



## Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette May 2021

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### May's History Minute: Dancing Around the Maypole



Like many of the holidays we celebrate today, May Day has its roots in ancient pagan festivals. The oldest of these is the Floralia, or Festival of Flora—the Roman goddess of flowers. The Floralia was held at the end of the month of April, for the duration of the Roman Republic era. Later, Germanic countries celebrated the canonization of St. Walpurga in early spring, beginning May 1, 870. Even the Gaelic cultures had a spring festival—Beltane, which marked the start of the summer season and focused on the blessing of cattle (and other livestock) as they moved to summer pastures.

This celebration of spring eventually moved across the ocean, landing in America. In Oberlin, students took up the rite of spring (off and on) in the late part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On May 12, 1897, an article in the Oberlin

Review reported: “The inhabitants of Oberlin ... were furnished much amusement and enjoyment on Thursday afternoon by a revival of the old English May Day, held on the lawn before Baldwin. The original ceremonies ... were followed as faithfully as the Oberlin customs would permit.”

The residents of Baldwin carried on this tradition for many years. In 1918, they even created a program for the festivities and invited their classmates to join them. The program for that year featured strolling minstrels, scenes re-enacted from Shakespeare’s “As You Like It,” a folk dance, and a May Pole Dance. Students even crowned a May Queen and King, with their court in attendance.

In the early 2000s, a student organization revived the tradition of May Day, albeit briefly, on Tappan Square as a community event.

The photo above depicts a postcard donated to the Oberlin Heritage Center, and is of mysterious origin! The individual who donated it had no further information on the participants pictured on the card, although it is marked “May Day, Oberlin, OH.” While the postcard remains a mystery, the origins of the celebration—both abroad and in Oberlin—are well-documented. Happy Spring to all, no matter how you celebrate!

## Civil War Personalities

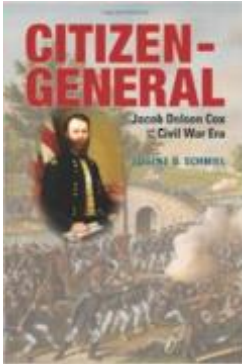
*Tuesday, May 25 at 7:00 p.m.*



Join Civil War historian and author Gene Schmiel as he highlights a variety of people, famous and unsung, black and white, Union and Confederate, 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.

## Book of the Month — *Citizen General Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era*



Would you like to learn more about Oberlinian Jacob Cox? Gene Schmiel's book about the aptly named Citizen-General is also available at the OHC Museum Store during open hours. You can also order it through our online store at:

<https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/store.shtml?details=101>. OHC members receive a 10 percent discount on all merchandise purchased, including books!

## OHC is delighted to announce its 2021 History Walk schedule!

This year, OHC will be mixing things up with a uniquely-themed history walk each Saturday of the month, from May through September. All history walks will take place on **Saturdays at 11:00am**, unless noted otherwise.

Please note that history walks take place outdoors, with little or no indoor stops, and may be canceled if there is inclement weather at the start time. History

walks will begin at various locations around town, so please check our website or ask for more details when you register. Masks will be required for visitors and tour guides.

Advance registration is required and there is a limited capacity for each tour. No walk-ons will be accepted. Participants can register online at <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/events.shtml> or by calling 440-774-1700. The cost for each tour is: adults: \$6; children/students/members: free.

Please keep an eye on our website as additional history walks are scheduled throughout the season! To keep in the loop, please visit:

<http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/whatsnew/?action=show&id=648>.



**Descriptions for each month's themed tours can be found below:**

**May — *Architecture*** (in honor of Historic Preservation Month)

Find out how the landscape, college campus, and town developed over its 180 plus years on this 60-minute walking tour of Oberlin. Learn which architectural styles prevailed, which were criticized by the community, and how several renowned architects came to work in Oberlin.

**June — *Freedom's Friends: Abolition and the Underground Railroad*** (in honor of Juneteenth)

Hear stories about Oberlin's most famous freedom seekers and people known to have helped them make their way to freedom.

**July — *Civil War to Civil Rights***

This tour highlights historic events that reveal both Oberlin's progress and setbacks in race relations dating from early Oberlin all the way up to the 21st Century. Learn how Oberlin was a leader in abolition, participating heavily in events such as the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, the Raid on Harpers Ferry, and the American Civil War, but also struggled with its own issues of equality and racism during these early years and later through Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and today.

**August — *One Step More: Oberlin Women's History*** (in honor of Women's Equality Day)

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. Hear stories of powerful Oberlin women including Lucy Stone, 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.

**September — *Radicals and Reformers*** (Westwood Cemetery)

This guided tour promises a pleasing balance of Westwood's scenic landmarks and stories of some of the many spirited men and women of Oberlin who simply refused the status quo. Find out which resident was remembered as "gentle, soft-spoken, tolerant and yet nobody's fool." Visit the headstone of the man who escaped from slavery (twice!) and later served on the Oberlin village council.

