

THE Local Historian

OHIO LOCAL
HISTORY ALLIANCE

Inspire. Connect. Educate.



Congratulations 2015 Alliance Award Winners!

The 2015 winners of the Ohio Local History Alliance's Outstanding Achievement Awards pose with their certificates after the Awards Luncheon at the Annual Meeting. Photo courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.

By Wendy Zucal, Executive
Director, Dennison Railroad
Depot Museums System,
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Since 1960, the Ohio Local History Alliance, in partnership with the Ohio History Connection, has led the state in recognizing excellent projects, programs, and publications produced by Ohio's local historical societies, museums, and related organizations. In addition, the Alliance is proud to recognize individuals who have contributed greatly to the field of local history. This year the Alliance board presented 17 Outstanding Achievement Awards at the annual Awards Luncheon during the 2015 Annual Meeting. These awards recognize exceptional projects and people that have made an impact by inspiring, connecting, and educating their audiences in Ohio.

Media and Publications

■ ***Past Pursuits: A Newsletter of the Special Collections Division of the ASCPL, Akron-Summit County Public Library, Special Collections Division, Akron.*** An overriding goal of the library's special collections division has been to share and

provide access to their large and comprehensive collection of local history and genealogy materials. *Past Pursuits* has been published by the Special Collections Division since 2002. Originally conceived as an outreach tool, content has expanded to include original scholarly articles on a variety of local history topics with unique collection items and genealogical history. Today, the newsletter has over 1,000 subscribers and is considered an outstanding family and local history publication.

■ ***A Magical Journey into Wadsworth's History, Wadsworth City Schools, Wadsworth.*** In 2006, principal Roger Havens discovered there was no common curriculum in use for third graders to learn local history. He proposed the development of a study book, a concept overwhelmingly approved by teachers. Havens partnered with a committee of local historians to establish content. With the help of the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, the book went to print and was used by teachers for the first time in
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2008. Since then, the book has been used in tandem with field trips to historic sites and museums and downtown walking tours.

■ ***Sneak Peek – Virtual Tours, Dennison Railroad Depot Museums System, Dennison.*** In an effort to attract more visitors to all three museums, the Dennison Railroad Depot Museum, Historic Schoenbunn Village, and the Uhrichsville Clay Museum, the museum leadership team worked with a local videographer to create short, virtual tours to give potential visitors a “sneak peek” into what was behind the front door. Following production, an intensive social media survey gathered feedback that was incorporated into the virtual tours before their final postings.

Exhibits and Displays

■ ***The Wonders of Camp Arrowhead, Lillian E. Jones Museum, Jackson.*** This exhibit documents the history of a premier summer camp for boys in Jackson that ultimately impacted not only the lives of hundreds of young men, but also their local communities and the nation. For the first time, the camp’s entire history was researched and made available to the public. Highlights include the camp’s

construction and its many years of operation as both a Boy Scout and Girl Scout camp. This is especially significant because the camp closed in the 1970s and only two original buildings remain standing.

■ ***Bricks, Barrel Vaults & Beer: The Architectural Legacy of Cincinnati Breweries, The Betts House Research Center, Cincinnati.*** The growing interest in beer brewing and a local brewer’s adaptive reuse of a 19th century brewery made this an ideal time for The Betts House to delve into Cincinnati’s beer heritage. To recognize and honor this rich history, this original exhibit explores the fascinating tale of brewing through technology and architecture coupled with creative programming that included receptions, such as “Drinking about Museums,” and home brewing demonstrations. The exhibit enabled The Betts House to increase awareness of their museum, while offering a new glimpse into Cincinnati history.

■ ***The Pity of War: Words and Images of World War I, Quaker Heritage Center of Wilmington College and Partners, Wilmington.*** Six students in the Introduction to Public History class began with a simple premise: create an exhibit recognizing

the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I that aligned with the Quaker Heritage Center’s mission. Students worked as a team to draft the exhibit text, create graphic identity, design the floor plan, and select artifacts and images for display. An interdisciplinary approach added a wide array of public programming to compliment the exhibit including lectures, poetry readings, and choral performances. This project is a model of collaborative college-community synergy.

■ ***Come Fly with Us, A History of the Simplex Aircraft Corporation, 1927-32, The Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum, Defiance.*** This exhibit used a unique mix of artifacts and media including photographs, artwork, magazine, brochures, ads, and invoices to tell the story of the Simplex Corporation, who created the first commercially-viable aviation products manufactured in Northwest Ohio. The exhibit outlines the historically significant impacts the company had on Defiance, the nation, and the aviation industry, succeeding on a limited budget within a very small space.
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Public Programming

■ **Abraham Lincoln Funeral Train 150th Anniversary, Bradford Ohio Railroad Museum, Bradford.** This public program was presented to commemorate the 150th anniversary Lincoln Funeral Train and Funeral Train Procession in Bradford. The event brought together local history students, Civil War buffs, and Lincoln reenactors for an informative program on events leading up to the assassination and along the funeral route. History students at the Bradford high school presented different aspects of the assassination and funeral train as well. The program tied local, state, and national railroad history together in one community event.

