



# Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette

## April 2021

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

To subscribe to the free E-Gazette, visit [www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org)  
or send e-mail to [members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org).

## The Oberlin Heritage Center Re-Opens to the Public on April 1



The Oberlin Heritage Center is pleased to announce that it will re-open to the public on Thursday, April 1, 2021. This means that office hours, as well as Museum Store hours, will resume 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. All safety protocols (masks and social distancing) will remain in place for staff, guests, volunteers, and other visitors.

**Public Tours will resume April 1.** On Tuesdays and Thursdays, OHC will offer the *Oberlin Origins Tour* of the Monroe House at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. This tour lasts approximately 30 minutes. Admission for this experience is \$3/adult and free for students and members.

On Saturdays, OHC will offer the *Oberlin Origins + Little Red Schoolhouse Tour* at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. This tour lasts approximately 45 minutes. The admission fee for this experience is \$4/adult and free for students and members.

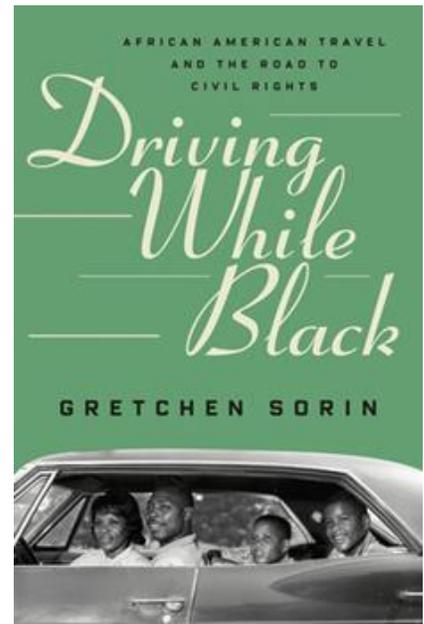
Advance reservations for all tours are required until further notice to ensure limited capacity. Please call (440) 774-1700 to make a tour reservation today or register online at <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/events.shtml>.

More information about the Oberlin Heritage Center's tours and other events can be [found online at: http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/tours](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/tours).

## **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 webinar.

## OHC Annual Grounds Clean-up Day Scheduled for April 24



Join OHC staff members anytime on Saturday, April 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to help spruce up the grounds of the Heritage Center for summer visitors! Projects include trimming, weeding, and general yard clean up. Tools and supplies are provided, or volunteers are welcome to bring their own. (Volunteers can park in the lot behind the Monroe House, off of Vine Street.) Masks are required. For more information or to sign up, contact Liz Schultz at [director@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:director@oberlinheritage.org).

### News from the Second Floor: OHC Says Goodbye to Walt Edling

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news that Honorary Trustee Walter H. Edling passed away at the end of March. Walt was a mover-and-shaker who served on the OHC Board from 2006 to 2014, including one term as Treasurer and another as First Vice-President and two terms as President. He also served as the President of the Vineway, LLC subsidiary Board from 2010 to 2016, where he played an instrumental role in facilitating the attractive renovation of the main facade for the near-century-old building at 82-86 South Main Street.

Walt grew up on a dairy farm north of Oberlin, attended the public schools, and graduated from Oberlin High School in 1955. He then earned a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from General Motors Institute (now Kettering University), a Masters in Mechanical Engineering from Case Western



Reserve University, and a PhD in Engineering Science from Colorado State University. During and after his studies he pursued a long career in education, enjoying 28 years with Lorain County Community College, where he served as a professor, chair, and then Dean of Instruction /Academic Vice President. His memories of LCCC's growth and development were documented by the Heritage Center in oral history interviews recorded in 2013 and 2019. Walt later worked for a non-profit educational research firm developing STEM learning teaching materials in Texas before retiring to Oberlin.

As OHC President, Walt attended nearly every committee meeting and public program and was always ready to lend a helping hand. He wasn't afraid to roll up his sleeves and assist with mechanical projects around the grounds as evidenced by helping to rescue, repair and restore the cast iron 19th century Morgan Street bridge railings, for which he and fellow volunteers received the History Outreach Award from the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums in 2009. As an active community member, long-time resident, gifted administrator, and strategic thinker, he led OHC through difficult challenges and planning processes that provided a strong future for the organization. For his many contributions to local history, he was recognized with the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Ohio Local History Alliance in 2014.

Walt had a dry sense of humor and a grounded perspective that made him both a valued team member and a dear friend. He enjoyed flying and building aircraft, restoring cars and tractors, traveling, and playing the piano. Walt Edling and his beloved wife of 61 years, Marge (who preceded him in death just two months prior), were Endowed Life Members and wonderful champions of the Oberlin Heritage Center and will be greatly missed.

