



Centerville- Washington History

The Curator

The newsletter of Centerville-Washington History

Director's Thoughts

By Cheryl Meyer

Fall is in the air. The sound of school bells, crunching of leaves, the smell of bonfires and, of course, OSU football, are all evidence that we are getting close to the end of the year. I have been fortunate enough to have been part of Centerville-Washington History for many years. I love what I do and look forward to coming to work every day to the Walton House Museum.

The Walton House is a beautiful structure. As referenced from "A Sense of Place", Henry Reese is believed to be the builder and original owner of this house, which was built around 1838. He purchased the original lot from Benjamin Robbins, one of Centerville's Founding Fathers. Henry Reese sold the house to Zenos Hines, a carpenter and plasterer. In May of 1862, Hines sold the house for \$300 to Henry Beck. At that point, the house saw a succession of owners. William E. and Miriam Walton purchased the house on July 19, 1927. It remained in their possession for 44 years.

The house is similar in design and construction to many stone houses in early Centerville. The double front doors are a style found mainly in Virginia and Maryland. The original portion of the house had two rooms with a wall dividing it in the middle and a door making both rooms accessible. Six more rooms were added to the house in future years and the wall separating the two front rooms was removed to create a 30 foot living room.

In 1971, the estate of Miriam S. Walton gave the house to Centerville-Washington History and with the help of many members and volunteers, the house was brought back to life.

Please come and visit the Walton House Tuesday through Friday from 12pm-4pm and see this local treasure first hand. It is truly a piece of history.

Have a great fall!



Presidents Letter

By Ed Ross, President

The year is rushing by and the pandemic is winding down...or is it?

With the assumption that most of us have been vaccinated we have decided to bring back "A Sense of Taste" for the seventh year.

Despite the challenges many restaurants have faced, we have a full roster of great food purveyors again. Besides our

"regulars" we will introduce

Yankee Trace, Tuscany Pizza and Boosalis Bakery this year. Burgundy Chic Boutique will be displaying a wide array of items from their store and "Eddie the Sax Man" will again be our musical entertainment.

We are reducing the ticket sales and spacing the tables further apart. Other than that, it will be the Taste as normal. As we usually sell all of our tickets, with the reduced number of tickets this year, I recommend getting your tickets quickly.

Museum operations are back to normal hours, and we are again welcoming visitors. The Americana festival brought hundreds of people through the Asahel Wright Museum. The parade float this year was instead three vintage fire trucks thanks to coordination by Bill Gaul.

We have 5 new board members who have joined working committees and have lots of great new ideas. You will have a chance to meet them at the Taste. We're looking forward to our Fall programs (and cooler weather) like the Ghost Walk, and hopefully school tours and the Holiday Walk.

See you at "A Sense of Taste!"



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

A Curator's Heart



Every aspect of being a curator is thrilling. I love the unexpected surprises each day brings. . .

A couple of days after the Americana Festival, there was a knock on my locked door. I pulled it open to a very startled man named Mike. He traveled here from Chicago to visit ancestors' graves in the Sugarcreek Cemetery and some local sites. He was surprised

and happy the Nutt Cottage was open.

He is "Centerville royalty", a descendent of Aaron Nutt. He connects to Aaron's son Levi through his paternal grandmother.

Mike spent two hours absorbing more history. I walked him to the corner of Ridgeway and Maple to show him the site of the four-generation homestead: Aaron's log cabin, later son Joseph's frame house, and finally Clarence's existing beautiful home. His son Lawrence lived here until 1970. I also walked him into the nearby cemetery to show him more family resting places.

Mike eventually plans to travel to New Jersey for additional genealogy. We may see him again! When asked about his day, he replied, "Centerville was a very nice community and I am impressed that you preserved some of these old homes through the centuries. I hope they continue to exist for future generations to see."

He works in technology and finds it interesting when applied to ancestry. He says, "Many of us know we are Americans for generations, but when you work on your ancestry and learn about each generation's life, you develop a real appreciation for what our forefathers and mothers did and the sacrifices they made."

