



Centerville-Washington History

The Curator

The newsletter of Centerville-Washington History

Director's Thoughts

By Cheryl Meyer

What a wonderful time of the year! Spring brings a new beginning and a fresh look on life. Nature begins to peek out with a lush green palette and the gentle whisper of rebirth. Spring is a reminder that new and wonderful things are on the horizon.

Centerville-Washington History continues to move forward, despite all the obstacles we have seen. We are beginning to look at the 2021 calendar. We know that our events and fundraisers may not happen this year but we are planning for them as if they will. These activities may take on a different look but we are willing to adapt in order to continue with our mission of promoting the history of our local area. We are getting back to our "On the Road Chats" with two virtual Chats scheduled



for the spring. In addition, schools have been requesting our virtual programs, the public has been busy with our virtual Sugarcreek Cemetery tour, "Walk Among the Tombstones," and our monthly Speaker Series is as strong as ever. We are seeing virtual participation by way of Facebook and YouTube, and our exhibits are always a highlight for the public. Centerville-Washington History is alive and well.

I also want to thank everyone for the comforting support during this past year. It would have been very difficult to make the progress we have made without it. Truly, it does "take a village." So with that being said, please consider volunteering your time to our efforts. The Centerville-Washington History staff is constantly thinking of new ways to reach the community but in most cases, we depend on volunteers to help with this. If you are interested in helping out, please reach out to me. Together we will find the volunteer opportunity that best suits you.

I invite you to join me in welcoming the season of spring. A new beginning for Centerville-Washington History and one I am eager to be part of. We have been through some challenging times but we have endured and have become stronger. Stay safe and healthy.

It Takes a Village

Farewell to Peggy...

We are going to see a big change occurring within the Centerville-Washington History staff. Our wonderful Peggy Brooker, finance manager and newsletter editor, has decided to retire. She and her husband, Dave, have two beautiful grandchildren they want to spend time with. While we can understand Peggy's decision, we will miss her dearly. Peggy has been part of Centerville-Washington History for 20 years and has been integral in making the financial side of our organization strong. She has been diligent in her duties, which have gone far beyond the financial component. Peggy could always be found helping out at our fundraisers, working with the youth, or cultivating a lovely garden at the Asahel Wright Museum. She decorated for holidays, assisted in display setups, cheerfully gave tours to visitors, and helped clean the museum without ever looking for recognition. She was often behind the scenes making sure events flowed smoothly. Peggy always had a kind word to say or a smile to give.

Peggy looks forward to staying in touch with friends she made by the attending Centerville-Washington History programs and events. Over the past twenty years she has enjoyed learning and applying new technology, and working with other organizations. Peggy said, "Participating in the growth of Centerville-Washington History has been an honor for me and I will always feel a part of the CWH family."

Peggy will be missed but we know she will not be a stranger. Good luck to Peggy on what this next chapter holds for you!



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.

President's Letter

By Ed Ross, President

After a tough viral year, we look forward to a new and improved year of activities and projects.

While some of us old enough have begun to get hope with vaccinations, we are still unsure how the year will unfold.

We are planning to move forward as a "normal" year, with A Sense of Taste, youth programs, and speakers programs; some of which we won't know until later if they can happen in the old way or in a new way. However, we do know that the second phase of the cemetery restoration, our "chat" series, museum openings, and all of our newly created virtual programs will happen.

Also happening, for sure, is the continuation of our

restoration of the Old Centerville Cemetery. Last fall with the help of 100 volunteers we cleaned 2/3 of the 450 tombstones in the cemetery. This spring we will schedule a few more volunteer days to complete the cleanings. In addition, a professional restoration company will arrive to reset and repair about 100 more headstones. While the Township has given us a generous contribution toward the repairs, more donations are needed to finish the job.

I have been attending meetings concerning the planned Uptown developments and have found most of the concepts to be complimentary to the historical preservation of the city with many improvements.

Our staff has been busy throughout the difficulties adapting to all of the challenges. If there is any silver lining to this pandemic, it is that many of their virtual adaptations will live on as useful new tools to reach schools, members and the public.

Learning Black History

By Joellen Ulliman, Curator

Early this year, the high school's Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion team (DEI) asked us to provide stories for Black History Month. They were compiling a resource bank of short videos to be used in middle and high school classrooms.