## **OHC Remembers Norm Craig**



Norman Craig, known to most as Norm, passed away on Sunday, March 7, 2021, at Kendal at Oberlin. For more than 43 years, Norm taught chemistry to generations of students at Oberlin College — and continued in a prolific second phase to his teaching and mentoring career after his formal retirement in 2000. Norm's achievements in the classroom and research lab were recognized with several national awards, including the Chemical Manufactures Association Catalyst Award for Excellence in Teaching Chemistry in 1987 and the Morley Medal from the Cleveland Section of the American Chemistry Society for his lifetime of research.

But Norm was also a friend to the Oberlin Heritage Center, and an expert on inventor Charles Martin Hall. In 2010, OHC awarded Norm our Community Historian Award for his research connecting Frank F. Jewett, professor of Chemistry, to Hall's success extracting aluminum from bauxite and creating a chemical process that revolutionized the world. Norm worked tirelessly to keep Hall's work in the public eye, helping author the text for the Ohio Historical Market that was installed in 2003 near the Jewett House celebrating the discovery, and working with OHC on a symposium in 2009 that put the spotlight on Oberlin entrepreneurs, including Hall. Thanks to Norm's efforts, Hall's work was also named a National Historic Landmark. Norm, along with his wife Ann, wrote a walking tour of Oberlin sites associated with Hall and which is still available on the OHC website.

The staff sends condolences to the Craig Family, the OC Chemistry Department, Norm's students, and all who knew and loved him.

*Photo courtesy of the Oberlin College Chemistry Department.*

## **April's Memorial Minute**

The staff members of the Oberlin Heritage Center extend their condolences to the families of Betty Annable, Sam Battista, Gerry Blomgren, Marjory Edling, Pete Garcia, Annette Peek, Erika Pilisy, Paul Schwaegerle, Judith Sheldon, Helen Woodward, and all others who have lost loved ones this year.

## **OHC Recognizes Extraordinary Legacy Gifts**

Last year was a tough one for OHC, technologically speaking. The increase in remote work prompted a failure in our network and then two ransomware attacks had us at our limits. But we had several things in our favor, including a full data back-up, a team that embodies creative problem solving, guidance from tech volunteer Marty Buck, and solutions by new tech contractor Chuck Balzer. Finding out that Shirley and Oliver Shubert had named the Heritage Center as a beneficiary of an annuity to be used "where needed most" was a breath of fresh air. With that, we were able to change our network structure, move our email online for easier remote access, upgrade our hardware for better security, and purchase new and "new to us" computers and laptops. Technology changes so fast it's sometimes hard to notice, but you can



clearly see the shift to smaller, faster, and more efficient units in the above photo comparing our new and old desktop computers. We were delighted to name one of our new research computers “Oliver” and our front desk laptop “Shirley” as a fun way to remember how much their gift means to us.

Another gift that came in over the holiday season was a generous contribution from the estate of Budd Werner to OHC’s general endowment fund at the Community Foundation of Lorain County. Annual distributions from this fund help pay for ongoing operations and may not sound exciting, but are critical to keeping the museum running. They are also incredibly valuable when the museum hits hard times like 2020, when program and service income was down but we still wanted to offer free virtual programs and needed to keep historical records and objects safe and protected. We were delighted that Janet Kelsey Werner was able to share this with us and discuss why both she and Budd chose to support the ongoing work of the Oberlin Heritage Center. – *Liz Schultz*

## **This Old House — Updates and Improvements**



As so often happens with home repair projects, one thing always leads to another. When “the oldest toilet in Oberlin” gave its last flush in 2020, Turnbull Plumbing and Heating installed a new, more efficient toilet. But the smaller tank meant more of the wall was exposed, so it was time to repaint the bathroom of the 1866 Monroe House. Thank you to volunteer and honorary trustee Scott Broadwell for a primo paint job. We're happy this could all happen when we had quiet days and everything was finished in time to welcome guests again!

## **History Forge Update**

Thanks to an amazing team of virtual volunteers, the Oberlin page of the HistoryForge project ([oberlin.historyforge.net/](http://oberlin.historyforge.net/)) now has over 1,000 records from the 1910 census available for public viewing and almost 2,000 more waiting in the wings to be approved after review. Online visitors can explore the data in several ways, including searching for specific people or buildings, sorting through the entire list by going to the People menu and 1910 Census, or looking at the map in The Forge menu option. As they transcribe, volunteers often encounter mini stories in the seemingly simple data, from scores of non-nuclear families to startling mortality rates to professions lost to time (feather renovator). Thank you so much to the team thus far: Judy Cook, Mary Anne Cunningham, Ann Fuller, Lynn Gagy, Bethany Hobbs, Kathy Jaffee, Steve Johnson, Suzanne McDougal, Cathy Meints, Prue Richards, and Mary Rowland, as well as Project Coordinator / Ohio History Service Corps member Marissa Hamm.

HistoryForge is an innovative digital history project led by The History Center in Tompkins County in Ithaca, NY. The project is generously funded by a two-year grant for Public Engagement with Historical Records from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) of the National Archives (NARA).