■ **Lincoln at Cleveland 2015, Cleveland Public Library, Commandery of the State of Ohio MOLLUS, Cuyahoga County Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, and Old Stone Church, Cleveland.** Lincoln at Cleveland 2015 was a four month commemoration of Lincoln and his final visit to Cleveland when his body laid in state. Throughout the four months, remarkable exhibits and events paying tribute to Lincoln included documents, books, photographs, and artifacts encompassing the final days. Events included receptions, a living history day, and multi-media presentations. This project received 14 resolutions and recognitions from everyone from city council members to congressmen.

■ **Not on our Watch: The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue of 1858, Kelton House Museum and Garden, Columbus.** As part of their efforts to create new Underground Railroad educational programming, the Kelton House created a period drama based on book *The Town that Started the Civil War* by Nat Brandt. Performed by members of the Kelton House Underground Railroad Community Advisory Committee, the play commemorates the dramatic events that occurred in Wellington and Oberlin around the capture of John Prince, a runaway slave, and the response of local anti-slavery students and townspeople who freed him from jail. The production was part of the museum's Black History Month programming and received outstanding responses from its audiences.

■ **Lorain City Grade 3, Lorain Historical Society, Lorain.** The Education Committee of the Lorain Historical Society created a history booklet, "Discover Lorain," that

aligned with Common Core standards for use in classrooms and was designed to bring students to the historical society. Using the booklets, students match what they've learned about history in school to artifacts in the museum they view during field trips. Lorain City Schools adopted the book into the third grade curriculum, and in its first year of use over 500 students visited the historical society's new building.

■ **Greenville Treaty Line Marker and Sycamore Tree Dedication, Shelby County Historical Society and Fort Loramie Historical Society, Sidney/Fort Loramie.** Two area historical societies and area schools created a partnership to highlight a significant event in their community that shaped Ohio and American history – the signing of the Greenville Treaty. The group located the beginning point of the Greenville Treaty Line and placed a marker at this point. They also planted a sycamore tree there to commemorate the original tree that was the original marker of the starting point of the treaty line. The tree's dedication included speakers who discussed the Greenville Treaty from a variety of vantage points.

■ **Time Travelers History Explorer Program, Warren County Historical Society, Lebanon.** This weekly summer program took children back in time to explore a different history theme. Students toured the museum, discovered artifacts, and participated in hands-on activities, games, and crafts. They created their own personalized tavern signs, cardboard Shaker boxes, simulated their own archaeological dig, and played 19th century games. The program has helped the historical society increase attendance and memberships, while providing local children with a unique summer break experience.

Individual Achievement Awards

■ **Carole Wise and Nora Basinger, Putnam County Historical Society, Kalida.** These two are the "dynamic duo" of the Putnam County Historical Society. Carole has served as the museum's curator since 1989. She has pioneered many museum programs, such as "Hats Off to History" and a mini museum in a trunk that she takes to nursing homes for those unable to visit the museum. Her educational background has assisted with developing tours for schools and scouts, as well as in

creating curriculum guides for teachers. In addition, she has coordinated an oral history program that now numbers over 500 interviews, and she writes a regular feature for the society's newsletter. Nora has been the registrar since 1991. She is the resident artist and idea person, who excels at making contacts for the museum and remembering every detail about every artifact.

■ **Kenneth Conklin, Upton Association, Warren.** Kenneth was one of the original board members of the Upton Association who fought vigorously to preserve the home of suffragette and women's rights advocate Harriet Taylor Upton. He was instrumental in taking the home from a cluster of rental units slated for demolition to a successfully restored house. Kenneth was also instrumental in getting former First Lady Barbara Bush to visit Warren to see the house after its restoration was complete. As Vice President of the Upton Association, he spearheaded the efforts to bring the ashes and cemetery marker of Harriet Taylor Upton back home to Warren from California.

■ **Kenneth M. Libben, Mohican Historical Society & Cleo Redd Fisher Museum, Loudonville.** Kenneth has a number of accomplishments that demonstrate his leadership of and dedication to his community. Through his leadership, he has transformed the Cleo Redd Fisher Museum into a community treasure, and he has gone far beyond the museum's walls to spark community history projects that create an awareness and appreciation of local history. Kenneth has restored a circa 1840s cabin, co-chaired a bicentennial celebration, and published the book *Images of America – Loudonville*.

■ **Polle Young Miller, Waterville Historical Society, Waterville.** Polle served her community for over 30 years as an elementary school teacher, as a city councilwoman, and for the past 19 years as a member of the Waterville Historical Society. She has found a way to forge solid relationships between students, the city and community, and history. Her outstanding efforts in educating children have included developing historical walking tours, architectural scavenger hunts, and a suitcase museum. Through a multitude of creative government activities, she has been able to weave history with current events into the classroom.