I started this project excited to be educating others. Little did I know that I would be educated by working with DEI and inspired by delving into two stories of residents

who made a difference. Working hard to make sure the stories were historically accurate, objectively told, and demonstrated sensitivity to actual events changed me.

I shared the story of Moses George, a Black man who lived in Washington Township in the middle/late 1800's.



He wanted his children to receive a formal education. Ignored by the officials at Schoolhouse No. 6, he eventually went before the Board of Education in 1875, asking that his children be taught as was their right. Nothing happened; the directors at the schoolhouse did not comply with the Board's orders for "separate but equal" schooling. In 1877 Moses went back to the Board. The Board ordered the directors to help. The schoolhouse directors finally proposed teaching the George children with an instructor at a location 2 1/2 miles from home and after hours at the



schoolhouse. The Board decided then that this "second school system" was cost prohibitive. Therefore, Mose's children attended Schoolhouse No. 6 with white students. Our school system was officially integrated.

Additionally, I shared the story of Polly

Webster, the first Black student to graduate from our high school in 1953. Her single mother moved the family to the Dayton area from Tennessee when race riots were heating up in the South. Her mother worked as a live-in cook for an affluent family here in Centerville; Polly lived with her and attended Centerville High School. One brother attended a special school for deaf children in Columbus and two others stayed with an aunt in West Dayton. Polly was the only Black student in a class of 23 students. She participated in many activities such as chorus and yearbook. She faced prejudice during two class trips, one to Dayton and the other to Washington DC. Both times, ticket takers would not admit her. Polly graduated and worked a few jobs, including as a supervisor at Top Value Stamps for over twenty years. Learn more about Polly in our newest exhibit *A Sense of Strength: Incredible Local Ladies from History* at the Asahel Wright House.

Both of these strong individuals impacted our community. They left an imprint that can never, or should ever, be erased. Sharing their experiences with young people indelibly stamp their influence on our history.

Herbal Medicine

Spring has sprung! Let's garden! This year, consider medicinal plants... join the ongoing movement for natural, herbal healing!

From our earliest times, we were fortunate to have excellent physicians. Dr. John Hole, the first doctor in Montgomery County and one of our first settlers, served in the American Revolution and relocated from New Jersey to the newly opened Northwest Territory in 1796. He and his wife Massee arrived in Washington Township with five children. Daughter Jane married Jacob Mulford in 1811. Jacob is the fourth youngest child of Caleb Mulford and Sarah Stevens who moved here in 1798. Both Jane and Jacob were born in New Jersey before their families ventured west.

Jacob became interested in medicine and studied with Dr. Mason, a doctor and preacher, from Lebanon. He was also influenced by Dr. John Hole and Dr. Nathaniel Strong, who arrived in Centerville in 1814 after his service in the War of 1812. In 1817-1818, Jacob attended botanic medicine lectures at Curtis Medical College. He was quite intrigued.

One of the leading proponents of botanical medicine was Samuel Thomson. Samuel was born into a farm family in New Hampshire. He had very little or no formal education; he worked on the farm. He learned about herbal remedies from a local widow and his own ingestion of plants found in the wilderness. He developed methods to cure many ailments. He eventually patented his system. In order to become a doctor of botanic medicine, all one needed to do was buy his book *Thomsonian Medicine* published in 1832 for twenty dollars. Thomson ultimately hoped people would benefit from the use of natural treatments.



Thomson believed illness was caused by digestive system obstructions and cold. Hence, the first step in treatment was taking *Lobelia inflata*, also called Puke Weed. Then, capsicum was given to raise body heat. Third, a composition powder was administered; this mixture contained bayberry, hemlock spruce, ginger, cayenne, and cloves. Another valued treatment was a "steam." This consisted of sitting in a chair, wrapped in a blanket, feet resting in a pan of water. Hot rocks added to the water created steam.

Thomson's methods received mixed reactions from the medical community and public. Some followed faithfully... some jeered. One man charged him in the death of his son.

Centerville's Dr. Jacob Mulford was well known for both using botanical remedies and treating epidemic diseases. He moved to Lebanon in 1836 and then Dayton in 1838. Jacob also served others as a Baptist minister. He died in 1844. He and Jane never had children.

Learn more about Dr. Mulford's fascinating botanicals! Martha Boice replicated his garden behind the Walton House.

She thoughtfully copied a comprehensive list of recommended plants for visitors to keep.

