Upcoming Events & Programs

2014 Annual Meeting

Monday, April 28 — The Ross County Historical Society’s 118th annual meeting for Society members will be held at 7:00 p.m. Included will be the annual business meeting with reports from the president, treasurer & director; the election of members to the board of trustees; and the recognition of volunteers. In addition, the recipient of the Society’s 2014 Nolan Scholarship will be introduced, and the Society will present the 2014 First Capital Historical Awards in recognition of individual and group efforts to preserve Ross County’s history. The evening will culminate with a ribbon cutting and refreshments in the Society’s new Collections Preservation Facility.

2014 Spring Speakers Series

Wednesday, April 23, 7:30 P.M., Earthwork Complexes of the Hopewell Culture, featuring Bruce Lombardo, Director, Heartland Earthworks Conservancy, Hillsboro, Ohio.

Wednesday, May 7, 7:30 P.M., Singular Elegance: The Image of the Woodland Indian during the Federal Period, featuring Floyd Barmann, historian, author, and museum & historic site director, Marietta, Ohio.

Wednesday, May 21, 7:30 P.M., Circle of Life: a Modern Shawnee Cultural Experience, featuring Ron Hatten, also known as Wehyehipihrehsnhwah (We-u-pa-shen-wa), Jackson, Ohio.

All three programs are open to the general public free of charge. Refreshments will be served. Please see page 3 for additional information.

2014 Museum Hours

April — December:
Tuesday — Saturday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

2014 McKell Library Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday, 1 to 5 p.m., year ‘round
Closed major holidays

Society Awarded History Fund Grant

The Ross County Historical Society is the proud recipient of a 2014 Ohio History Fund grant. The grants are awarded each year during the annual Ohio Statehood Day commemoration held at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus.

The History Fund is a competitive matching grants program administered by the Ohio Historical Society. It is one of four "tax check-off" funds found on Ohio’s income tax forms and funded entirely through Ohio taxpayers’ voluntary contributions.

“The History Fund is about preserving and sharing Ohio’s heritage by supporting local projects and programs that strengthen Ohio history,” said Burt Logan, executive director and CEO for the Ohio Historical Society. “Ohio taxpayers’ support reinforces [the proposition] that the History Fund is a worthy program that helps organizations and historical societies fund the projects important to their communities. For just $8 — the average donation — Ohioans are helping to preserve their history.”

This year, the Fund had $110,000 to grant and awarded 10 grants to organizations throughout Ohio. It received 64 applications requesting a total of $788,000 in grant-funding. The Ross County Historical Society received $10,000 for the purchase of textile storage cabinets for the Society’s new collection facility. The cabinets and new facility will make it possible for the Society to store its historic clothing collection under optimal conditions that will both meet best practices for textile care and make the collection more accessible for exhibition and study.

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**President’s Report, by Bob Nelson**

The Society’s 118th annual meeting will be held on Monday, April 28th. This is an important meeting, and all members are encouraged to attend. Accomplishments of the past year will be reviewed as well as special recognition of all volunteers. Once again, there will be the presentation of our 2014 First Capital Historical Awards, and the recipient of our 2014 Nolan Scholarship will be introduced and recognized.

The annual meeting is also the time when changes can be made to the Board of Trustees. I’m sorry to say that Julia Pierson and Lav-era Motes have both decided to leave the Board because of family responsibilities. Julia has been chairperson of the Scholarship Committee for several years and has had great satisfaction in selecting the annual recipients. Lavera has been a loyal member of the Social Committee as well as other committees. Thank you both for your dedicated service.

Judy Benson and Neil Coleman have been nominated to replace Julia and Lavera on the board. Also the following members have been nominated for additional terms on the Board: Erc Picciano, Ron Bowen, Robin McKell and Pat Medert. Biographical information about the candidates will be included in the meeting notice.

I would also like to take this opportunity to report that I will be stepping down as President of the Board at our regular monthly board meeting in May. My big objective these last four years has been to help make our new Collections Preservation Facility a reality. We raised the funds and built the building, and I couldn’t be more pleased with the results. It has certainly been my pleasure to work with the entire Board as well as Tom Kuhn, Jamie Bliven and all of the staff these past four years. See you on April 28th.

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**Welcome New Members**

The Society welcomes the following new members since the last issue of the Recorder (names are in alphabetical order):

- Janet Ackley
- Mary Grace Cochenour & Justice
- Dorothy Corbin
- Robert Doerflein
- William & Barbara Franz
- Wade & Cheryl Prince Godfrey
- Dolores Hathaway
- Dawna LaRock
- Mr. & Mrs. Roger Moore
- Denny & Helen Norris
- Cathy Hartley Plimpton
- Shari Hartley Plimpton
- Diana Reynolds
- James Slyn
- Janet Smith
- John F. Stanhope
- Jim Stratton, Hocking Hills Adventure Trek LLC
- Mr. & Mrs. Glen Upton
- Dr. & Mrs. Randall Van Voorhis & Family

**NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

- Ellen Marie Doerres – Placier
- Angela Jane Phillips

**Director’s Report, by Tom Kuhn**

We are finally coming out of one of the coldest and snowiest winters in recent memory. The weather, however, did not prevent us from making progress on a number of fronts during these last few cold dark months.

