



## Oberlin Heritage Center E-Gazette December 2021

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### Home for the Holidays



Before the Monroe House took on its second life as the flagship building for the Oberlin Heritage Center, it was home to the Siddall family—physician Claire Siddall and his wife Estelle, and their five children. Lawrence Siddall, the youngest member of the family, has graciously shared many of his memories about life in the Monroe House for the OHC archives. One of his favorite memories is vaguely reminiscent of the movie *A Christmas Story*, and takes place on Christmas Day. So, pour a cup of hot cocoa, get cozy, and enjoy a trip into the past.

“The first Christmas that I remember was in this house. After supper on Christmas Eve, we listened to the radio and then sang carols. I didn’t mind going to bed early. The next morning, my excitement was almost unbearable. I stood in my plaid flannel bathrobe with my two brothers at the top of the front hall staircase, holding on to the dark

mahogany banister. From there I could get a glimpse of the presents under the tree. I was first in line because I was the youngest. We were waiting for permission to go down. Near the top of the stairs was a niche in the wall in which sat a small Chinese statue of a kitchen god, painted red and gold. Just as we were about to descend, my brother Claire said, pointing to the figure ‘Don’t forget to touch it for good luck.’”

“Then down we went to discover what was in our bulging stockings hanging from the fireplace mantle. Afterwards, we began what seemed to me the painstakingly slow process of taking turns opening our gifts as we sat around the tinsel, lighted tree. My excitement of the morning was temporarily diminished in the afternoon by a careless injury. My right thumb still bears the scar from cutting myself with the first pocket knife I ever had, which I had earnestly requested. I was too scared to go to my parents, and instead sought treatment from my brother John, who washed the wound and put a bandage over the flap of sliced skin, adding, not unkindly, ‘Maybe you’re too little to have a knife. You have to be more careful, or I’ll take it away from you.’”

From all of us at the Monroe House, to all of you in your homes: Happy Holidays! And may your celebrations all be accident-free.

*Photos courtesy of the Oberlin Heritage Center.*

## **Lynds Jones—The Birdman of Oberlin**

*A Presentation by Diana Steele, January 25 at 7 p.m.*



*Lynds Jones.*

Join Oberlin’s Diana Steele, an avid birder and the Northeast Regional Director at the Ohio Ornithological Society, as she explores the life and times of Lynds Jones (1865-1951).

Jones, who graduated from Oberlin College in 1892, began teaching ornithology at his alma mater — the first course of its kind ever offered at an American college or university.

Not only was he a professor at Oberlin for nearly four decades, Jones also had a tremendous impact on the fields of ornithology and recreational birding. He founded both an ornithological society (The Wilson Ornithological Society, 1888) and a journal (now the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, 1889) that remain active today. Jones is also responsible for many of the common practices that recreational birders take for granted as “standard practice” in the field, more than a century later. Steele will present this virtual program via

Zoom at: <https://bit.ly/3nKV6ZU>. The program is free, but pre-registration is required.

*Photograph courtesy of Diana Steele.*

## Take a Self-Guided Tablet Tour at the Monroe House!

The Oberlin Heritage Center is now offering **self-guided tablet tours** of the Monroe House! Stop by Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and experience the *Oberlin Origins* tablet tour for just \$3 per adult (students and children under 18 are free). Take a deep dive into the history of this storied home, its occupants, and the early years of Oberlin—colony and college. Each tour lasts approximately 30 minutes, but you are welcome to explore history at your leisure.

And don't forget our guided tours—OHC is offering tours of the Monroe House on Tuesday and Thursdays at 10:30 and 1:30 p.m., and tours of the Monroe House and Little Red Schoolhouse on Saturdays at 10:30 and 1:30 p.m. Guided tours are also \$3 per adult, while students and children under 18 are free. Both the guided and self-guided tours are offered at OHC year-round.

For more information, visit <http://www.oberlinheritagecenter.org/visit/tour> or call (440) 774-1700.



## News from the Second Floor: Ohio Humanities Awards \$10,000 SHARP Grant to OHC



The Oberlin Heritage Center was grateful to receive a \$10,000 SHARP grant from Ohio Humanities (Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan). The funds will be used in the first half of 2022 to support general operating costs such as utilities,

website host fees, and telephones. Expenses like these are part of the backbone of OHC that allows us to keep serving our guests, program attendees, and researchers. Thank you for helping us start 2022 on solid footing! (Support has been provided by Ohio Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the federal ARP Act of 2021.)

## Thank you for Making the Fifth Annual Trivia Night a Success!



Amanda Meszaros and The Arch Rivals claimed the title as OHC Trivia Champions in last month's virtual contest. Twelve teams (with 76 players) registered for the fifth annual competition, which was emceed by the father and son team of Kevin and Max Greenwood. We'd like to thank our sponsor, Kurt Sarringhaus, for helping make the evening possible, as well as all the Lorain County shops and restaurants that donated items for the raffle and gift baskets. And a big round of applause to the volunteers who worked behind the scenes to keep the technology running smoothly—we couldn't have done it without you! We are happy and grateful to have brought the community together for a fun-filled evening and look forward to hosting the event again next year, be it in person or via Zoom. Congratulations to our 2021 Trivia winners: Trivia Night Champions – Amanda Meszaros and the Arch Rivals. Second Place: Lauren Price-Jones and the Whitefish Campers. Third Place: Sherri Chavez and Triviasaurus Rex.

## Meet the OHC Interns!

OHC is happy to welcome two new interns to the Monroe House this fall!