## Register for the Oberlin Heritage Center's Hands-On History Camps Today!

The Oberlin Heritage Center will offer two week-long history camps this summer for boys and girls ages 8 to 13. Camps are designed to stimulate children's creativity and allow them to experience history, architecture, art, crafts, and games. An experienced educator leads the camp, assisted by college student interns and occasional community volunteers. Camp days will take place primarily outdoors and will include occasional walking field trips to locations around town, weather permitting. Children must bring appropriate outdoor wear, sturdy shoes, a mask, a bag lunch, and a water bottle each day.



### **Architecture Camp; August 2-6, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Children will love learning the basics of architecture in this hands-on camp. Campers will tour Oberlin architecture, explore building materials, try construction challenges, sketch designs, create mini structures, and envision buildings of the future. Scouts attending this camp will also complete some requirements for Architecture badges.

### **Oberlin Outdoors Camp; August 9-13, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Let's get outdoors and explore Oberlin's landscape! Campers will tour around famous man-made landmarks, gardens, and natural spaces. Children will learn about pollinators, plants, and how we affect our local environment, and try their hand at gardening and designing landscapes of their own.

Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations must be accompanied by payment. Children and grandchildren of Oberlin Heritage Center members may receive the member discount. No refunds will be made for cancellations within one week prior to the session the registrant is scheduled to attend. A camp session may be cancelled by OHC for any reason and a full refund will be made at that time.

\$65 for members; \$75 for nonmembers (\$5 discount if registered before July 1). Scholarships are available to students who qualify for schools' free or reduced lunch programs (please inquire). Register online by visiting the OHC events page at: <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/events.shtml?month=8&year=2021>. (If you register online, you will be contacted and asked to complete a permission form. A health survey must be completed on the first day of camp.) Questions? Please call the Museum Education and Tour Coordinator, Amanda Manahan, at 440-774-1700 or send an e-mail to [tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org).

*Please note that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the structure and logistics of these camps may need to be revisited and altered.*

## Upcoming Events:

### Save the Date for OHC's Annual Meeting

*Wednesday, June 2 from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.*

Join attendees from near and far as we come together for the Oberlin Heritage Center's 2021 Annual Meeting, which will be free and open to all on Zoom and **will take place on June 2 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.** 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 recently formed to preserve 33 East Vine Street, a National Historic Landmark, and to 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. To participate in the fun, and to register for the meeting, please visit the OHC website at:

<http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/whatsnew?action=show&id=647>.

The 2020 Annual Meeting minutes, financial report, list of new trustees, and proposed updates to the Constitution can also be found at the link above.

*Photo of the Wilson Bruce Evans Home, courtesy of the Oberlin Heritage Center.*

## News from the Second Floor:

### OHC Thanks our Grounds Day Crew!



The OHC staff would like to send a very special thank you to the volunteers who participated during the April 24 grounds clean up day. Volunteers helped with various yard work chores, including planting flowers, picking up yard debris, pulling weeds, filling the two new pollinator flower beds, and spreading mulch. The grounds look fantastic! Our heartfelt gratitude goes out

to Scott Broadwell, Angela Cecil, Marianne Cochran, Sid Comings, Joe Cross, Lori Ebihara, Elizabeth and Julia Elrod, Craig Enos, Mari Kuroda, Bert Latran, Julie Min, Cathe Radabaugh, Maureen Simen, Maia and Owen Tritt, and Bill and Dorothy Washburn. Many hands make light work!

## Lorain County Students Participate in History Day Competition



Region 3 Ohio History Day was held virtually on Saturday, March 27. Ohio Region 3 consists of students from Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, and Summit Counties. This year's theme was "Communication in History." Local winners are listed below.

### **Oberlin Heritage Center Hubbard Prize**

This prize is awarded to an individual or group that creates a paper, website, or documentary on the assigned theme. In order to be considered for the prize, the student(s) must live and/or attend school in Lorain County, and be a junior or senior in high school. The Hubbard Prize includes a cash award and an invitation to OHC's Annual Meeting. This prize is sponsored by Ned and Gail Hubbard, long-time supporters of OHC. The Hubbard family was the second family to own what is now called the Jewett House.

*2021 Winner:* "That is Absolutely Ridiculous!" Fred Rogers Speaking Against Racism  
*Project Type:* Senior Individual Website (To view the winning website, please visit: <https://71559661.NHDWebCentral.org>)

*Student:* Sofia Barlow

*School:* Christian Community School

*Teacher(s):* Michael Hoehn

### **Senior Individual Exhibit Finalist**

*Second Place:* Dorothea Lange: "How Photography Helped End the Great Depression"

*Student:* Brynn McCaslin

*School:* Christian Community School

*Teacher(s):* Michael Hoehn

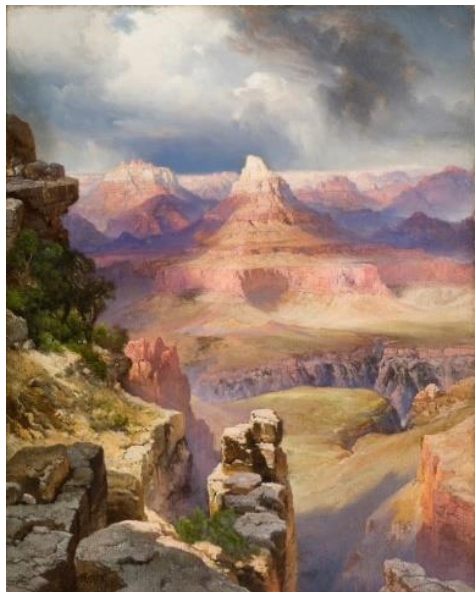
Thanks to all of the students from Langston Middle School and Christian Community School who participated during a challenging year.

