



MUSEUM MESSAGE

Ohio's Oldest Museum April 2015
www.firelandsmuseum.org

Firelands Historical Society Reservations for May 20 Annual Dinner Meeting

The dinner meeting will be held at the Norwalk Eagles Club banquet room at 151 Cline Street on May 20 at 6:30 p.m. The menu is as follows: baked chicken, twice baked potato casserole, California blend w/cheese sauce vegetables, tossed salad w/3 assorted dressings, pies and beverage. The cost of the meal is \$15.00 per person.

The program "Prehistoric Ritual and Ceremony in the Huron Valley: The Archaeology of the Heckelman Site" will be presented by Brian Redman, curator and John Otis Hower Chair of Archaeology, at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

For five summers, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, in cooperation with the Firelands Archaeological Research Center, investigated the remains of an ancient ceremonial center on the Huron River near Milan, Ohio. Known today as the Heckleman site, this bluff top was the location of earthwork constructions that enclosed one area. The site was constructed as early as 2,600 years ago and was used for another 800 years. The last residents abandoned the bluff top about 600 years ago.

Payment must accompany reservation. Reservations may be made using the form printed below. Reservations and check are to be sent to the Firelands Historical Society, P.O. Box 572, Norwalk, Ohio 44857. The reservation deadline is Wednesday, May 13. If you are unable to come to the dinner, members may come for the annual meeting, followed by the program.

Please make _____ reservations for the Firelands Historical Society dinner meeting on Wednesday, May 20 at 6:30 p.m. Dinner cost - \$15.00. Enclosed is a check in the amount of _____

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____

**Please remember to send us your change of mailing address and E-mail.
Also, if you would like to have your newsletter sent by E-mail only, please let us
know. Send information of change to:
curator@firelandsmuseum.org.**

Up Coming Events

Saturday, May 2

Museum opens for the season with several new displays.

In honor of the centennial anniversary, 1915-2015, the Sally De Forest Chapter of the DAR is co-sponsoring an exhibit of American Revolutionary War items at Firelands Historical Society. Unique to this display is a rare ship's model made from whale bone. It was created by an American Revolutionary War prisoner on a moored British ship. The model came from the estate of Alfred P. Sloane, CEO and president of General Motors. Also displayed will be several items that were owned by George and Martha Washington, and the event will also include other items that will be marked for the occasion throughout the museum.

Also, new to the museum are sports memorabilia from St. Paul and Norwalk High Schools acknowledging their recent state championships.

Annual Picnic

June 17, 2015 at 6 p.m.

The annual picnic will be held on June 17 at the home of Mary Carabin, 2611 Old State Road, Norwalk. Her farm home is the first house on the right on Old State Rd going south, just off of Rt 250. There is a light at the intersection of Old State and Rt 250. Mary's farm has been in her family for 110 years and was purchased by her grandfather, Fred Lieber in 1905. Her home dates to about 1835.

Please bring a dish to share. Table service and beverages will be provided.

Garden Tour

Our annual garden tour is being planned for July 11 from 10 a.m to 4 p.m with the help of the Huron County Master Gardeners. Tickets will be \$10 to benefit the Firelands Historical Society. Watch for more details closer to the event.

Notice to All Members

Due to the need for more storage space, the board of trustees has decided to offer to our members all issues of the Firelands Pioneers for free, plus postage and handling, if mailed. These books give a wealth of information about the early Firelands area and its people. The issues available are the 3rd series from 1980 – 2000. Also, earlier issues – 1902, 1907, 1921, 1925, 1930, 1937 & index. Postage is \$7.00 for each set. If you just want to complete your set, postage is \$3.00 for one book, and 25 cents for each additional book.

Happenings

Historic U.S. Route 20 Signs

The City of Norwalk officially became part of the Historic US Route 20 Association as four road signs were unveiled on Friday, January 30 at 2 P.M. The ceremony took place at the corner of Church St. and West Main Street with members of city administration, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Firelands Historical Society in attendance. Bryan Farr, the founder and president of The Historic US Route 20 Association, traveled from Massachusetts and somehow avoided the Boston snow storm to be present at the unveiling.

