



The Curator

The newsletter of Centerville-Washington History

Director's Thoughts

By Cheryl Meyer



This is one of those times that putting my thoughts down on paper has become quite a challenge. I have had amazing experiences here and have met some incredible people but it is time for me to pass on the torch. I have made a decision that has not been

easy but has been one that I have been considering for some time. I will be retiring from being your director of Centerville-Washington History at the end of this year. I am entering a new chapter in my life called "Francesca, Eli and Charlotte." These beautiful grandchildren are calling my name and I wish to answer.

Looking back on the last several years, I do so with a smile on my face. Our Board of Trustees and staff are incredible people. They continually find ways to pursue our mission of connecting the community to its heritage. The time they give to our organization has given Centerville-Washington History a voice in the community.

Our membership is strong and supportive . . . the importance of remembering who we are and what we stand for is always at the forefront. I am in awe of the significance of the local history of our community, proud of the early people who decided to settle here, and finally, proud to have called Centerville-Washington History my home away from home.

I have found that learning about the past can help to understand the present and, finally, can guide us to predict the future. We have a strong *sense of community* here and I am so happy to have been part of it.

I care deeply for our organization. Thank you for your friendship and support.

Fondly,
Cheryl

Presidents Letter

By Ed Ross, President

We are excited about the new uptown restaurants and the construction which has directly affected our museums in many positive ways.

At the Walton House, we worked with the City over the past year to make changes to our backyard, move our chicken house, and add ADA-compatible sidewalks and landscaping to our yard. This was done to facilitate the new rear public parking lot behind Franklin Street businesses. Even though it made for drastic changes to our familiar property, we see good things as a result. Instead of our driveway to Franklin Street, we can now enter and exit from a safe point on the extended Virginia Avenue. We also have a new large open backyard, usable for various events with lots of parking.

At the Asahel Wright Museum, our backyard has been opened up, and landscaped, and will become a city park. The surrounding parking lots have been improved, sidewalks added, and easy entryways to more parking.

From the beginning, we decided to work with the City to help move the overall project forward, and we are pleased with the results. These uptown changes have been disruptive in the short term, but we believe they will benefit the entire community while preserving the historical sense of place.



New mural on the wall of Meridien Restaurant



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



I am currently healing from a recent surgery, so "EYE" will see you in the next edition! Until then, I wish you a very special holiday season with your loved ones.

Education Corner

By Carrie Burns, Education Coordinator

If you have driven through Uptown Centerville over the past couple of months, you might have noticed the changes in and around the backyard of the Asahel Wright House and the Walton House. During the past few months, many conversations have started with "Did you see what they are doing today?" Having front-row seats to all the new brick sidewalks, curbs and parking lots has been exciting to watch! Amidst all the excitement, I have had my eyes on the progress in order to remain as informed, and thus flexible, for navigating the routes of students on our school tours. Let me share some challenges that ran alongside the excitement.

As you may remember, the Chicken House was moved over the summer onto a new foundation with a new South-facing orientation. At the beginning of school, it was unknown if the sidewalk around the beloved farm life portion of our tour would be complete in time for the fall tours starting in October. It was thrilling at the end of September to return the farm life artifacts to their rightful places in the Chicken House just in time for the start of tours.

For the most part, the construction at the Asahel Wright House only impacted my walk into work. However, one morning a couple of weeks ago, I walked in to see lots of trucks and machinery removing the asphalt right next to the Asahel Wright House for repaving. Yikes! Immediately I was mentally rerouting how to get the 75+ students in and around our museum safely. Needless to say, tours that day were noisier than usual at the Asahel Wright

House, and the classes walked a few extra steps to avoid the parking lot. Despite it all, the students that day were super engaged and excited to be "traveling back in time" in our museums.

As I write this, our final school tours of the 2023 fall season are this week. Imagine my delight to write to the teachers and let them know that students can now be dropped off right next to the Asahel Wright House! The construction around Walton House is close to being complete and it is going to be great. We love bringing students into our museums and getting to "travel back in time" with them while sharing the history of our community.

