



Fact Sheet

May 2012

Mission: “To preserve and share Oberlin’s unique heritage and to make our community a better place to live, learn, work and visit.”

History: The roots of the Oberlin Heritage Center date back to the Oberlin Village Improvement Society, founded in 1903 by a group of concerned citizens to beautify and improve the town, and the Oberlin Historical Society, organized in 1960 to preserve the Little Red Schoolhouse and the Monroe House. The two volunteer groups merged in 1964 as the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization (O.H.I.O.). The organization has grown tremendously since hiring two professional staff members in 1993, Pat Murphy (Executive Director) and Mary Anne Cunningham (Assistant to the Director). In 2005 the organization was renamed “The Oberlin Heritage Center.” (It retains Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization as its legal name). Today, the Oberlin Heritage Center is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is widely recognized as a model small museum, historical society and historic preservation organization. It offers educational programs and special events both at its complex of historic sites and throughout the community, often in collaboration with other organizations.

Governance: The non-profit 501(c) (3) organization is governed by an 18-member Board of Trustees. Officers include President Walter Edling, First Vice-President Nicholas R. Jones, Second Vice- President Robert B. Calhoun, Secretary Gail Wood and Treasurer Cathe Radabaugh. The organization’s strategic plan is available upon request.

Facilities: The Oberlin Heritage Center includes the historic Monroe House (1866), Jewett House (1884) and Little Red Schoolhouse (1836-1837).

Tours: Guided tours of the three sites of the Oberlin Heritage Center are offered on a walk-in basis on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. History walks, focusing on topics of various historical themes, are offered regularly during warm weather months. All tours and history walks may be arranged at other times by appointment. Check our website, send an e-mail, or call for additional information.

Office and Museum Store: The organization’s business office and the museum store are located in the Monroe House; open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and at other times by appointment. The museum store includes a unique assortment of Oberlin history-themed books and mementos.

Oberlin Heritage Center Resource Center: Our library is located in the Monroe House and features a vast array of reference materials relating to Oberlin's history including genealogical information on early Oberlin families, historic house inventories, and building preservation resources. If you would like to use our Resource Center, please make an appointment by contacting us at (440) 774-1700.

Publications: Members receive the Oberlin Heritage Center’s annual report, advance notices of special events and upcoming programs, and they also may opt to receive our E-Gazette newsletter on a monthly basis. Publications include *Oberlin Origins and Onward!* by Bentley Boyd (2011); *Investing in Community: The History and Legacy of the Nord Family of Ohio* by Martha M. Pickrell (2004), *Sarah Margru Kinson: The Two Worlds of an Amistad Captive* by Marlene D. Merrill (2003), the *Biking Tour of Historic Oberlin* (2003), the children’s activity book *My Oberlin History and Adventure Book* (1998), and *Westwood: A Historical and Interpretive View of Oberlin’s Cemetery* (1997).

Research: Current research projects underway include the Oberlin Oral History Project, Westwood Gravestone Inventory Project, and the citywide Architectural and Historical Inventory of Oberlin Buildings (in cooperation with the City Historic Preservation Commission).

Recent Awards & Accomplishments: Ohio Museums Association's Visual Communication Award for the Oberlin History comic book "*Oberlin: Origins and Onward!*" (2012); Ohio Local History Alliance (OLHA) History Outreach Excellence Award for the Oberlin Heritage Center's Summer Camps for Kids programs (2011); Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations (OANO) Standards for Excellence Certification (2011); OLHA Individual Achievement Award to James W. White, Past President of the Oberlin Heritage Center Board (2010); Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums (OAHSM) History Outreach Excellence Award for Morgan Street Bridge Project Restoration (2009); Chemical Breakthrough Award from the American Chemical Society's Division of the History of Chemistry (2009); *Preserve America Steward* designation from the United States Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (2009); OAHSM History Outreach Excellence Award (2008) for "*Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage*" a series of community programs presented for Black History Month (February 2008); OAHSM Individual Achievement Awards (2007) to Mary Anne Cunningham (Assistant to the Director) and Prue Richards (Collections Assistant); OAHSM Individual Achievement Awards (2006) to Pat and Dick Holsworth (Honorary Trustees; Pat also is Past President of the Board and a retired OHC staff member); Oberlin Heritage Center selected to be part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *Partner Places* program (2006); Pat Murphy named "Oberlinian of the Year" by the Oberlin News-Tribune (2006); Accredited by the American Association of Museums (2005); OAHSM Individual Achievement Award (2005) to Cathe Radabaugh, Past President of the Board; OAHSM History Outreach Excellence Award (2005) for *Investing in Community: The History of the Nord Family of Ohio*, by Martha Pickrell; OAHSM History Outreach Excellence Award (2004) for *Sarah Margru Kinson: The Two Worlds of an Amistad Captive*, by Marlene D. Merrill; Designated a facility on the National Park Services' National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (2004); Preservation Hero annual award from Downtown Ohio/Heritage Ohio (2004); Prepared nomination for the National Trust for Historic Preservation's selection of Oberlin as one of its Dozen Distinctive Destinations (2004).

Funding: The organization is funded by memberships, contributions, endowment income, investments, grants, special projects and planned gifts. Foundation supporters include the Community Foundation of Lorain County, the Richard R. Hallock Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, The Nord Family Foundation, Nordson Corporation Foundation, Ohio Humanities Council, and the Stocker Foundation.

Members: At the heart of the organization are more than 740 individual, family, business and organizational members from Oberlin and elsewhere in Lorain County, as well as from across the country. Endowed life members have made a special lasting gift to our endowment that provides on-going operating support. Members receive free admission to OHC's historic sites tour and neighborhood history walks, a reduced rate on any program for which there is a fee as well as discounts on museum store purchases, and additional benefits at history museums and historic sites around the country through the Time Travelers Network. New members are always welcome.

Staff: The organization's staff includes Executive Director Pat Murphy, Assistant to the Director Mary Anne Cunningham, Business Manager Bethany Hobbs, Collections Assistant Prue Richards, Education and Tour Coordinator Liz Schultz, Museum Housekeeper Deloris Bohn, and student interns. Tommy Trice (Buildings and Grounds Assistant) is a part-time staff member funded through Mature Services, Inc.

Volunteers: Over two hundred volunteers of all ages and backgrounds assist in many ways including giving tours, doing research, helping with events, working in collections care and cataloging, serving on committees, taking photos, gardening, assisting with public relations and more. New volunteers are always needed.

For More Information

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