US Route 20 is America's longest highway, a 3,365 mile journey through the nation's history and some of its most breathtaking wonders. It spans the continent through twelve states, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. The mission of the Historic US Route 20 Association is to identify and preserve the cultural importance of the inner cities, small towns, and rural communities along all present and former alignments of US Route 20 by promoting tourism and encouraging economic development. The mission is to be carried out through various community development programs, books, guide books, travel apps, visiting and coordinating with other non-profit organizations and working directly with the local towns to bring awareness of and connect what US Route 20 has in common with respect to their

locations. The new mobile app will feature "mom and pop" businesses, historic attractions & sites, lodging & dining, weather, and turn by turn directions to find and stay on US Historic Route 20. Such locations will also be featured on the website and in travel guides.

Norwalk's involvement began last summer when Bryan Farr, US Historic Route 20 founder and president, visited Norwalk and was invited to come back and give his presentation to the Firelands Historical Society. The October meeting at the Laning Young Research Center was enthusiastically supported by a standing room only crowd.

Following the meeting, the Firelands Historical Society officers and trustees passed a motion to investigate the purchase of Historic US Route 20 signs for Norwalk's portion of the highway. Two large signs were purchased for the entrances to Norwalk through the Visitors Bureau and two smaller signs were purchased for the entrances to the business district on behalf of the Firelands Historical Society by Christopher Hipp and John Schumm. The Norwalk City administration gave full support to the project and posted the signs.

Norwalk, proud of its rich history but always looking forward, is pleased to share its sites and attractions with visitors through its new membership in the Historic US Route 20 Association.



History of the Gilger and Moose Theater

Our last newsletter mentioned that Gene Widman built what is now our Laning-Building after a fire had destroyed the building in which he had housed his business. That building was the former Gilger and later the Moose Theater. This month we will cover some of the history of Gilger-Moose building.

The red brick building at 34 Monroe Street was built in 1903 by William G. Gilger who was a Norwalk jeweler and had been the manager of the Gardiner Music Hall in Norwalk. The land for the building was donated by Francis B. Case, a wealthy manufacturer of tobacco products and processor of the famous "Maple City" smoking tobacco. The new theater was to be built on Monroe Street near Case Avenue and next to the building built by the State of Ohio for the Armory. The armory building still stands and is used by the City of Norwalk for some of its recreation programs. The theatre had a balcony, two boxes on each side of the stage, and a gallery. Its outstanding characteristic was an unusually large stage which helped attract musicals and was said to have had the best pit orchestra between Cleveland and Chicago. Hundreds of musicals and plays were shown at the theater but none matched opening night on October 7, 1903. A thousand tickets had been sold for \$10.00 each and the elite of Norwalk society awaited the curtain to rise. The musical "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" was to be performed by a musical show group starring DeWolfe Hopper (one time husband of columnist, Hedda Hopper). But the train bringing the group from Chicago had been detained due to a heavy rain storm. Harkness Livery Stable awaited their arrival to haul the scenery to the theater. At 11 p.m. the 100-member cast and scenery finally arrived in Norwalk in the pouring rain. An hour later, the curtain opened.

The Gilger Theater also showed silent movies. During the early years, the local orchestra would establish the musical mood for whatever appeared on the screen, until the movie producers sent canned music with their silent movies that put them out of a job. One of the orchestra members was Harriet Graves Lawton who played the cornet and later served as one of our Firelands Museum hostesses in the 1950-1960's. Her cornet is now owned by the Firelands Museum. Mary Stewart, our board member relates that her mother, Mildred (Monnett) Laning, played the piano for silent movies and visiting vaudeville acts. Note: our Laning-Young building is in part named after her.