A huge thank you to all of our fall tour guides for sharing your time and knowledge with the school children.





Ghostwalk on Main

This year's Ghostwalk on Main continued to be a successful way to share local history with residents. We welcomed 210 guests who followed guides on a walking tour around Uptown Centerville with stops to hear actors portraying historical figures. This year groups went inside three historic buildings on the tour. Thank you to our many volunteers who made the evening a lot of fun!



Tours stopped at the Andrew Vincent house



Eric Ulliman portrays Benjamin Robbins at Routsong Funeral Home



Jeff Ulliman portrays Joseph Nutt at Clarence Nutt House



HOLIDAY HOURS

The Museums will be closed from December 20 to January 2 for a Holiday Break. We will reopen on January 3.

Welcome New Members!

Michael Ben
Jarod Christman
Steve & Susan Haller
Gary & Pam Smiga

In Sympathy

Donna Clark, passed away on September 18, 2023, at age 92. She was a member since 2003 and served CWH as a valued board member and education volunteer.

Rev. Edgar Nutt passed away on September 9, 2023, at age 96. He was a member since 1993.

Donald Nutt passed away on October 24, 2023, at age 91. He was a member since 1991.

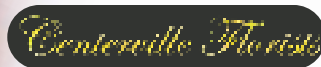
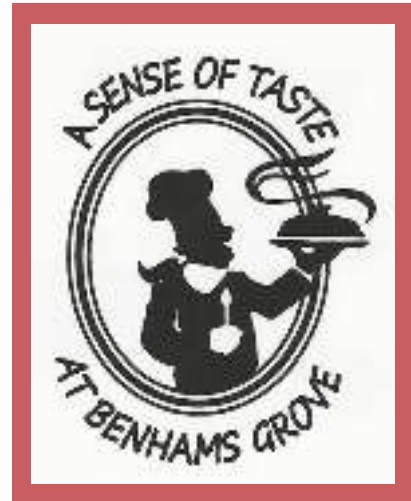
Both Donald and Edgar were direct descendants of Centerville co-founder Aaron Nutt.

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Philly Pretzel Factory
Bill's Donuts

Manna
Yankee Trace
City BBQ
Greek Street

Agave & Rye
Graeter's Ice Cream
Centerville Courtyard
Meridien

Donna Clark

By Marian Sensenbaugh

Centerville-Washington History lost a long-time and valuable member with the passing of Donna Clark on September 18th at the age of 92.

From the very beginning of her membership, she was an active volunteer, taking part in numerous areas with an "I can do that" attitude. Her artistic talent and flair for decorating were visible at Victorian Teas, Volunteer Dinners, and other social events. Donna created miniatures that depicted life in the past. A one room schoolhouse and a detailed general store had a place of honor in the Schoolhouse.

Donna began her involvement by offering to illustrate our two books written by Ferne Reilich, "Down the Lane" and "The Old Tree". Her drawings were meticulous in detail and brought the historical passages to life. The books are still used in Centerville classrooms today. Donna served a long tenure on the Board of Trustees. Her time spent on the Educational Committee was her favorite. She gave yearly tours of the Walton House to all third-grade classes. Her love of history also allowed her to be an integral part of developing the Summer Workshop programs.

Donna donated many things, but the item that will be remembered most is the bell outside the school. It was the dinner bell from her family's farm. At her house, the bell was rung whenever her favorite football team, Michigan, scored a touchdown. Today it is rung when students enter the schoolhouse for classes. Now, each toll is a reminder of Donna and her love of Centerville History.



Questions and Answers

At this year's membership dinner, we had guests reminisce about several questions that we would share in upcoming editions of The Curator. Here is one question and a few guests answers:

What was your favorite recreational activity when you were a child? What time frame was that?

- Hylda Strange said that her favorite activity was roller skating in the late 1940s and early 1950s.
- Another guest said, "I liked to play with my dolls, make clothes for them" - during the '50s.
- Ron Dickman remembered enjoying summers at his grandparent's farm in northern Ohio.
- Playing cards was another favorite pastime. (1947-1952)

Centerville-Washington History MONTHLY SPEAKER SERIES

2023-2024

Free and open to the public!

