

# The Curator

Centerville-  
Washington History

The newsletter of Centerville-Washington History

## Director's Thoughts

By Cheryl Meyer

Happy Fall!

I love this time of year! When I was teaching, the fall meant a new year with children excited to begin school and learn new things. I am hoping that what I am about to share with



you will ignite your interest to do some research and learn new things about the community you are a part of.

Centerville-Washington History's Nutt Cottage at 78 N. Main Street, is quite unique. In 1813, the cottage was part of a 63-acre tract that John Beck acquired from his father-in-law, Aaron Nutt. This small limestone structure was originally 23 ½ by 20 feet. There was a large fireplace in the front room which was used for cooking and providing heat during the cold months. Enclosed shelves were uniquely designed on one side of the fireplace, with a narrow, enclosed corner winding stairway to the sleeping loft in the attic on the other side. The Cottage now has three rooms and a bath on the first floor. An early stone addition to the rear was added giving the dwelling the current saltbox design. There are two bedrooms upstairs. Stone steps to the cellar are worn with age, with the bottom two steps carved out of the solid limestone.

In 2002, Mrs. Lois Zizert, the owner of the building since 1959, passed away, leaving her home to Centerville-Washington History. She had been a founding member and our first president in 1966. After extensive renovations by Centerville-Washington History volunteers, the house became our Research Center, home to artifacts, archives, and the office of our curator.

Centerville-Washington History's mission is to connect the community to the history of our local area and this is certainly satisfied at the Nutt Cottage Research Center.

And as always ... *"It Takes a Village"* ... and you are my village!

## Presidents Letter

By Ed Ross, President

It has been a busy summer with our children's summer programs, *On the Road Chats*, *Americana*, and a steady flow of museum visitors.

But this summer we also had some new dates on the calendar. We had a tent and game at two *Party in the Park* events at Stubbs Park, we planned two *School House Pop!* events.

*School House Pop!* was a brainstorming idea from our board retreat to open the museums to working families. With the evening crowds outside Graeter's Ice Cream, we decided to open two Saturday nights from 7-9 pm. To attract the visitors, we showcased a singer behind the Asahel Wright Museum and it worked! Dozens of visitors came to hear the music and took tours on July 23. The next one will be Saturday, September 24, featuring Alexis Gomez. Kudos to Terry O'Brien, Jerry and Hylda Strange, and Angie Gomez for bringing this idea to life.

We're now in high gear to make the 8th annual *A Sense of Taste* the best ever. We have a record 15 restaurants committed to providing tastes from their menus, along with Edde the Sax Man, displays from local boutiques, and some new games to add to the fun and fundraising.

First-time restaurants Manna, Greek Street and Lock 27 will bring some exciting new dishes to sample. Many local favorites will be on hand as well. See the full list on page 7.

As Cheryl would say, "It takes a village" to make this happen and many volunteers will be there to help. We hope to see you and your friends for a wonderful evening of food and fun.



**The Mission of Centerville-Washington History is to connect the community to its heritage by collecting, preserving, interpreting and promoting the history of our local area. Centerville-Washington History is partially funded by the city of Centerville and Washington Township.**

## Curator's Corner

By Joellen Ulliman, Curator

### An Artifact's Journey

An old item collecting dust, perhaps shoved into the back of a closet, is suddenly noticed. No one wants custody, certainly not anyone in the owner's family. It served its purpose. Its time passed.

With a quick call to (937) 312-0040, a new life awaits. Once it is established that the item is suitable for CWH's collection, an exciting process begins. Paperwork is exchanged



and signed. It becomes the legal property of our museum. This item is on the way to becoming an artifact!

Everything the owner knows about the item's history is collected. Often additional research is conducted to establish time period and use. Donor information is entered into Past Perfect, a system used to manage all artifacts. An accession number is issued. An accession consists of all items donated by one source. Each item is then cataloged separately under the umbrella of the accession number.



Each item has its own artifact identification number and record page generated by Past Perfect. It is now forever known by that number. Every artifact is handled with love and care...as the valuable treasure it is.

All data, such as history, size, color, and condition, is entered into the computer program. Next, there is a photo shoot. The artifact is featured simply yet attractively. The photo is added to the item's record.

