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Heritage Center Hosts Grand Oberlin History Extravaganza

The Oberlin Heritage Center is pulling out all the stops this year for Oberlin College's Commencement/Reunion Weekend (also Memorial Day Weekend), and hosting a four-day "Grand Oberlin History Extravaganza" for the community, college and visitors. The extravaganza offers something for history buffs of all ages, including guided tours of the Heritage Center's historic sites, history walks in the community, free public programs on a wide range of Oberlin history topics, a photography exhibit, children's activities, extended hours for the Museum Store, and much more! Events begin Friday morning, May 22 and run through Monday afternoon, May 25, taking place at the Heritage Center as well as several locations around town, including the Oberlin Depot (240 South Main Street) which will serve as "Oberlin History Central."

"We're trying something new this year," explained Pat Murphy, Executive Director at the Oberlin Heritage Center. "Traditionally, this is the weekend when Oberlin is overflowing with visitors – area residents, returning alumni, families of graduating students – and we thought it a great opportunity to share some of Oberlin's rich history with those who hold college and town dear to their hearts. The small professional staff from the Heritage Center will be aided by dozens of dedicated volunteers who will lead tours, present programs, greet visitors and assist in numerous other ways to assure a fun and successful weekend for all."

The Oberlin Depot, a two-room passenger station built in 1866, will provide a historic setting for many of the activities that the Heritage Center will offer from Friday through Monday. (The Depot is owned by The Nord Family Foundation, who handsomely refurbished it in 2004 for use by local nonprofit organizations.) Visitors can drop by the Depot to enjoy mini-exhibits of photos of Oberlin College and adjoining residential neighborhoods as they evolved in the 20th century. Most of the photographs were taken by William Farquhar (Oberlin College class of 1943), Albert J. McQueen (OC 1952 and Professor Emeritus), and Prue Richards (OC 1970 and the Heritage Center's Collections Assistant). Children can take part in history-themed "make and take" craft projects or, weather permitting, old-fashioned lawn games as well as the adjacent playground. Visitors also can pick and choose from a series of public presentations, each about an hour long. Seating for these programs is limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Admission is free to the Depot events, although donations and Oberlin Heritage Center memberships will be gratefully accepted to support future history-education programs. The line-up of weekend activities includes:

Friday, May 22

- 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Oberlin Heritage Center and Museum Store open.
- 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Guided Tours at OHC. Fee (free to OHC members).
- 11 a.m. Freedom's Friends History Walk. Meet at MLK, Jr. Park. Fee (free to OHC members).
- 1 and 3 p.m. Tappan Square History Walk. Meet at flagpoles at SE corner of Tappan Square. Fee.
- 1 to 5:30 p.m. Oberlin History Central at the Oberlin Depot. Photography Exhibit, Children's Activities, Museum Store. Free admission (donations accepted).
- 4 p.m. "Oberlin College Architecture: A Short History." Presenter: Jane Blodgett. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).

Saturday, May 23

- 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Oberlin Heritage Center and Museum Store open.
- 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Oberlin History Central at the Oberlin Depot. Photography Exhibit, Children's Activities, Museum Store. Free admission (donations accepted).
- 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tappan Square History Walk. Meet at flagpoles at SE corner of Tappan Square. Fee.
- 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Guided Tours at OHC. Fee (free to OHC members).
- 10:30 a.m. "Oberlin's Invisible Leading Lady." Presenter: Prue Richards. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).
- 11 a.m. Freedom's Friends History Walk. Meet at MLK, Jr. Park. Fee (free to OHC members).
- 1 p.m. "An Armchair Tour of Downtown Oberlin's Historic District." Presenter: Pat Murphy. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).
- 2:30 p.m. "Giles Waldo Shurtleff (1831-1904): The Man Behind the Statue." Presenter: John Mercer. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted)
- 4 p.m. "Looking Beneath the Gown: The Saga of Academic Regalia at Oberlin." Presenter: Steven Plank. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted)

Sunday, May 24

- 12 noon to 5:30 p.m. Oberlin History Central at the Oberlin Depot. Photography Exhibit, Children's Activities, Museum Store. Free admission (donations accepted).
- 12 noon and 2 p.m. Tappan Square History Walk. Meet at flagpoles at SE corner of Tappan Square. Fee.
- 1 p.m. "The Anti-Slavery Collection of the Oberlin College Library: A Monument to 'The Town that Started the Civil War.'" Presenter: Ed Vermue. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).
- 2:30 p.m. "A Social History of American Architecture." Presenter: Jane Blodgett. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).
- 3 p.m. Freedom's Friends History Walk. Meet at MLK, Jr. Park. Fee (free to OHC members).
- 3:45 p.m. "Oberlin College, 1949 to 1952." Presenter: Albert J. McQueen. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).

Monday, May 25

- 1 to 5:30 p.m. Grand Oberlin History Extravaganza. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).
- 1 p.m. Freedom's Friends History Walk. Meet at MLK, Jr. Park. Fee (free to OHC members).
- 2 p.m. "Travel Back in Time with Tip Maddock." Presenters: Dennis Lamont and Albert Doane. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).
- 4 p.m. "A Virtual Tour of the Oberlin Heritage Center." Presenter: Elizabeth Schultz. Oberlin Depot. Free (donations accepted).

The Oberlin Heritage Center appreciates the support of The Nord Family Foundation for these activities. For more information, visit www.oberlinheritage.org, or contact Liz Schultz, Museum Education and Tour Coordinator at the Oberlin Heritage Center at (440) 774-1700 or e-mail tourinfo@oberlinheritage.org .

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