3rd TUESDAYS at RecPlex West Theater
965 Miamisburg Centerville Rd.

Reception 6:30 pm Program 7:00 pm

January 16, 2024

Paul Cooper

Frontier Between the Miamis: Pioneers in Ohio 1783-1800

February 20, 2024

Ed Ross

Ida Weller - A Woman Ahead of Her Time

March 19, 2024

Ed Roach - National Park Service

Post-1908 Trip into the Wright Brothers' 'Clunky' Business Affairs

April 16, 2024

Rosemary Thunder Schwoebel

*A Vietnam Memoir - Adventures of an American
Red Cross 'Donut Dolly' 1968-1969*

May 21, 2024

Billy Ring, Miamisburg Fire Dept. Capt. (Ret.)

July 1986 - Miamisburg Railroad Chemical Tank Car Fire

CentervilleWashingtonHistory.org
Donations welcome and appreciated.

A SENSE OF TASTE

Our annual fundraiser was a wonderful success as the community had fun getting together to enjoy good food while supporting Centerville-Washington History. A big thanks to our staff, board and members for their hard work and individual contributions!



Trivia Challenge!

How Much Do You Know About Montgomery County & Washington Township

By Phil Kern, CWH Trustee

- Q. How many townships are in Montgomery County?
- Q. Who was Montgomery County named after?
- Q. Who was Washington Township named after?
- Q. How many townships, in the State of Ohio, are named Washington Township?
- Q. Prior to being called Centerville, what other names were used for the location?

- Q. Who were the early settlers of Centerville-Washington Township?
- Q. In what year did the first settlers arrive in Centerville-Washington Township?
- Q. Who was the first doctor to settle in Centerville-Washington Township?
- Q. How many early school buildings were initially erected in Washington Township?
- Q. What other hamlets were located in Washington Township?

Look for the answers in the spring Curator!

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW! HISTORY NOT TAUGHT IN CENTERVILLE SCHOOLS

By Phil Kern, CWH Trustee

Hiram Strong was a Colonel in the 93rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. He died of wounds received on September 19, 1863, during the battle of Chickamauga. He was an unlikely soldier but a good one, a natural leader without a natural inclination to earn fame or solve problems through killing and maiming his fellow man.

He was born in Centerville, Ohio in 1825. He graduated from Miami University in 1846 and was admitted to the bar in 1849. He was as unlikely a lawyer as he had been a soldier; he was bashful, slow, and hesitating in speech, quiet and retiring.

He overcame his disabilities to develop a large and lucrative law practice. There was a generous aspect to his personality that gave him empathy for his clients, and he soon developed a reputation as a peacemaker and problem solver. He practiced for four years with William C. Bartlett and then formed a nine-year association with Lewis B. Gunckel in 1853.

On August 5, 1862, Hiram volunteered in the Union Army for three years of service with the 93rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He did this not out of a desire for military life or ambition, but out of a sense of duty to his community and the common good, giving up his home family and a successful law practice.

When he entered the army, Hiram had no military knowledge and had to learn "on the job." He adapted well and rose through the ranks. In July 1863, he asked for and was granted a twenty-day period of sick leave and returned home until August 14. He had considered resigning his commission citing disappointment with the lack of progress in the War and his own health problems. But each time his sense of duty strengthened his resolve to remain true to the course of his three-year service commitment.

Col. Strong returned to the War and on August 17, led the 93rd OVI on a march to Alabama and established camp in Lookout Valley and awaited further orders. By September 18th, the 93rd Ohio had joined with other forces of the Army of the Cumberland, under Gen. William Rosecrans, at Chickamauga Creek in northern Georgia, and engaged in heavy combat. The next day, in battle with Gen. Braxton Bragg's Confederate forces Col. Hiram Strong was mortally wounded by an enemy bullet.

Hiram died on October 7 and his body was returned to Dayton and on October 12, 1863, he was interred at Woodland Cemetery.

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