All artifacts are categorized with other "like items". There are eleven broad categories. Each category is subdivided many times. The archival shelves are organized according to these broad groups, keeping like items stored together as much as possible. Being a small museum network with limited space, of course there are exceptions. Before the new artifact can rest, however, it needs identification. If it is a textile, a label with the number is sewn into the garment or accessory. If metal, cardboard, wood, etc., a barrier paint is applied in an inconspicuous place and the number is written in archival ink. For paper and photos, numbers are placed on the back with special pencils. Sometimes tags are used. Each artifact is unique and presents its own challenge when marking.

The process isn't over yet. Ready for storage, once a permanent place is established, the artifact may be wrapped, folded into, or placed in acid-free paper and box. Or...it is placed directly on an archival quality shelf, depending on the size and material. The record shows the stack, shelf, and box number (if applicable). The ID number

is inscribed on the outside of boxes for easy retrieval. The specific location is noted in the record.

Now the waiting begins. The freshly added artifact is ready to be called into service. It may wait a day, or years. The important thing is, it is available for an exhibit when needed...and easy to find. A true treasure!



### Family Fun found at the Old-Fashioned Picnic!

Centerville-Washington History partnered with the Centerville-Washington Park District to provide a relaxing and enjoyable wrap-up to a spectacular summer.

After families enjoyed their own picnic dinners, they were invited to explore the CWH old-fashioned games table. Favorite active games included quoits, jump rope, hoop rolling, and the game of graces. Popular toys were Jacob's ladder, yo-yos, and checkers. CWH was happy to share history with families and friends celebrating summer with this classic tradition.



### *In Sympathy*

Judith Rezy Passed away in February 2022.  
She has been a member since 1992.

Marge O'Neil passed away in March 2022, leaving behind her husband Jim. They have been members since 1999.

Loren Gannon passed away in July 2022.  
Loren has been a member since 2004.

### *Welcome New Members!*

Timothy & Lori Bishop  
Larry & Brenda Blank  
Jim & Pat Folck  
Dan Spiller

## Exploring History

By Susan Melville, staff



I love discovering new places around Centerville, especially while walking my dog, Ruby. One of our favorite places to explore is Bill Yeck Park near the Smith House. We hike there many times a week. On the orange trail there is a rebuilt well with the story of an early settler displayed on a small placard nearby.

The remnants of the well were discovered in 1984 and it was rebuilt by the park district. I was curious to discover more about some of the people that lived in this beautiful area. With help from Joellen Ulliman, our curator, our publication, “A Sense of Place”, and online records, I was able to discover a bit more.

A pioneer cabin, once located near the well, was owned by Abner Stevens. He already owned a nearby farm when he purchased the land from William Reeder for \$4000. In 1850, records show his homestead had 50 swine, 3 horses, two cows and produced 2000 bushels of corn. The pigs were driven to Bellbrook for butchering along with other farmers’ pigs. It is possible he had other relatives living nearby as two other 30-year-old men with the last name of Stevens were neighbors on the census.

In 1858, Abner Stephens (Stevens) bought the Peter Sunderland property after he and his wife died. This property is nearby Cross Point shopping center. The 1860 census lists eight children aged one through seventeen, a wife, Elizabeth, and a household servant. His property was valued at \$2700. From newspapers I discovered that at the age of 50 he also was chosen as a delegate from Washington Township to the county convention. Evidently, he was a person of influence within the community.

By the time of the 1870 census the family had left the area and moved to Shelby county in Illinois. What could have made this prosperous farmer move to Illinois? We can only speculate because there are no records that indicate why he would move his family when he appears to be doing so well. Land was probably cheaper in Illinois and this could have been the motivation as his sons mature and are able to help more on the farm.

As I dove into the paper trail of this family I started to become even more curious about their life and wonder what farming was like for them. Isn’t it interesting how exploring history makes us appreciate those who have walked this land before us.

## Member Highlight

By Cheryl Meyer, director

The Centerville-Washington Township Americana Festival Committee recognizes the importance of bringing the community together in celebration of July 4th. The Community Spirit Award was created for this very reason. It honors the legacy of one of its founders, Jim Reppert, who believed in giving back to one’s community as a civic duty/responsibility. This award seeks to recognize those who have made a similar commitment to this community and the festival. It was given for the first time this year to Centerville-Washington History’s own, Robert (Bob) Daley. Bob embodies that very spirit of civic duty and responsibility as shown through the Americana Festival but also through Centerville-Washington History. Bob has a true passion for preserving local history and inspires others to share that passion. He has served in many capacities here at Centerville-Washington History.

