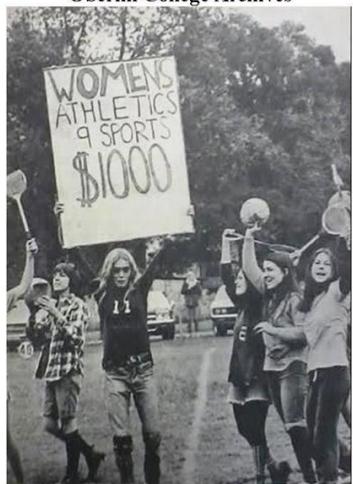


Photos courtesy of
Oberlin College Archives

Enjoy a guided 75-minute walking tour of Oberlin landmarks and monuments with historic connections to women's continued efforts to gain rights and respect with this Women's History Month offering of the Heritage Center's ***One Step More: Oberlin Women's History Walk.***

In 1834, John J. Shipherd pledged Oberlin's commitment to "the elevation of female character" through education. Little did he know, there was dynamite in that promise, and women carried the matches. This engaging tour takes participants through campus and community to explore how Oberlin confronted and defined issues of femininity in the 19th and 20th centuries.

How did this Women's History tour come to be named? In 1883, on the occasion of Oberlin College's 50th anniversary celebration, Lucy Stone (OC 1847), a well-known crusader for equal rights, urged her alma mater to take *one step more* in the fight for justice. Hear Lucy Stone's story and others of powerful Oberlin women including Marianne Parker Dascomb, Adelia Field Johnston, Mary Church Terrell, and Lucy Stanton Day, and learn how they used Shipherd's promise to shape what it meant to be a woman in Oberlin and in the United States.



Although the outdoor tour is free and all are welcome, capacity is limited to 12 participants and advance reservation is required. Participants must wear a mask and follow social distancing recommendations. Register online at:
<https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/events.shtml?details=NTM3Mg==> or call (440) 774-1700.

Save the Date for OHC's Annual Meeting!



Save the Date for the Oberlin Heritage Center's Annual Meeting, which will take place virtually the evening of Wednesday, June 2, 2021. More details—including format, location, and speakers—will follow!

Leadership Lorain County Intern Program is Now Accepting Applications

OHC is delighted to announce it is offering a summer internship experience through Leadership Lorain County, along with several other nonprofits and organizations across Lorain County. Applications are now available on LLC's website for college students to spend their summer growing their knowledge of Lorain County, building a professional network, gaining experience in the workplace, and having fun, all during this **PAID** internship opportunity. The application deadline is March 5. To apply, please visit: <https://www.leadershiploraincounty.com/programs/intern-program/>.

OHC is Hiring a Summer Youth Assistant!

Are you a high-school aged student looking for a summer employment opportunity? Do you want to learn more about the Oberlin community, meet new people, learn professional skills, and earn a paycheck? Then this is the job for you!

The student assistant will help with youth camps, greet visitors to the museum, complete a research project, help with museum tasks, and give tours. The position runs from June 8 – August 15, and will encompass 35 hours a week, for 10 weeks. If interested, please submit the following by April 3, 2021:

- Cover letter describing why you want the position and how you are qualified.
- Complete the volunteer application from the OHC website at oberlinheritagecenter.org/getinvolved/volunteer or provide a resume with the contact information for two references.

Please send your application materials to Amanda Manahan at tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org or mail your application to: Oberlin Heritage Center, PO Box 0455, Oberlin, OH 44074.

The student assistant position at OHC is made possible through the support of Nordson Corporation.

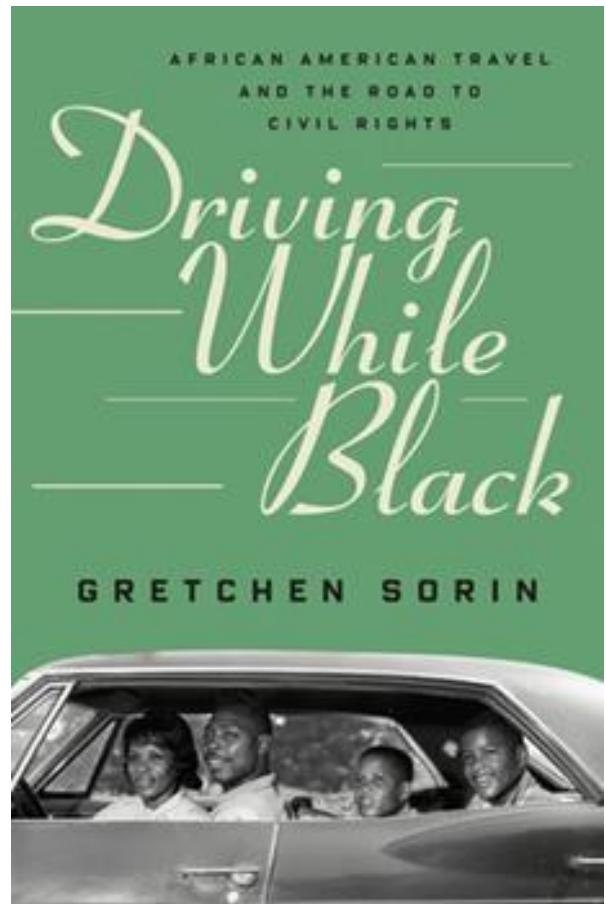
Driving While Black: A Conversation with Historian, Author, and Documentarian Gretchen Sorin

Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Join Dr. Gretchen Sullivan Sorin for a free, virtual program on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. The presentation is based on Dr. Sorin's book *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights*, which was ranked one of Bloomberg's Best Nonfiction Books of 2020. Dr. Sorin's book represents decades of research, interviews, photographs, and records that convey both the opportunities and dangers black motorists faced—and continue to face—on the road. From the relief of independent mobility, to the hostility of sundown towns and systemic racism, to the automobile as a personal status symbol, to the unique businesses that catered to African American travelers, Dr. Sorin takes readers on a road trip of American history, culture, resilience, and ingenuity. The book, which can be purchased at Ben Franklin/MindFair Books, also formed the basis of the documentary "Driving While Black: Race, Space and Mobility in America," co-directed by

Dr. Sorin and Ric Burns. This documentary, which first aired in October 2020, is now available for free public viewing at: <https://www.pbs.org/video/driving-while-black-race-space-and-mobility-in-america-achvfr/>.

Dr. Sorin earned a BA from Rutgers University in American Studies, an MA in Museum Studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program / SUNY Oneonta, and a PhD from SUNY Albany in History. Dr. Sorin is a Distinguished Professor and Director of The Cooperstown Graduate Program as well as a museum consultant and scholar. The program will begin with an introduction to her findings, followed by a conversation facilitated by Dr. Meredith Gadsby, Associate Professor of Africana Studies and Comparative American Studies at Oberlin College. The program will end with an opportunity for viewers to submit questions. Advance registration is required for this free Zoom program at: <http://bit.ly/2No73FD>. Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



OHC Welcomes New Student Interns



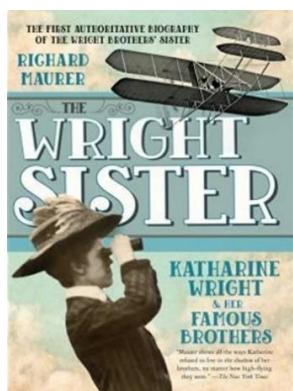
The Oberlin Heritage Center is pleased to welcome two new student interns from Oberlin College for the spring semester. Please join us in welcoming Adrienne Sato and Callie Howard to our team!

Adrienne Sato is a first-year Bonner scholar from Louisville, Kentucky. She plays on the soccer team at Oberlin, and is still figuring out what she plans to study during her time as an undergraduate. Adrienne is left-handed (and more importantly, left-footed), and is very excited to be working with us this spring.

Callie Howard is a third-year student from Dallas, Texas. She is currently studying history, anthropology, and German, and hopes to go into museum studies after graduation with a focus on local history and archival work.

Welcome, Adrienne and Callie!

Book of the Month — *The Wright Sister: Katharine Wright and her Famous Brothers*



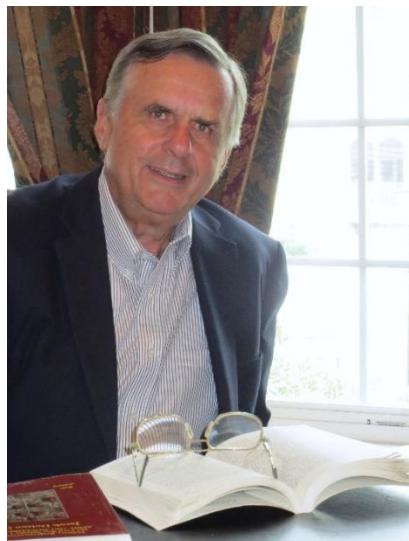
You will of course have heard of the famous Wright Brothers, but did you know that their sister Katharine was literally (and figuratively) the wind beneath their wings? Katharine was the brothers' beloved sibling, confidant, and caregiver—and she managed most of their affairs. This lively biography is based on a thorough study of her personal papers and the Wright archives. The book recounts a touching personal story, and casts a uniquely intimate light on the lives of two of the 20th century's most famous men—and the woman who stood behind them in their endeavors.

Consider purchasing *The Wright Sister* for someone special in your life today, and help celebrate Women's History Month with a unique gift. The book can be purchased in the museum store (curbside pick up available) or online at <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/store.shtml?details=116>. Better yet—all OHC members receive 10 percent off store purchases!