Living drama eventually gave way to movies with Joe Felter taking over from Mr. Gilger. Sometime after World War I, the building was sold to the Norwalk Moose Lodge who continued to operate the building as a movie house until the early 1930's when the building was sold to the Schine Movie chain. It ceased to exist after the Schine's new theater was built on West Main Street. The West Main theater opened on August 13, 1941.

Afterwards, the building was purchased by Jay Hargraves for his furniture warehouse. He used the back of the building. The front part of the building for several years was used by the Jerpes Co. who manufactured powdered detergent. Prior to February 6, 1959, an announcement in the Norwalk Newspaper reported that extensive remodeling and improvement was planned for the building. The improvement would include the installation of a second floor, new heating system, lighting, office and display quarters, as well as a modern loading well and dock in the alleyway on the east side of the huge structure. The remodeled building, in addition to serving as a warehouse for Mr. Widman, would also be used for manufacturing Widman products. Unfortunately on the afternoon of February 6, 1959, a welder's torch changed all these plans and the building was destroyed by fire. The total loss due to the fire was estimated at \$150,000.

The lot on which the old theater building was situated was purchased in 1982 by the Firelands Historical Society from Jay Hargraves and is now our large parking lot.

MOOSE
THEATRE NORWALK
Week Commencing Jan. 11, 1935

FRI. & SAT.-Mat. Sat. 2:30 Cont.-Winter Special 10c-15c
2 BIG FEATURES
Ben Lyon, Thelma Todd, Pert Kelton, Skeets Gallagher, Walter Catlett in
"Lightning Strikes Twice"
Also
HOOT GIBSON in **A MAN'S LAND**
ADDED ATTRACTION SATURDAY - VAUDEVILLE ON STAGE - 3:55-6:40-9:25

SUN., MON. and TUES. - - - Mat. Sun. 2:30 Cont.
SHIRLEY TEMPLE in
BRIGHT EYES
with James Dunn & Jane Darwell

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY - TWO BIG FEATURES
Gloria Swanson, John Boles, Douglas Montgomery in
MUSIC IN THE AIR
Also **DAMON RUNYON'S**
MILLION DOLLAR RANSOM
with Phillip Halmes, Edward Arnold, Mary Gordon



MOOSE THEATRE AND ARMORY, NORWALK, OHIO



Items of Interest

The National Park Service has put the Rush R. Sloane House, 403 E. Adams Street, Sandusky on the National Underground Railroad Network of Freedom. Rush Sloane was a life member of the Firelands Historical Society and also served as President of the society. He is best known as an abolitionist who worked to help the Underground Railroad. His home was a safe house for runaway slaves, and in 1852 he was accused of interfering with the Fugitive Slave Act. He was convicted and fined \$4,330.30, serious money back in the 1850s. The present owner of the house plans to turn it into a bed and breakfast. Sandusky Register 14 Nov 2014

We recently received from John Blakeman, President of the Ohio Prairie Association and biologist with the Huron-based Meadows Environments, information he has compiled about "The Prairies of the Original Firelands". If you are interested in reading the information, come to the Laning-Young building and you will find it in the book-rack on the desk. To contact Mr, Blakeman, his E-mail is: jablakeman@aol.com

Additional Museum History Information

A letter was received from Patricia Young Alverson, of Chattanooga, TN, the daughter of the late Judge Don and Seville Young, in reply to our previous article about the history of the museum. She desires to add the following information to the story.

She feels the Wickham house would never have been purchased and moved without her father's (Judge Don Young) encouragement and support. She remembers watching the moving and rehabilitation of the house. Her parents built the first library which was located in the basement of the museum. Her father designed, built, and painted the shelving and her mother cataloged the entire collection. She herself was a high school student and spent many volunteer hours on her knees helping her father varnish the newly sanded floors throughout the house. She said her parents never sought attention to their community efforts, but they gave greatly. Prior to her mother's death at age 99 years in 2012 her home was opened to members, Henry Timman and Mary Carabin, to take whatever donations they thought the Museum might enjoy. This consisted of paper documents and artifacts. Most of the artifacts received are currently on display throughout the museum.