Curator Jamie Bliven, with the assistance of a dedicate group of volunteers—including Gary Argabright, Joe Bennett, Erc Picciano and Bob Nelson—made great strides setting up storage shelves and moving hundreds of items into our new Collections Preservation Facility.

The Society was instrumental in organizing and hosting the annual community-wide Statehood Day commemoration on March 1. Almost 200 people showed up for our open house which featured several new exhibits including one Pat Medert assembled in the McKell Library titled “120 Years of Theater History in Chillicothe, 1805-1925”.

We have also been busy with preparations for hosting the annual regional meeting of the Ohio Local History Alliance on Saturday, March 29; our own annual meeting set for Monday, April 28; and our Spring Speakers Series which begins Wednesday, April 23. Opening day for major league baseball—Monday, March 31—is just a prelude to our own opening day at the Museum one day later. So, so long Old Man Winter. It’s time for spring!

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**Gift Ideas from the Museum Store**

**Back In Print!**

- The Civil War Journals of Samuel H. Hurst, 73rd Regiment, OVI, $14.95 — a perfect companion to Hurst’s Journal History of the 73rd OVI, compiled by Patricia Fife Medert.
- Ohio’s first capital, by Patricia Medert & Andrew Verhoff.
- The Rise and Fall of Camp Sherman: Ohio’s World War One Soldier Factory, $4.95 — a reprint of Richard Peck’s popular pictorial history of Chillicothe’s WWI army training camp.
- Chillicothe, Ohio: Frontier Settlement to State Capital, $14.95 — an illustrated history of Chillicothe’s founding and role as Ohio’s first capital, by Patricia Medert & Andrew Verhoff.

**Ohio and Erie Canal Motor Tour: To Circleville from Chillicothe, $15.00 — an exploration of the remains of this historic waterway, by Martha Gerber Rittinger.**

**Society members receive a 10% discount on all purchases.**

**Memberships Make Nice Gifts**

Memberships to the Ross County Historical Society make thoughtful and inexpensive gifts. Buy them for the history buffs you know by returning the form on page 7. Benefits include free admission to each of our museums and the McKell Library plus discounts at the museum store.

A Friendly Reminder

The use of articles, photographs, and other items in the Recorder is prohibited without the express written consent of the Board of Trustees of the Ross County Historical Society, 40 W. 5th St. Chillicothe, OH 45601.
Spring Speakers Series 2014
Focusing on Native American Cultures:
Prehistoric, Historic & Contemporary
at the Ross County Heritage Center
45 West Fifth St., Chillicothe, Ohio
Free & Open to the Public

Earthwork Complexes of the Hopewell Culture
Featuring Bruce Lombardo, Director, Heartland Earthworks Conservancy, of Hillsboro.
Wednesday, April 23, 7:30 p.m.
What is so special and unique about ancient earthworks? This presentation is full of graphics that help viewers grasp the extraordinary significance of these mysterious monuments of the ancient world that are so densely clustered around Ross County. Bruce Lombardo is a professional interpretive designer who became fascinated by southern Ohio's ancient earthworks when he became a ranger at Hopewell Culture National Historical Park. There, he designed displays on earthworks and co-wrote the script for the orientation film shown to park visitors. He is the founder and director of the Heartland Earthworks Conservancy, a group dedicated to preserving unprotected ancient earthworks of the Hopewell Heartland. He has also worked extensively in nature conservation throughout his career, and now works in South Africa for 6 months each year, where he develops interpretive programs about the need to protect endangered species.

Singular Elegance: The Image of the Woodland Indian during the Federal Period
Featuring Floyd Barmann, noted historian, author, and museum & historic site director, of Marietta.
Wednesday, May 7, 7:30 p.m.
A native of Ohio and historical society director for 30 years, Floyd Barmann has now turned his focus to the scholarly pursuit of research and publication of works dealing with Ohio's formative years and the epic stories of the Northwest Territory. He has spent over a dozen years searching through scores of museums and archives to discover unpublished materials about the people and events occurring from after the Revolution through the presidency of George Washington, "enough new information for four or five books." The first of these publications will highlight images of the Woodland Indian living alongside settlers during the transformation of the wilderness of the Northwest Territory into the State of Ohio. Barmann's presentation will highlight his vast research and the many images and illustrations he has gathered in the process.