**Callie Howard** grew up in Dallas, Texas and is a senior at Oberlin College, where she is studying history, anthropology, and German. Callie came to OHC because of her interest in local history and museums, and because she thought working at OHC would expand her knowledge of historical Oberlin and help her gain a better understanding of how the town evolved. In the future, she hopes to attend graduate school to study public history, and would ultimately like to work in a field that allows her to help make history and cultural knowledge accessible to everyone.



**Adrienne Soto**, from Louisville, Kentucky, is a second-year student at Oberlin College. She has not yet declared a major, but is leaning toward psychology. An avid history buff, she finds it engaging to look back at the evidence of the past and to try to piece together a cohesive picture of life in a different time period. Adrienne recalls that the first tour she took at OHC was “an amazing experience,” and thought the opportunity to work with the organization sounded exciting. Although she is still undecided about her future, she says she has enjoyed her time at OHC and would consider exploring a career in museum studies.

## Memorial Minute

OHC remembers long-time member and friend Maxwell Morgan, who passed away on October 27, 2021. Together with his wife Muriel, Max was an Endowed Life Member at OHC and a generous supporter of our work and mission. We also would like to announce the passing of Katherine Smith, who directed family and friends to make a gift to OHC in her memory, if they wished to honor her and of Dayton Livingston, who (along with his wife Ann) was a long-time member of the OHC community. We extend our deepest condolences to the families who are mourning the loved ones they lost this past year.

## Memberships Make Wonderful Gifts

Do you have a history buff in your family? Are you having a hard time finding the perfect gift for the family member who is just so difficult to please? If you answered yes to either question, we have the answer for you—a year-long, gift membership to OHC! Members are the lifeblood of our organization and make OHC’s mission-driven work possible. An OHC member enjoys the following benefits:

- Free admission to tours and history walks offered by the Heritage Center, as well as two guest passes to share with family or friends.
- Reduced prices for most events for which there is a fee, including workshops and children's camps.
- Ten percent discount online or in-store.
- Complimentary benefits at 300 history museums nationwide through the Time Travelers Network. (<https://timetravelers.mohistory.org/>)

To purchase a gift membership, visit: <https://bit.ly/3cWVdLy>, call (440) 774-1700, or email [members@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:members@oberlinheritage.org) for more information. [Replace with Paypal Link]

## Your Holiday Shopping Can Benefit OHC

This holiday season, don't forget that the Oberlin Heritage Center's Museum Store is a source of great holiday gift-giving ideas. The store is stocked with history-themed books, anti-saloon league beverage glasses, Oberlin afghans and other mementos, all of which are also available online at:

<https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/store.shtml>.



You can also support the Oberlin Heritage Center by using Amazon Smile when you do your regular Amazon shopping! Just use the special Amazon Smile link at <https://smile.amazon.com>, and Amazon will give a portion of each sale to the charitable organization of your choice at no extra expense to you. When using Amazon Smile, just search for OHC under its full name: the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization.

### Also of Interest:

#### AMAM Tuesday Tea: Conflicting Visions of Ohio's Landscape

*Tuesday, December 14 at 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

Join Alexandra Letvin, assistant curator of European and American art, and Hannah Wirta Kinney, assistant curator of academic programs, as they present a Tuesday Tea on their exhibition *DIS/POSSESSION* at the Allen Memorial Art Museum. Their discussion will focus on Frederick E. Cohen's painting, *Bentley Simons Runyan Family* (ca. 1857), which is currently on view in the King Sculpture Court. Participants will be invited to



engage in a dialogue about the land we now call Ohio through the questions raised by Cohen's portrait of this settler colonial family. This free program will be held in the East Gallery. The event will also be broadcast on Zoom. To access the online Tea, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3wOpl4B>. (Note: The Zoom link will not be live until the event begins.)

*Frederick E. Cohen (American, ca. 1818-1858), Bentley Simons Runyan Family, ca. 1857. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mary Parsons McCullough (OC 1907), 1970.10.*

## Western Reserve Historical Society Hosts Holiday Candlelight Tours

This season, the Cleveland History Center invites you to explore the area's beloved holiday traditions with its Holiday in the Hay Candlelight Tours, held weekly beginning Thursday, November 18. Tour Cleveland's Hay-McKinney Mansion by candlelight, then enjoy festive refreshments to ring in the holiday season before exploring our museum galleries. Museum admission is included with each reservation. Tours will take place 12/02/, 12/09/, 12/16, 12/23/, and 12/30. General admission is \$20, WRHS member admission is \$15. To view tour times and other details, and to register, please visit:



<https://www.wrhs.org/blog/tag/candlelight-tours/>.

## Meet Ohio President Warren G. Harding

Curious to learn more about Ohio President Warren G. Harding? Look no further than this brief documentary, put together by the Ohio Channel and the Ohio History Connection to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Harding's inauguration. Take a trip through history and learn



more about the successes—and scandals—of Harding's public life and the legacy of his administration. The video can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/3HtrjwJ>.

## Make a Gift to Support the 2021 OHC Annual Fund Today!



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. Thanks to **YOU**—our members and supporters—we have been able to continue sharing Oberlin's history, through both virtual programming and in-person community events. If you've enjoyed our programming this past year and want to help support OHC, **please consider making a tax-deductible gift to our 2021**

**Annual Fund campaign.** Your gift will help us deliver history experiences that are educational, fun, interactive, and relevant to all our members—virtually and in person. You can make a gift online at <https://secure.oberlinheritage.org/donation.shtml> today. Thank you!

*Please note—for the 2021 tax year, individuals (or married individuals filing separately) can claim up to a \$300 charitable donation, and married individuals filing jointly may claim up to a \$600 charitable donation. Consult with your tax advisor if you have any questions regarding this deduction.*

*Photo courtesy of the Oberlin Heritage Center archives.*



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