Charitable Donations

Marjean Workman, Mont Vernon, NH and Mr and Mrs Robert Jacobs, Sandusky, Ohio

2014 TREASURER'S REPORT
FIRELANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND:

JANUARY 1, 2014 BALANCE \$16,352.77

INCOME: 2014 ACTUAL

Admissions	\$1,083.00
Copy Sales	\$83.50
Gifts Received	\$16,987.77
Gift Shop Sales	\$466.86
Interest Income	\$793.15
Library Rent	\$360.00
Meeting Income	\$792.00
Meeting Room	\$0.00
Memberships	\$3,285.00
Other Income	\$312.66
Pioneer Sales	\$300.85
Plaque Sales	\$463.10
Research Fees	\$101.45
Special Projects Income	\$0.00
Garden Tour	\$956.00
Stewards Income	\$11,837.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$37,822.34

SPECIAL FUNDS:

ACQUISITIONS FUND	\$3,500.00
ENDOWMENT FUND	\$96,184.14
FORD MEMORIAL	\$19,789.00
LIBRARY FUND	\$262.00
LANING-YOUNG BLDG.	\$3,200.00
MAINT/CAPITAL FUND	\$22,222.55
OLD BUILDING SURVEY	\$1,057.00
PUBLICATIONS FUND	\$1,063.92
WINDSOR/ADMIRAL	\$63,028.37
WINDSOR II	\$15,325.57
BLACK ENDOWMENT FOR AMER. INDIAN ARTIFACTS	\$25,414.62
SPECIAL FUNDS TOTAL	\$251,047.17
(AS OF 12/31/2014)	

EXPENSES:

Advertising	\$659.35
Education	\$120.00
Equipment	\$2,036.00
Garden Tour Expense	\$66.00
Insurance & Security	\$3,039.00
Maintenance	\$5,109.40
Newsletter	\$770.72
Other Expenses	\$122.00
Payroll Taxes	\$1,005.36
Plaque Sales	\$238.00
Postage	\$61.56
Programs & Meetings	\$3,921.00
Research Library	\$0.00
Supplies	\$652.23
Stewards Expenses	\$212.14
Sales Tax	\$119.28
Utilities-Midway	\$226.80
Utilities-Museum	\$2,397.52
Utilities-Research Ctr.	\$3,641.36
Workers Comp.	\$416.42
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$24,814.14

John Elmlinger, Treasurer
Firelands Historical Society

DEC. 31, 2014 BALANCE \$29,360.97

BUSINESS NAME

Firelands Historical Society
4 Case Ave.
P.O. Box 572
Norwalk, OH 44857-0572

Firelands Historical Society Officers:

Pat Mak, President
Dan Rood, Huron Co. Vice President
Sue McCreery, Erie Co. Vice President
Mary Carabin, Secretary
John Elmlinger, Treasurer

The Firelands Historical is proud to be a member of these fine organizations:

Firelands Council of Historical Societies
Huron County Chamber of Commerce
Lake Erie Firelands Tourist Council
Norwalk Economic Development Corporation
Ohio Association of Historical Societies & Museums
Ohio Genealogical Society
Ohio Historical Society

Annual Membership dues:

Individual - \$20
Husband and Wife - \$35
Business - \$100

Life Membership dues:

Individual - \$500 (or \$50 annually for 10 years)
Business - \$1000 (or \$100 annually for 10 years)

Send Correspondence to:

The Firelands Historical Society
P.O. Box 572
Norwalk, OH 44857-0572
Museum phone: 419.668.6038

Research Center phone: 419.663.0392

E-mail: curator@firelandsmuseum.org

Museum Hours

May, September and October - Saturday 10-3 and Sunday 12-4.

June thru August - Tuesday thru Saturday 10-3 and Sunday 12-4.

Closed on Monday's.

For group tours and other special arrangements call 419-668-6038

or E-mail: curator@firelandsmuseum.org.