Learn even more about early Ohio doctors and remedies. CWH, in conjunction with Centerville-Washington Park District, is offering Medicinal Plants and Folk Remedies on August 6 from 7-8 PM at the Walton House. Registration with the park district is required.

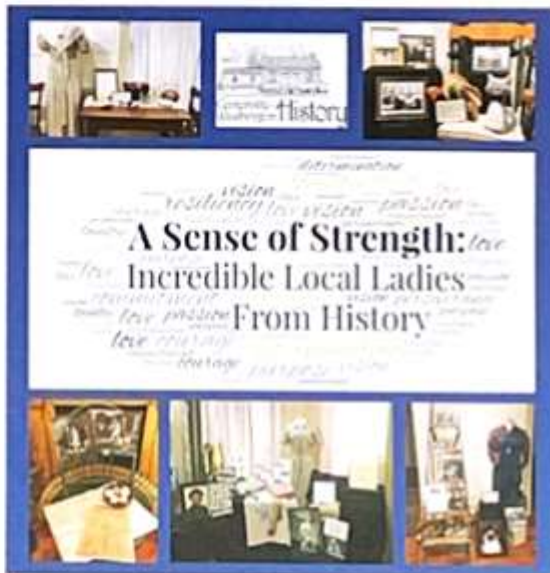


Membership has its privileges! Like this special opportunity...

All members are cordially invited to a sneak preview of our newest exhibit, *A Sense of Strength: Incredible Local Ladies from History*. Although our museums are currently closed to the public, we are excited to share this exhibit with you, our wonderful members. Be one of the first to experience approximately 200 years of local history through the eyes of some of the women who shaped our community.

- *Begin with Massee Hole, one of the first settlers in Washington Township in the late 1790's.
- *Travel through the 1930's and 40's with Ida Weller, champion for local farmers.
- *Venture into the 1950's with Pauline Webster Trammel, the first Black graduate of Centerville High School.
- *Explore the expansion of Washington Township through the 1960's and 70's with Ethel Winterhalter, first female township trustee.
- *Relive the 1980's to the millennium with Shirley Heintz, first female mayor of Centerville.

Call (937) 312-0040 to schedule your personal showing. State health standards for Ohio will be followed. Masks are required.



The Watkins House

By Jerry Strange

One of Centerville's historic stone houses sits at the corner of Nutt Road and Route 48. You may not have noticed the house as you drive south on OH-48, because in recent years the landscaping has become overgrown, effectively hiding it. The house consists of an original one-room stone cabin built over a cellar, a two-story stone addition, and a two-story wood frame addition.



Watkins house 2021



Watkins House 1930

The original one-room stone cabin portion of the house was constructed by Jonathan and Clarissa Watkins in 1804. In 1812, the Watkins added a two-story stone addition to the West of their original stone cabin with the door facing the highway, as shown in this 1930 picture of the house.

The final addition of a two-story wood structure was added in 1940 by Caroline Watkins Burnet and her husband Chester and the door facing the highway was replaced with a window. (Caroline was the great-great-great-granddaughter of Jonathan and Clarissa.)



Watkins House 1945

The house was recently purchased by Scott and Tonya Zipperian, who plan to remove the overgrown vegetation, return the front door to its original location, refurbish the inside and outside and bring the house the recognition it deserves as one of the jewels from Centerville's past.

Note: You can read more about the Watkins house and other stone buildings in the society's publication, *A Sense of Place*.

Junior Historian Program

At Centerville-Washington History, our mission is to connect the community to its history. Recently, we created a Junior Historian Program for our local elementary students. Following a school-related CWH presentation, students can choose to share what they have learned with friends or family members through a series of challenges. A **Sugarcreek Baptist Cemetery Junior Tour Guide** must locate grave markers for our area founders, point out examples of family gravesites, explain the meaning of flag markers, and talk about the importance of being respectful while in a cemetery. An **Artifacts Apprentice** can define the word "artifact," explain what artifacts can teach us about life in the past, why artifacts must be handled carefully, and has helped us to identify a mystery artifact. Our first Junior Historians have their photographs displayed on the children's wall at the Asahel Wright House. Congratulations!