About a week later, I received an excited phone message from a woman needing information on an old farmhouse on Mad River Road. Her daughter lives across the street. When I called back, she screeched breathlessly, "We are on our way over!"

Minutes later, I opened the door to three disheveled women, eager to find out more. Kirby and Carolann are the front and back neighbors of the farmhouse in question. Kirby's mother Kary was visiting from Georgia and encouraged the two friends to investigate the history of the property.

Samuel and wife Rebecca Creager bought the land in 1834; the home was built shortly after. A springhouse, blacksmith shop, and barn were also built on the 50 acres.

Ever since Kirby and Carolann moved into their homes, located on former fields, they have been curious. Kirby

found a little vintage shoe in the dirt. The current owner of the old farmhouse discovered a bottle of chloroform hidden in a stairway ceiling.

Their enthusiasm was contagious. It spilled into a tour of the research center and discussing early life in the area.

Life as a curator doesn't get any better than this. Connecting people to our local history is not only my job, it is part of my heart.



Education Corner

By Melissa Wagner, Education Coordinator

Summer Youth Program

This summer, our community began a return to some of our familiar events and programs. After making adjustments to COVID guidelines, Centerville-Washington History was able to once again provide its popular and educational Summer Youth Program. The four workshops offered included "Stories in Stone", "Old Tyme Woodworking", "Summer Day of Work & Play", and "Bird Tweets". "Stories in Stone" encouraged the children to create stories after learning about the lives of early settlers and local stone homes. The participants of "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 sewing, to making lanterns and butter, participants got to walk in the footsteps of a child from the past. A new program, "Bird Tweets" allowed children to study and observe various Ohio birds, how they camouflage, build nests and fly in patterns. Children dissected owl pellets and took home creations of their very own. One mother told us that her daughter proclaimed it to be the best camp she has ever been to!

A big thank you to Ferne Reilich, Joellen Ulliman, Adam Zengel, Phil Kern, Bob Hutter, Marian Sensenbaugh, Cheryl Meyer, and Marilyn Williams for all your time and for making this program a success! You are appreciated!



Volunteer Request

We have volunteer opportunities for members in the following areas-

- Tour guides and general helpers for local elementary and middle school students
- History on the Go classroom helpers

In addition, we are accepting high school students for our Teen Volunteer Program.

Working with Centerville-Washington History is a great opportunity to gain an educational experience while providing a community service.

For more information about assisting with tours or our teen volunteer program please contact our Education Coordinator, Melissa Wagner at 937-291-2223 or melissacwh@sbcglobal.net.

Save the Date for a Ghostly Good Time

Centerville-Washington History and The Friends of Washington-Centerville Public Library, in partnership with the City of Centerville, the Heart of Centerville and Washington Township, invite you on a haunted history walk through Uptown Centerville.

Ghost Walk on Main is sure to be spooktacular fun!

Tour groups will be led by a storyteller guide.

Learn and be entertained by local history, hear spooky stories, and enjoy refreshments and drinks compliments of Heart of Centerville businesses.

This is a walking tour, starting at Benham's Grove, so make sure you wear comfortable shoes. New tour routes and reenactments are planned for 2021!

Participants must be age 21 or older. The event takes place Thursday, October 14th at scheduled evening intervals. Tickets go on sale September 13th and will be available online at

wclibrary.info/ghostwalk.

Proceeds from ticket sales benefit

Centerville-Washington History and Friends of Washington-Centerville Public Library. Please direct questions to Melissa at melissacwh@sbcglobal.net or call 937-291-2223.

Bet You Didn't Know!

By Phil Kern, CWH Vice President

Pledge of allegiance

The earliest known version of the Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy in 1892 and appeared in "The Youth's Companion" magazine. The words went like this:

"I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Today, these are the words to our current Pledge of Allegiance:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Welcome New Members!

Arthur Held

Bob and Kathy Hutter

Jeanette Schultz

In Sympathy

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of long-time member George Nelis who passed away July 12.