Circle of Life: a Modern Shawnee Cultural Experience
Featuring Ron Hatten, also known as Wehyehpiehrsehnhwah (We-u-pashen-wa), of Jackson, Ohio.
Wednesday, May 21, 7:30 p.m.
Ron Hatten, grew up in Jackson, Ohio, where he still lives today. He was raised by his grandparents in a home where the family only spoke Shawnee. Fluent in the life, song, and culture of his people, Hatten's presentation links the stories that his grandfather taught him with the challenges of modern-day life offering a way back to nature. They are powerful, fascinating and evocative stories filled with humor, beauty and happiness. His hand carved wooden flute is beautifully in tune with its natural surroundings. Hatten, who retired from the nursing profession in 2012, now travels Ohio year-round sharing his Circle of Life with groups of all shapes and sizes. We are thrilled to welcome him here to Chillicothe and invite you to join us for this rare opportunity to experience Shawnee culture.
From the Library, by Pat Medert

120 Years of Theater History in Chillicothe, 1805-1925

Volunteers Jane Hilty and Shirlee Ater recently finished organizing and encapsulating the hundreds of theater programs and playbills that are in the archives. The items are from more than a hundred years of theatrical performances in Chillicothe. They reveal the importance of the theater to the community during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the wide variety of stage entertainment performed here, and the appearance of the nation's leading actors in the local theaters. With the help of photo archivist, Lisa Uhrig, and curator, Jamie Bliven, I have selected programs and pictures from the photo archives in preparing an exhibit, “120 Years of Theater History in Chillicothe, 1805-1925” in the temporary exhibit room in the McKell Library.

Theatrical performances and exhibitions as popular forms of entertainment date to the times of the early Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. These pastimes had been a part of the lives of Chillicothe's first settlers. Before a decade had passed after the town's founding in 1796, such offerings were once again available to them. In the absence of a theater, the venue for traveling show people was the local taverns. It was not until 1834 that the town had its first theater, and this was in a building once used as a church behind the present day Majestic Theatre.

In the late 1840s, two local business men—John Waddle and Nathaniel Thatcher—recognizing the need for an entertainment hall in the city, erected business buildings which provided public halls, complete with stages, on the third floors. They were made available for concerts, lectures, dances, and plays.

John Waddle called his room “City Hall,” but the name was soon changed to “Waddle's Hall.” Thatcher's hall was known as the “Atheneum,” and it was there that the first production of Uncle Tom's Cabin was presented in February 1854. These entertainment halls lost their appeal for theatrical productions after Masonic Hall opened its doors in 1854.

The first building to house Scioto Lodge No. 6 Free & Accepted Masons was destroyed by fire on April 1, 1852. The Masons replaced it with a three-story brick structure which provided them with lodge rooms on the third floor and an entertainment hall with a stage and room to seat 600 to 700 people on the second floor. The hall was rented out, and Masonic Hall became the town's primary site for balls, concerts, exhibitions, and dramatic presentations.

Improvements to the facility were made over the years, including the removal of the ceiling and floor between the first and second floors to allow for the addition of a balcony that would seat 200 theatergoers.

After the Civil War, opera houses began to appear in almost every city and town in the country to attract theatrical stock companies to their communities. Recognizing the need for an opera house in Chillicothe, Dr. George W. A. Clough, in 1875, purchased the old building at the northeast corner of Fifth and Paint St., which had been built by the congregants of the Second Presbyterian Church for their place of worship. The church ceased to exist in 1857, and after the war it was occupied by the Soldiers Monument Association which used the auditorium as Monumen
tal Hall where benefit performances were held to raise money for the town's Civil War monument.

Dr. Clough made structural changes to the exterior of the building and transformed the interior into a theater that appealed to both performers and theatergoers alike. The managers of the Clough Opera House brought leading stage stars to Chillicothe.

Masonic Hall was faced with serious competition for the first time. Within a year of the Clough's opening, Masonic Hall had been renovated into the Masonic Opera House. Additions were made to the building, the auditorium was redecorated, and a new stage was built. A theater manager was hired to arrange for a regular schedule of stage productions provided by the many traveling theatrical stock companies that took their performers from town to town.
For the next four decades, nationally known actors, actresses, comedians and musicians performed at the Masonic. Unlike other cities of its size, Chillicothe could boast of two premier theaters. It was reduced to one fourteen years later, however, when the interior of the Clough Opera House was heavily damaged by fire on March 1, 1890, and Dr. Clough decided not to make the repairs necessary to reopen the theater.