Bob and his wife, Berneta, joined the Centerville-Washington Historical Society after working on the bicentennial anniversary project. He was board president in 1998 and 2002. Bob recognized that fundraising was a priority for our organization in order to continue with our mission of connecting the community to the history of the local area. Bob was involved in many fundraising events such as the Autumn Ball. Work on the Nutt Cottage was funded under Bob’s leadership. The Daleys are lifetime members. “Centerville-Washington History is in our estate plan,” says the Daleys, and they urge others to remember the non-profit in their wills.

Bob has always said that it is every person’s duty to give back to their community and work together for the betterment of all. He sees it not only as our responsibility but as our privilege. He is both a role model for our community as well as a real supporter of Centerville and Washington Township.  
Congratulations Bob Daley!



## Mary Higgins Garden tour

By Cheryl Meyer, director

Neither rain nor sticky temperatures would keep people away from visiting a truly beautiful and amazing garden. The Mary Higgins Garden Tour 2022 on Saturday, July 23rd was a true gift to all that paid a visit. Mary Higgins, an esteemed local gardener and a long-time member of Centerville-Washington History opened up her gardens to the public. People left completely awestruck and with a desire to go directly home and work on their garden.

Mary has always been so supportive of Centerville-Washington History. Every year she allows us to set up a table at the tour to share what we do and by doing so, we are able to continue with our mission of promoting the history of the local area. We also received donations that go right back to our organization. This year was no exception to the kindness and generosity of the garden visitors. Thank you, Mary, for sharing your gift of gardening and for being such a wonderful supporter of Centerville-Washington History. A special thank you goes to Grandma's Gardens for helping to promote this event.



## Butchering Day

When days grew cold and the moon was right  
Butchering day came into sight.  
The gayest day of all the year.  
Friends came from far and near,  
A day with much parley and fun,  
Before it was light the work begun;  
To get us ready with supplies for winter.  
When days were short we must stay indoor  
And snowbound one could not get to a store.  
Supplied with molasses and jelly, applebutter and jam,  
Every kind of thinking you could put in a can.  
Wheat for our flour, dried yeast for our bread;  
Corn and hay for the animals and wood in the shed  
We now must arrange a supply of meat for winter.  
Hogs in number for each member, one,  
And extra, for times when company would come.  
Made lard and sausage, panhaus and headcheese;  
Then a beef yearling was killed to add to these.  
No kind could claim such independent life,  
Loving and living, work free from all strife.  
Our neighborhood, a little group, sufficient unto itself.

Della Pine Himes, "Butchering Day," in  
Rhythmic Meditations.



*This sausage stuffer artifact and picture of a butchering day is displayed at the Asahel Wright Museum.*

### Upcoming Events:

Save the date: Thursday, October 13, 2022 Ghost Walk on Main. Tickets go on sale September 13, 2022.  
For more information go to [wclibrary.info/ghostwalk/](http://wclibrary.info/ghostwalk/).



Save the date: Sunday, November 20, 2022 Hometown Holiday Walk. Join us for holiday fun!

## Things Change

By Jerry Strange

One of the goals of CHW is to preserve the past for the future. For instance, we preserve the Nutt cottage, as we should, because it reflects our heritage. But, what was on the lot before Aaron Nutt built his house? Maybe it was something that should have been preserved but wasn't. We don't know. With that in mind, I decided to show before and after pictures of the property across the street from our house on E. Alex Bell Road.



The picture above shows the property directly across the street from 650 E. Alex Bell Road in 2022. A few of the three hundred and some apartments in a development known as Gateway Lofts. The picture below is of the same property in 2010, which at that time consisted of a thirty-acre woods. You may think, "Who Cares?" I point this out because someday someone may wonder, "What did the view from the front porch of the house at 650 E. Alex Bell look like before there were apartments?" They will be able to go to this issue of The Curator and there it will be. And, I can't help but wonder, "Was this the view that Aaron Nutt, Jr. had when he built the house in 1833?" (Minus the power lines, the paved street, and the trucks, of course.)



## Grant for Historic Clothing

It's been a long-time wish of staff at Centerville-Washington History to expand its collection of replica historic clothing. While our closets contained a fair amount of clothing to be used for re-enactment scenarios, it has been somewhat mismatched representing different sizes and time periods.

When a grant opportunity came from **Constellation Energy**, it seemed the perfect time to move forward with the application process. Susan Melville applied for the grant and was thrilled to be awarded the full \$500 for historical costumes benefitting Centerville-Washington History. This grant was specifically designed for non-profit organizations that educate different age groups.