## Upcoming Events:

### Save the Date for OHC's Annual Meeting— June 2, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.!

Save the date for an evening of fun, celebration, and news! This abbreviated annual meeting will be free to attend on Zoom. We look forward to honoring Community Award recipients, welcoming new board members, thanking outgoing board members, having a bit of digital fun, and sharing announcements. We will also have a special update from the Wilson Bruce Evans Home Historical Society, which was recently formed to preserve 33 East Vine Street, a National Historic Landmark, and share the legacy of the Evans family and local African American history with current and future generations.



We have some fun extras planned for the night, including a dessert-to-go option provided by Blue Rooster Bakery and a 50/50 raffle that supports the Pat Murphy Endowment for Heritage Preservation. Registration and ordering details will follow in a special announcement in April.

## Civil War Personalities

*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](http://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:**

## **The AMAM Presents: Mindful Meditation with El Anatsui's *Oga and the Masses***

*Thursday, April 22 at 3:30 p.m.*



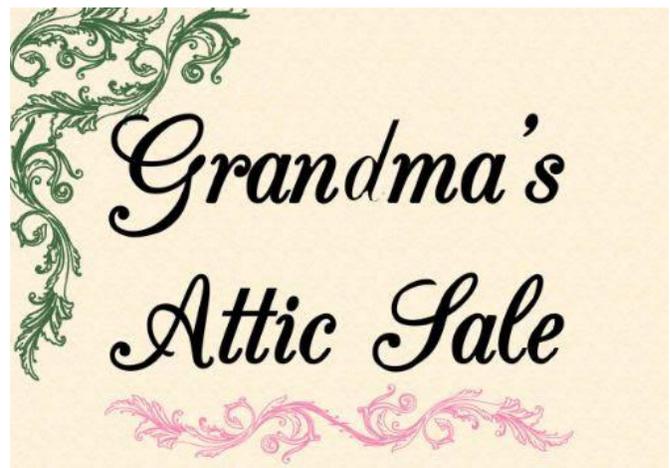
The Allen Memorial Art Museum's Mindful Meditation series continues, virtually, on the fourth Thursday of the month, through May. In the April session, clinical therapist Libni López will lead the group in a meditation centered on El Anatsui's *Oga and the Masses*.

Please fill out the AMAM form at: <http://bit.ly/3scOBi6> to register for the session and receive the Zoom link. You need only register once; we will use the same Zoom link for each month's session.

*The Mindful Meditation Series is presented by the AMAM and the Oberlin College Counseling Center.*

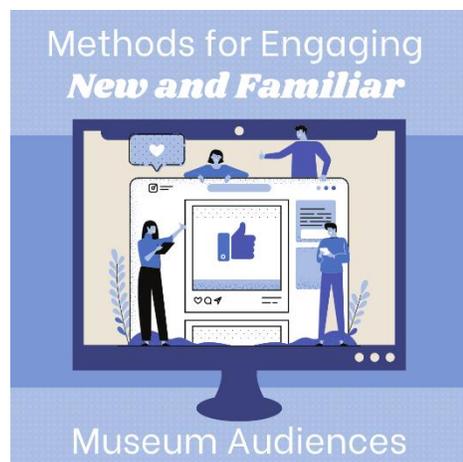
## **Grandma's Attic Garage & Garden Mini-Sale**

Save the date for the Brownhelm Historical Association's next Grandma's Attic Sale! BHA will be holding mini-sales throughout the spring, summer, and fall featuring fantastic Grandma's Attic Sale items to allow for social distancing and maximize safety for all. Masks will be required. The first sale will be held the weekend of April 23-24 and will feature items for the garage or the garden. Larger or more unique items will continue to be sold online. Look at BHA's Facebook Marketplace page and Craigslist. If you want more information about what items are up for sale, please contact them at [brownhelmhistory@gmail.com](mailto:brownhelmhistory@gmail.com).



# Professional Development Opportunity: Methods for Engaging New and Familiar Museum Audiences

Wednesday, May 19 at 10:00 a.m.



Join Marissa Hamm, OHC's Americorps/Ohio History Service Corps member, on Wednesday, May 19 for a free, online event that will explore ways to recruit new museum members and keep your current audiences engaged. During her presentation, Marissa will share recommendations to strengthen your museum's communications with a variety of audiences, including how to increase your social media engagement, connect with local tourism organizations, and improve your museum's newsletter. Come prepared to discuss your favorite newsletters and ask questions.

This webinar is open to anyone who is interested in the topic. The program will run from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday May 19, 2021. Register in advance to receive the Zoom link by clicking here: <http://bit.ly/3cV6k7w>.

Marissa Hamm is currently serving her first year in the Ohio History Service Corps at the Oberlin Heritage Center. She is a Northeast Ohio native and holds a Bachelors' Degree in history from the College of Wooster. Marissa has previously worked with other local historical societies in the area and at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill, NY.

## 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.





**OBERLIN  
Heritage  
CENTER**

**73½ South Professor Street**

**MPO Box 0455**

**Oberlin, OH 44074-0455**

**(440) 774-1700**

**[www.oberlinheritagecenter.org](http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org)**