



73½ South Professor Street
P.O. Box 455
Oberlin, OH 44074-0455
Phone: 440-774-1700
Website: www.oberlinheritagecenter.org
E-mail: members@oberlinheritage.org

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Contact: Patricia Murphy, OHC Executive Director at patm@oberlinheritage.org
or Eugenia Poporad Vanek at vanekep@verizon.net

Oberlin Heritage Center Spotlights Civil Rights Stories

Oberlin's 19th century roots in abolitionism affected the views of its residents well into the 20th century as the nation fought for racial justice through prayer, moral reasoning, politics and even violence. Sharing stories from Oberlin's Oral History Project, **Eugenia (Geni) Poporad Vanek** traces the changes in attitudes from idealism after the Civil War to discrimination during the '30s and '40s and back to the idealism of the '60s in the "town that started the Civil War." **From Civil War to Civil Rights: Stories from the Oberlin Oral History Project** takes place **Wednesday, May 27 at 7:15 p.m.** at Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium (600 Kendal Drive). The event is hosted by the Oberlin Heritage Center and is free and open to the public.

The Oberlin Oral History Project is an ongoing community effort presently overseen by the Heritage Center that includes more than 100 interviews of long-time Oberlin residents collected by volunteers over the past three decades. Many women's stories from the project were included in the Heritage Center's 2014 oral-history-based publication *Bonnets to Boardrooms: Women's Stories from a Historic College Town*, researched and compiled by Vanek, now an OHC Honorary Trustee. The book is available for purchase at the Heritage Center's Museum Store, Ben Franklin/Mindfair Books, FAVA's Uncommon Objects, and Kendal at Oberlin's Cardinal Shop, all located in Oberlin. It also is available through Amazon.com.

Geni Vanek is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University and Boston University, and she received her Ed.D. from the University of Rochester. She spent more than thirty years as a teacher, administrator, and researcher in schools, health care institutions and nonprofit agencies in the Cleveland area. Vanek has served on the Board of the Oberlin Heritage Center as well as those of the Lorain County Board of Health, Oberlin City Council's Design Review Commission, and the Oberlin Seniors of Neighborhood House Association (now known as Senior Enrichment Services of Oberlin). She is a past recipient of the Heritage Center's "Volunteer of the Year" award, and just last month was inducted into the Cleveland Heights High School's Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame.

For more information about this event or others hosted by the Oberlin Heritage Center visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700.

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