Upcoming Programs and Events:

Civil War Personalities: People Who Made a Difference

Tuesday, May 25 at 7:00 p.m.



Join Civil War historian and author Gene Schmiel as he highlights a variety of people, famous and unsung, black and white, Union and Confederate, and who influenced the outcome and aftermath of the conflict. Schmiel has written several books related to the Civil War, including six books in his series, *Civil War Personalities: 50 At a Time*, as well as an award-winning biography of Oberlinian, Civil War General, and Ohio Governor Jacob Cox, the namesake of Oberlin College's administration building. Schmiel holds a PhD in History from The Ohio State University. You can learn more about him by visiting his website at civilwarhistory-geneschmiel.com, or you can shop for his books at: <https://www.amazon.com/-/e/B00HV4SSWK>.

This free, 40-minute Zoom program will end with a Q&A session. Advance registration is required at: <http://bit.ly/3ddDNMc>. Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Also of Interest:

Virtual Speaker Series - *The Oberlin Colony: Utopian Ideals of Learning, Labor, and Religion*

Free Online Program – Saturday, March 6 at 11:00 a.m.

Historic Zoar Village's Speaker Series is going virtual!

Join Amanda Manahan, Museum Education & Tour Coordinator at the Oberlin Heritage Center, for a discussion on the Oberlin Colony. The Colony, founded in 1833 as both a community and a collegiate institute, was started by a religious duo in the hopes of creating a community in the American west that demonstrated strong Christian values.

Hear stories of the accomplishments and struggles of the early community, and how its founding ideals influenced decisions that related to education, women's rights, and racial justice.

Please email Tammi at tshrum@historiczoarvillage.com to register for the Speaker Series and receive the link to view the Series virtually.

The Cleveland History Center Needs YOU to Help with a Virtual History Day Contest

Saturday, March 27, 2021



On March 27, 2021, the Cleveland History Center will hold a VIRTUAL Region 3 Ohio History Day contest. Ohio History Day asks students in grades 6-8 and 9-12 to conduct research based on a theme and create an original project such as a paper, performance, website, exhibit, or documentary.

To make this virtual experience work for the students, CHC needs many volunteer judges who are willing to review virtual projects, provide feedback in online forms, and videoconference with fellow judges on the morning March 27. You do not need to be a history "expert," but you should be able to remain objective and give constructive feedback to students. Judge training will be provided, and first-time judges will be placed in teams with experienced judges.

For more information on judging, testimonials from past judges, and tips on how to evaluate History Day Projects, visit the state office's History Day Judges Page at <https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/education/in-your-classroom/ohio-history-day/judges>.

To sign up as a judge, [please visit: https://oh-rtwrhsrhc.nhd.org](https://oh-rtwrhsrhc.nhd.org).

And, if you have any questions, please contact: historyday@wrhs.org.

Cozy and Comfortable: Quilts, Coverlets, and Bedspreads

January 30 – April 3, 2021

The Chagrin Falls Historical Society presents: *Cozy and Comfortable: Quilts, Coverlets, and Bedspreads* on site and Segment Titleonline through April 3, 2021. The museum will be open to small groups who schedule ahead of time, and will be available through online programs (to be announced). Please call the museum at (440) 247-4695 to schedule a visit! Admission to the museum is free, but donations are appreciated. For more information about this program, please visit www.chagrinhistory.org.

Mindful Meditation with Koo Kyung Sook's *Invisible Torso #2*

Thursday, March 25 at 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.



The Allen Memorial Art Museum's Mindful Meditation series continues, virtually, on the fourth Thursday of the month, through May. For the March session, clinical therapist Libni López will lead the group in a meditation centered on Koo Kyung Sook's *Invisible Torso #2*. Please visit the form below to register for the session and receive the Zoom link.

This program is presented by the AMAM and the Oberlin College Counseling Center. Please contact the museum's Education Department at (440) 775-8671 with any questions.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1l4G6KNVuIyqxS8oPOhPSNVI0eFVc5YR0pWymaiXa3Ug/viewform?ts=5ff34602&gxids=7628&edit_requested=true#responses.

OHC is Keeping History Alive

The Oberlin Heritage Center is working harder than ever to fulfill its mission: to preserve and share Oberlin's unique heritage and to make our community a better place to live, learn, work, and visit. Despite the challenges faced last year, we are excited to begin a new year and to bring our members even more ways to stay engaged with Oberlin's history, through virtual programming, newsletter features, and safe community outreach. We'd like to take a moment to thank you again, for supporting OHC's efforts and working with us to keep history current for our members. Our members are the foundation of this organization, and your support helps keep the lights on! We appreciate every single one of you.



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