Melissa Wagner set out to find an experienced seamstress. Another historical organization recommended Sharon Druber and she did a wonderful job creating six reversible, tie-front vests in assorted sizes to match the skirts in our collection. Thank you to Sharon for all her work!



### Education Program Volunteer Opportunities

To continue to provide quality programming please consider sharing your time and talents with those eager to learn more about history.

For more details about specific programs, volunteer time commitments, etc. please contact Melissa Wagner at 937-291-2223 or [melissacwh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melissacwh@sbcglobal.net).

**Thank you** also to all of our volunteers who have helped out this year with Americana, Party in the Park, Summer Youth Program, School Tours, and all of our other events! We can not fulfill our mission without you!

## Summer Youth Program

Centerville-Washington History offered two workshops this year for our Summer Youth Program. "Old Tyme Woodworking" constructed birdhouses with tools from the 1800s. Each child painted the houses after construction to make it a true original. "A Summer Day of Work & Play" guided children through a typical day in the life of a child in the 1890s. From washing and ironing to making lanterns and butter, participants got to walk in the footsteps of a child from the past. A big thank you to our volunteers-Roger Duffy, Bob Hutter, Bill Gaul, Phil Kern, Jan Mazza, Marian Sensenbaugh, and Adam Zengel - for all your time and for making these programs a success! You are appreciated!



## Centerville-Washington History

### MONTHLY SPEAKER SERIES

2022

Third Tuesday of the month  
Free and open to the public!  
Enjoy refreshments and historical education.

RecPlex West Theater  
965 Miamisburg Centerville Rd.  
Reception 6:30 p.m. Program 7:00 p.m.

**September 20, 2022**

Steve Grismer  
*Dean, Dillinger & Dayton Ohio:  
Legend, Lore & Legacy*

**October 18, 2022**

Angie Hoschouer  
*History, Mystery, Murder & Mayhem*

**November 15, 2022**

Paul Cooper  
*Doolittle's Raid on Japan*

[CentervilleWashingtonHistory.org](http://CentervilleWashingtonHistory.org)

Donations welcome and appreciated!

## Thank you to our Business Members

Solid Rock Roofing  
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# "A Sense of Taste"

A culinary tasting event sponsored by  
Centerville-Washington  
History

## Save the Date

*Benham's Grove*

Thursday, September 8, 2022  
5-8 pm

Tickets \$35 (advance only)  
at:

Walton House Museum  
89 West Franklin St., Centerville  
433-0123

Or Online at:  
CentervilleWashingtonHistory.org

*Entertainment and cash bar!*

### Participating Food Vendors

Bill's Donuts  
Esther Price  
Graeters  
Frickers  
Melting Pot

Pretzel Factory  
Station House  
Yankee Trace  
Bethany  
Manna

City BBQ  
Old Bag of Nails  
Lock 27  
Randell Residence  
Greek Street

Thank you  
2022 Sponsors!



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Jason Schnarr



City Council &  
Mayor & Mrs. Compton



Trustee Sharon Lowry



Temporary housing in Historic Centerville

Centerville-Washington History  
89 West Franklin Street  
Centerville, Ohio 45459

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## Centerville- Washington History

### Board

(June 2021-May 2022)

#### OFFICERS

**Ed Ross**  
*President*

**Phil Kern**  
*Vice President*

**Jan Colson**  
*Secretary*

**Bill Gaul**  
*Treasurer*

#### TRUSTEES

Brenda Badgley	Dave Meyer
Angi Gomez	Terry Obrien
Cole Hetman	Hylde Strange
Ron Johnson	Jerry Strange

#### Ex officio

<i>Dale Berry</i> Washington Township	<i>Mark Engert</i> City of Centerville
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*Executive Director*  
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**Karen King**  
*Communications & Marketing Manager*  
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#### Facilities/Phone & Hours

**CW History Headquarters  
Walton House Museum**  
89 West Franklin Street  
Centerville, Ohio 45459  
(937) 433-0123  
Tuesday-Friday Noon-4 PM

**Joellen Ulliman**  
*Curator*  
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**Nutt Cottage Research Center**  
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**Asahel Wright Museum  
School Museum**  
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Centerville, Ohio 45459  
(937) 291-2223  
Tuesday-Friday Noon-4 PM

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