Emma Fischer
Stingley 3rd grade
Sugarcreek Baptist
Cemetery Junior Tour Guide



Max Daiello
Stingley 3rd grade
Sugarcreek Baptist
Cemetery Junior Tour Guide



Benjamin Greiner
Stingley 3rd grade
Sugarcreek Baptist
Cemetery Junior Tour Guide



Caroline Duke
Stingley 2nd grade
Artifacts Apprentice

Welcome New Members

Karin Krause
Jan Mazza

Centerville-Washington History Time Travelers Summer Workshops

Little historians in grades 3-5 will participate in fun and educational activities from our pioneer past. All workshops will be from 9 A.M.-Noon at the Asahel Wright House.

Tuesday, June 15th	Bird Tweets
Wednesday, June 16th	Old Tyme Woodworking
Thursday, June 17th	A Summer Day of Work and Play
Friday, June 18th	Stories in Stone

Registration is \$35 per session. Children and grandchildren of CWH members will receive a \$5 discount. Space is limited. Registration forms with more details including safety protocols are coming soon to our website. Please contact Melissa Wagner at 937-291-2223 with questions.



Centerville-Washington History offering Scholarship for Centerville Seniors

Centerville-Washington History will be awarding a \$1,000 scholarship to a Centerville High School senior who is majoring in education at an Ohio college or university. The student must have a 3.0 GPA and be active in school and community clubs and/or organizations. Interested students should request additional information and a scholarship application from his or her Unit Counselor.

In Memoriam

Gifts are sometimes given to Centerville-Washington History in memory of people dear to our members. In the last year, the following were remembered in this special way:

The Allens of Centerville • Ralph Bender
Diane Bockhorst • Beverly Callander • Celia Elliott
Jim & Betty Johnson • Charles & Nina Kuhbänder
Armand Martino • Janet Thobaben • Brenda Woods

Homesteading Ohio

In partnership with the Centerville-Washington Park District, CWH will present "Homesteading Ohio." Join us to experience a simulation of Centerville's founders. Meet some of Washington Township's early citizens and learn about the hardships they faced traveling to the area. Pack your wagons, encounter challenges and hunt for food. The trail is approximately one mile in length on a crushed limestone path. Register for this event on the park district's website or contact Melissa Wagner, Education Coordinator, at 937-291-2223 for more information. Space is limited.

All Ages

Saturday, May 1st (Rain date: Sunday, May 2nd)

2:00-4:00 PM with staggered start times

Bill Yeck Park, Smith House, 2230 E. Centerville Station Road

\$8 for residents, \$10 for non-residents

Registration deadline is Thursday, April 22nd

In Sympathy

Joyce Young, former Washington Township, woman of influence in the Dayton community at large, and CWH member since 1994 passed away on December 28, 2020.

Elizabeth "Betty" Nutt, wife of Donald Nutt of Vandalia and a member of the historic Centerville Aaron Nutt family passed away January 18, 2021. The Nutts have been CWH members since 1991.

Phil McLaughlin, a dedicated volunteer in the Centerville community, active member in his church, husband of Karon DeBrosse, and CWH member since 1972 passed away on February 10, 2021.

Bet You Didn't Know - Early Centerville Hotels!

By Phil Kern, CWH - Trustee

DOOLITTLE'S TAVERN:

Travelers in the early 1800's going from Cincinnati to Dayton would need overnight accommodations. In September 1823, Enos Doolittle purchased lot #26 of the Robbins' Plat from his father-in-law, Benjamin Robbins, for \$400.00. On the lot he built a two-story stone building and opened a tavern. Because of the success of the tavern, he added a one-story stone addition to the south as a dining room and entertainment room and turned the building into an inn with sleeping quarters on the second floor. He also added a large stable out back for the horses that pulled the stagecoaches.

The 1882 - *W.H. Beers - History of Montgomery County* says that the tavern "...came to be known far and near as the best stopping place for travelers west of the Alleghenies..."

Some of the older Centerville residents recall their grandparents telling of the thrill of "...watching the red stagecoach thundering into town. The driver whipped up the four horses, brought out his horns and bells, and made a spectacular dash up the hill to stop with a flourish before Doolittle's Tavern...."

Several famous people had overnight accommodations at the Tavern, including Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tom Corbin, Ohio Governor, and William Henry Harrison, ninth President of the United States who stayed there the night before the 1840 Whig Convention in Dayton, where he was successfully nominated as their presidential candidate.

Doolittle's Tavern continued to operate until around 1845. At that time, due to the deaths of his three young children as well as his wife, Doolittle left Centerville and moved to Columbus abandoning the tavern. In 1909 the building was demolished and a new Township Hall was erected and continues to operate as a place for children's performances and other community events.



