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The Legacy (and “Wanderings”) of Charles M. Hall

The Oberlin Heritage Center launches a new year of community programming on **Wednesday, January 28 at 7:15 p.m.** with an entertaining and informative discussion of Charles Martin Hall (OC 1885), the Perkin-Medal-winning discoverer of the modern aluminum extraction process, and new developments in Hall’s historic legacy. Oberlin College Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, **Norman C. Craig** (OC ’53) presents *“Who Hauled Hall on Top of Hall?”* in Kendal at Oberlin’s Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive). The event is free and open to the public.

Hall, who grew up in Oberlin and attended Oberlin High School as well as the College, is best known as an inventor who developed an inexpensive method for producing aluminum metal. Through his technical achievements, he transformed the metals industry, enabled long-distance transmission of electricity, and made way for revolutionary modes of transportation. Through his wealth, he propelled Oberlin College into the 20th century. The program’s curious name comes from an Oberlin College student-written song *Who Hauled Hall on Top of Hall?* submitted in a 1954 local contest soon after the dedication of the College’s Hall Auditorium. **Ann Craig** OC ’55 and classmate **Helen Thompson Taylor** will treat the audience to a performance of the song to begin the program. The illustrated presentation also follows some of the “wanderings” of the College’s lightweight aluminum statue of Hall, the saga of the final construction of Hall Auditorium, and the controversial story of Hall’s sister, Julia Brainerd Hall, and whether or not she played a significant role in her brother’s work.

Norman Craig received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College in 1953 and his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1957. He taught in the Oberlin College Department of Chemistry from 1957-2000; following retirement he has continued to remain active as a researcher and lecturer. Craig is a past recipient of the American Chemical Society's (ACS) Award for Research at an Undergraduate Institution, an ACS Catalyst Award for Teaching, and the Morley Medal of the Cleveland ACS Section. He was instrumental in Oberlin being named a National Historic Chemical Landmark by the American Chemical Society for Hall’s groundbreaking work in developing the aluminum process. Craig also received the Oberlin Heritage Center’s Heritage Guardian Award in 2010 for being a dedicated community leader in the preservation of Oberlin history.

For more information about this Oberlin Heritage Center event, or other upcoming OHC programs, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700.

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