Thank you to our Business Members
Solid Rock Roofing • Tinnerman Insurance Agency
TOPOS • Antiques Village



Honored Benches

A bench is a place to sit and rest and perhaps enjoy the outdoors. Two very special benches face each other in the gardens of the Walton House and both were built by Adam Zengle. Vickie Bondi and her husband Phil were finally able to visit the bench placed in honor of Vickie's service to Centerville-Washington History when she retired as Executive Director in 2019. The family of Celia Himes Elliott gathered in the garden in July to dedicate a twin bench in recognition of their matriarch's contributions as a founding member of the historical society and to remember her life.



Medicinal Plants and Folk Remedies

By Joellen Ulliman, Curator



As the sun set on Friday evening, August 6, the public enjoyed an informative, fun presentation in the Walton House gardens, hosted by both Centerville-Washington History and Centerville-Washington Park District. The Walton House Museum was open before the formal program. Then,

amidst the gorgeous flowers, participants learned about botanical and medical remedies used by early settlers in this area. CWH educational coordinator Melissa Wagner and CWH lifetime member Martha Boice treated the crowd to a very unique side of local history. Martha gave people a tour of the Mulford botanical plant garden after the presentation. There was also a small exhibit of early medical supplies. Participants left amazed, smiling . . . and with a lot more knowledge.

Centerville-Washington History MONTHLY SPEAKER SERIES

2021-2022

Third Tuesday of the month

Free and open to the public!

Enjoy refreshments and historical education.

Donations welcome and appreciated.

****RecPlex West Theater (Rec West)**

965 Miamisburg Centerville Rd.

Reception 6:30 p.m.

Program 7:00 p.m.

October 19, 2021

Raymond Szymanski

Swamp Gas Revisited:

The True Story of the 1966 Michigan UFO

November 16, 2021

Paul Cooper

Japan Attacks Pearl Harbor:

December 7, 1941

January 18, 2022

Tony Kroeger

Hidden History of Dayton

February 15, 2022

Mike Williams

FDR's Confidential Crusader

March 15, 2022

Jim Miller

Warrior Two-Six: A Helicopter Pilot's Story

April 19, 2022

Andrew Walsh

Lost Dayton

May 17, 2022

General John Allen

The Future of Afghanistan,

Women's Rights and Role of Civil Society

****In person presentations are the goal for this series. However, presentations may shift to a digital format as needed. State and local health guidelines will be followed.**
CentervilleWashingtonHistory.org

History I'll Bet You Never Heard!

By Phil Kern, CWH Vice President



During the first half of the 19th century, a young barefooted missionary, in a sack cloth, roamed thru Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana & Illinois 'spreading good seeds and a new take on the kingdom of heaven'. His name was Johnny Chapman or better known as Johnny Appleseed.

He is credited with planting apple seeds in tree nurseries wherever he traveled and the seeds were left with a neighbor to tend

until Johnny returned. The nurseries' primary purposes were growing trees from the seeds that were later planted in orchards. The apples that Chapman favored for planting were small and tart or commonly called "spitters"—named for what you'd likely do if you took a bite of one, but this made them ideal for making hard cider and applejack. This was a far more valuable crop than edible apples.

Most likely, the settlers that came into the Centerville/Washington Township area during the early 19th century brought apple trees with them to plant and used the apples to make apple cider for consumption. Since there was a limited availability of wine, beer, coffee, and tea in the backwoods country, cider became the favorite drink and it was even preferred over water, due to the potential of dangerous bacteria in the water.

Unfortunately, in the 1920's, during the Prohibition era, FBI agents made their rounds into the orchards and mercilessly tore them down to prevent the people from making 'hard cider' or homemade hooch! This nearly killed America's connection to hard cider as this beverage had deep roots in the country's history and has only recently seen a resurgence in popularity.

Today, we find numerous types of apples at our grocery stores or at nearby farmers markets. During Chapman's time in the 19th century, there were more than 14,000 distinct apple varieties grown across the United States, but today, there are only about 100 varieties of apples that are commercially grown.

A humorous story from colonial New England: '...an eligible young lady would try to peel an apple in a single strip and toss it over her shoulder and then peer nervously to see what letter the peel formed on the floor: this would be the initial of her future husband....!'