THE HILLAN HOTEL:

A two-story stone building at 94 N. Main St. owned and operated by James Hillan, was another early inn for overnight accommodations and was an unusual inn as nine local folks made the Hotel their "... usual place of abode..."! It opened in September 1855 and continued operation until 1866 when Hillan sold it and purchased the two-story stone and frame

Asahel Wright house at 26 N. Main St. (now part of the Centerville-Washington History complex) for his family home. He also purchased John Archer's log structure, known as 'The Sign of the Crossed Keys' tavern, and maintained the tavern on the first floor with sleeping rooms on the second floor. (This building is #16 in the latest edition of "Stepping Through Time: A Walking Tour of Historic Centerville.")

THE WOODBOURNE INN:

In 1818/19, the Farmers & Manufacturing Co. constructed a braced frame building that had wood siding, many windows, four fireplaces - two downstairs and two upstairs in the sleeping rooms. The Inn was located on Lot #10 at the corner of Third & Main St.

(now called Whipp Rd.) in the village of Woodbourne. It also served as a stagecoach stop on the route between Dayton and Cincinnati. Over the next 25 years, the Inn was bought and sold by several individuals and in the mid-1970s the house was totally rebuilt on the original foundation retaining the original exterior architectural details and two additions were added, one on the east side and one on the west side. Currently, it is now a private residence.

Lest we forget, a look at 55 years of CWH Presidents

Lois Murray Zizert	1966-1967
Richard Studebaker	1967-1968
Elizabeth Hoy	1968-1969
Max O. Dickey	1969-1970
Paul Hoy	1971-1972
Celia Elliott	1972-1973
Robert Farquhar	1973-1974
Carolyn McConville	1974-1975
Loren Gannon	1975-1976
Betty Ann Perkins	1976-1977
Harold Berry	1977-1978
Caroline Burnett	1978-1979
Howard Houser	1979-1980
William Fenton	1980-1981
Dennis Corbly	1981-1982
Joan Garner	1982-1983
Carl M. Schell	1983-1984
Janet Thobaben	1984-1985
Gloria Clouse	1985-1986
Mary Aldridge	1986-1987
Winnie Risner	1988-1989
Joann Treffinger	1989-1991
James Zachritz	1991-1992
Bernard Samples	1992-1993
Rick Pavlak	1993-1994
James Treffinger	1994-1995
Jan Nelson	1995-1997
Pat Aldrich	1997-1998
Robert Daley	1998-2000
Florence Krahling	2000-2002
Robert Daley	2002-2004
Sue Hufnagle	2004-2005
Bootie Zengel	2005-2006
Jerry Strange	2006-2008
Roy Turton	2008-2010
Susan Ross	2011-2012
Ed Ross	2012-2015
Steve Feverston	2016-2019
Ed Ross	2019-2021



Save the date for the 2021 "A Sense of Taste"

Thursday, September 9, 2021
@Benham's Grove

Thank you again to our 2019 Sponsors:

Platinum Level Bethany Village Don Wright Realty, LLC

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If your business would like to be a 2021 "Sense of Taste" Sponsor, contact cwths@sbcglobal.net for details

Membership Renewal Season Around the Corner

Start checking your mailbox in late April for your annual membership renewal package. Please return membership forms and dues promptly or feel free to renew your membership online at

CentervilleWashingtonHistory.org/membership

Your annual dues and donations make it possible to collect, preserve, and promote the history of our local area!

If you have any questions about your membership, please feel free to contact Karen at karencwths@sbcglobal.net or call 937.433.0123

SPEAKER SERIES

While we have greatly missed gathering in person each month, the bright side is that the Speaker Series programs are available for viewing on-demand. Many thanks to Richard Diaz and the Miami Valley Communications Council for making these virtual presentations possible. Search "Centerville-Washington History" on YouTube.com

Topics available:

- Gerrymandering - Manipulating the Boundaries of an Electoral Constituency by Dennis Turner
- WWII: Pacific Theater by Veteran D. Ralph Young
- Governor Cox & the National Road by Jeff John
- Dayton Beer: A History of Brewing in the Miami Valley by Tim Gaffney

The following will be presented via Facebook and YouTube starting at 7 pm on the date listed and afterward.

March 16, 2021 Women's Suffrage
By Nancy Garner, Ph.D. Wright State Professor

April 20, 2021 The Life and Times of John H Patterson
By Jim Charters, Dayton History

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