*The Ohio History Day Competition is sponsored by National History Day, the Cleveland History Center, the Ohio History Connection, and Case Western Reserve University.*

## **Also of Interest:**

### **AMAM Presents Webinar: Caring for the Art of the Capitol**

*Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.*



Join Barbara Wolanin (Oberlin College '66 & MA '69) as she describes some of the murals, sculptures, paintings, and archives that she cared for during the 30 years she was curator for the Architect of the United States Capitol. Few people are aware of the range of heritage assets overseen by the Architect of the Capitol. In her role as curator, Wolanin managed the conservation of art, which she first learned about as a student at Oberlin College. Please register in advance for this free event at <https://bit.ly/3adyudi>.

*Image: Thomas Moran (American, 1837–1926), "The Grand Canyon," 1909. Oil on canvas. Shared courtesy of the Allen Memorial Art Museum.*

### **Hale Farm and Village Announces Spring Picnic Days**

*May 1, 2, 8, and 9 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.*

Bring a picnic and enjoy the natural beauty of the living history museum and Cuyahoga Valley as the season comes into full bloom. Explore the forests and trails, search for wildflowers, and observe the diversity of migrant birds returning for the season. Children can enjoy games on the village green or complete crafts on site or at home. Enjoy spring-themed museum demonstrations, such as cooking with foraged plants, flower pressing, and specially curated craft and trade demonstrations.

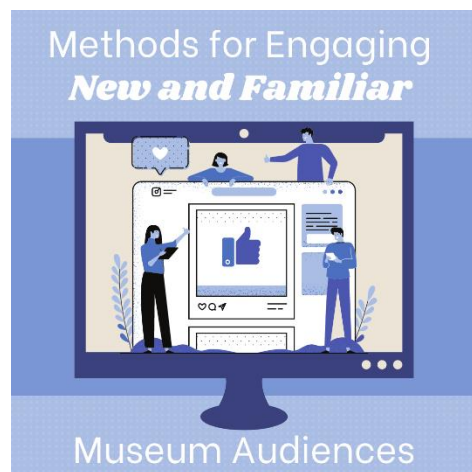
Admission is a reduced rate of \$6 per person for Western Reserve Historical Society members; youth 2 and under and active military are always free.

Pre-sale tickets are available at [www.halefarm.org](http://www.halefarm.org) or admission is available at the Gatehouse Visitor Center. Call (330) 666-3711 for more details.



## **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.

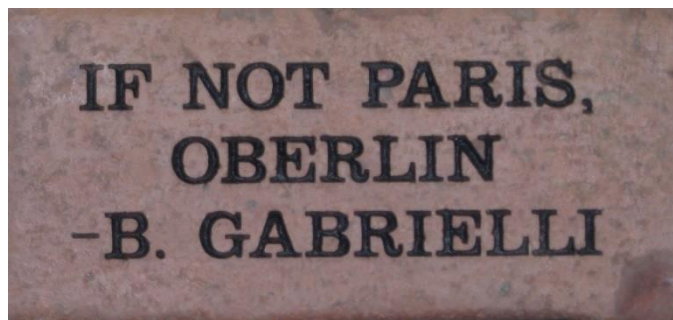
## **Join the Lorain County Historical Society for History Walks in Elyria this Spring**

Lace up your sneakers! The Lorain County Historical Society has announced that it will be offering walking tours of Ely Square in downtown Elyria as well as historic Washington Avenue during the coming months. Learn about local history while enjoying the sun and warm weather. Advance registration and payment will be required, and dates and times will be announced soon. Visit <http://www.lchs.org/> for more information!



## Be a Part of Oberlin History with Our Buy-a-Brick Program!

Are you searching for a unique gift for that certain special Oberlinian in your life? Do you want to commemorate your love for your hometown in a meaningful way? Well, look no further than the **Oberlin Heritage Center's Buy-a-Brick Program** and have a brick inscribed with a personalized message of your choosing installed on the Oberlin Heritage Trail this summer for all to see and enjoy!



The Oberlin Heritage Trail winds through the OHC campus at 73 South Professor Street, and is paved with century-old bricks that are engraved with supporter names or special, personalized messages. Twelve characters or spaces, one half inch each, may be engraved in one, two, or three lines on each brick. You will receive a photo of your brick once it is installed—and if the brick is in honor of someone, they will receive notification of this special gift (and a photo), too.

To order a unique piece of Oberlin history, visit our website to download an order form at: <http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/platform/cms/files/brick08.pdf>. Let your creativity run free, and make the Heritage Trail a wonderful place for future generations of Oberlinians to explore.

*Please place your brick order by May 31 so that we can send our order to the engraver in early June.*



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