We all have heard the old saying "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" and there is plenty of truth to the saying. A large apple has about 150 calories and 5 grams of fiber per serving and the fruit's polyphenols and fiber help balance bacteria in the stomach. One thing though, we shouldn't peel it, as two thirds of the antioxidants and much of the fiber are found in the skin.

HAPPY EATING!



"A Sense of Taste"

Thursday, September 9, 2021

@Benham's Grove from 5-8 pm

Tickets available now at
the Walton House or
centervillewashingtonhistory.org/a-sense-of-taste

This culinary event will
feature tastes from:

NCR Country Club, Old Bag of Nails Pub,
Tuscany Pizza, Yankee Trace,
Boosalis Bakery, The Melting Pot,
Frickers, Station House, Popcorn Terry,
Philly Pretzel Factory,
Graeter's Ice Cream, Angel's Food Cakes,
Esther Price Candies, Randall Residence,
Bethany Village & Bill's Donuts

PLUS- visit a booth by
Burgundy Chic Bolutique!

Friends • Good Food • Fun • Laughter
Cash Bar • Edde the Sax Guy
50/50 Raffle

Rolling Donut Bus

By Phil Kern, CWH Vice President

A September 2009 article in the Dayton Daily News indicated that a local Centerville resident found and purchased this 1960 VW Bus that had been customized as a 'rolling donut vehicle'. It was outfitted with a serving counter, serving windows, generator, doughnut maker, and all the stuff necessary for selling coffee and donuts. During the early 1960's, it could be found at the local GM plants where factory workers were served hot coffee and donuts.

This vehicle was found in 2005 after sitting idle for over 45 years and was purchased for \$2,269.00 at an auction by Jay D. Tyree, owner of the Rolling Donut Company in Springfield Ohio. The overall condition, at that time, was very good, and after the oil and spark plugs were changed and the engine was cleaned up, it started right off. Next, a new paint job was completed and new tires were installed and it was ready for displaying at local car shows and, of course, the Dayton *Concours d'Elegance* held at Carillon History's park. Unfortunately, this vehicle was sold in early 2020, at an auction, for \$123,200.00 and resides in someone's car collection. Location unknown!

I'll bet this would have been a great asset for Bill's Donuts! Just think, they would be able to come to your office or your parties and serve "Bill's - World Famous Donuts" (at least we think so) coffee & donuts.

Does anyone remember this vehicle at GM plants or any other Dayton area manufacturing plant? If so, would you consider sharing your story for possible publication in a future Curator. Please send any stories or memories to Susan at susancwths@sbcglobal.net.

Adam Zengel

By Jerry Strange, CWH Trustee

Super heroes are all the rage in movies these days from Superman to Black Panther to Wonder Woman. They can go faster than a speeding bullet, jump tall buildings and bend steel girders in the pursuit of justice. In short, they are societies protection from the evil in the world.



You may not be aware of him, but the historical society has its own super hero – he goes by the name Adam Zengel. I will admit that Adam can't go faster than a speeding bullet or bend steel girders with his bare hands, but when it comes to protecting the buildings of the society from the ravages of time, Adam is the man. The toilet at the Walton House isn't working, Adam is there to fix it; a window in the Nutt Cottage is stuck shut, Adam is there; the chicken coop needs painting, you guessed it, Adam; and before the paint dries he's off to solve another problem. And, unlike the movie super heroes, he does it with a smile and no one gets killed.

Adam has been saving our buildings for over twenty years and he doesn't show any signs of slowing down. I don't know where he gets his energy; maybe it's Kryptonite, maybe it's spinach; in any case, he is our historical society's "super hero."

So, Superman can leap over tall buildings, but can he fix a broken toilet or rewire an electrical switch in the time it takes to say Super Hero? Adam can. Ultimately, the rages of time will win, but not on Adam's watch.

Note: When the society obtained ownership of the Nutt cottage in 2003, it was in very bad shape and in need of some serious restoration. Adam, with help from Tommy Williamson and Dave Hufnagle, was responsible for bringing the Nutt Cottage up to code.