Vaudeville—stage entertainment which offered a variety of short acts such as comedic slapstick, song and dance routines, juggling acts, and the like—was introduced in the 1870s. It quickly gained in popularity, and by the end of the century, Chillicothe’s one theater, the Masonic Opera House, which carried vaudeville shows along with its more serious productions, could not meet the demand for this form of entertainment. This was fulfilled with the opening of the Orpheum Theater in 1900 and the Apollo and Dreamland in 1909. These theaters changed names with owners and managers and became known as the Royal, Star and Queen theaters.

Scioto Lodge No. 6 moved to a new building in 1904 and sold the old one to Richard Wolfe, who at that time was the manager of the opera house. He added motion pictures to alternate with his stage productions in 1908. In 1915, he sold the theater to the Myers brothers who changed the name to the Majestic Theatre. They continued to present stage shows but featured more movies, and live performances were gradually phased out altogether.

For more than 100 years after its founding, live theater was Chillicothe’s most popular form of entertainment. Its importance to the community cannot be overstated. Theater managers were able to bring quality productions, along with their famous stars, to town, and many considered Chillicothe as one of the best show towns in the state. In 1911, the magazine, Colliers Weekly, published a souvenir booklet featuring 100 of the greatest stars of the stage. Eighty-four of them had appeared in Chillicothe.

In the next Recorder, I will write about the performers and productions from Chillicothe’s theater history.
From the Photo Archives, by Lisa Uhrig

Remembering the Emmitt House

On January 6, 2014, neighboring Pike County suffered a major loss when one of its most famous buildings, the Emmitt House, in Waverly, was destroyed by fire. The building was constructed along the Ohio and Erie Canal by James Emmitt in 1861 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One of the craftsmen employed by Emmitt in the construction of his new hotel and restaurant was Madison Hemings. Hemings, the son of Thomas Jefferson by his slave, Sally Hemings, had come to Pike County in the early 1830s and was a master carpenter.

Though Emmitt is best known for his businesses in Waverly, he also had many connections to Chillicothe. The canal warehouse which still stands on the northeast corner of Main and Mulberry Streets was constructed by Emmitt around 1850. In June 1865, James Emmitt bought the old Valley House hotel on Paint Street in Chillicothe at a sheriff’s sale. After making renovations to the building he renamed it the Emmitt House. This hotel wasn’t quite the success as the Waverly location and he soon sold it.

Besides the hotel business, Emmitt operated a grain mill and a whiskey distillery in Pike County. He is believed to be the first millionaire in Southern Ohio and built a grand house that still stands in Waverly. Unfortunately, by the time of his death in 1893, most of his fortune was gone.

The Ross County Historical Society owns an elaborate Italian desk that was bought by James Emmitt on a “grand tour” of Europe.

Ruins of the Emmitt House after the January 6, 2014 fire. (Photos by Frank Robertson, Chillicothe Gazette Media)
Recent Acquisitions of the Museum and Library
(Listed in order received since the last issue of the Recorder)

88. Books – Civil War, various authors & titles, Currency – Civil War era, donated by Pat Medert.
94. Pewter Plate – c. 1788; Pewter Inkwell; Stool, wooden – (child’s), Tin Fat Lamp, Framed Writing Slate – early 19th century; Fair Police Badge, Chewing Gum Tin, Foot Warmer – late 19th century; Advertising Rules – early 20th century, donated by Pat Medert.
95. Photo Negatives – (6) b & w, Chillicothe Civil War Round Table, early 1960’s, taken by Mrs. J. A. Smith, donated by Tom Castor.
97. Book – Absalom’s War – the Life and Death of a Young Ohio Farmer in the Civil War, 2013, written and donated by Christopher McFarland Clarke.
103. Booklet – Suggested Short Tour of Typical Chillicothe Historic Homes and other architecturally interesting structures, souvenir copy courtesy Chillicothe Gazette, donated by Robert M. Kraus.

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Officers and Trustees of the Ross County Historical Society

Bob Nelson .................................................. President
Henry Herrnstein .............. 1st Vice President
Erc Picciano ......................... 2nd Vice President
Tim Barada .......................... Secretary
Bob Casari ................................. Treasurer
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Pat Medert ................................. Trustee
Laversa Motes ............................... Trustee
Julia Pierson ............................... Trustee

The RCHS Welcomes Junior Member...

Name ____________________________ Telephone # ______________
Address _____________________________________________________________
City __________________________ State ________ Zip Code ______________
Birthdate ______________________ Grade in School ______________
Parent/Guardian’s Name ___________________________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian’s Signature ____________________________
What are your hobbies? __________________________________________________________________________
Are your parents members of the Historical Society? - Yes - No
Is this a gift membership? - Yes - No
From Whom? ____________________________________________________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________________________________________________

Please send $10 with this form to
The Ross County Historical Society
45 W Fifth Street
Chillicothe, OH 45601-3227