



MUSEUM MESSAGE

Ohio's Oldest Museum September 2015
www.firelandsmuseum.com

Fall Program Meeting Schedule

September 16

Erie County Lakeshore Summer Colonies

The program "Erie County Lakeshore Summer Colonies from the late 1800's to early 1900's" will be presented by **Bonnie Albright**, a current resident of Huron, Ohio. The lakeshore has been a vacation destination for years where many people enjoyed the summer by owning a cottage in the areas of Huron, Vermilion, and Sandusky. Ms. Albright's program will include early photos of Sandusky and Cedar Point.

October 21

"Land of the Free? "Home of the Brave"

Bill Lucht will present a video documentary about the 1941 way of life for dozens of families living in several townships of Erie County was altered forever. The War Department displaced dozens of families from their farms and businesses so that the War Department could build the Plum Brook Ordnance Works in order to produce TNT for preparation for war.

November 18

Richard DeLombard will present the program "The Bicycle in the Victorian Era". Mr. DeLombard is a member of the National Wheelman Association and has ridden his high wheel bike in many parades throughout the United States. Back around the turn of the century, Ohio had several towns that manufactured bikes, those being Norwalk, Bellevue, Clyde, Oberlin, Cleveland and other towns throughout the state. The Firelands Historical Society has a tricycle made in Norwalk and also owns a High Wheel. Mr. DeLombard will bring several bikes to view.



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, please let us know.

Send information of change to curator@firelandsmuseum.com.

Summer Happenings at the Firelands Historical Society

Donation

In June we accepted a check from the Norwalk Eagle's Club in the amount of \$2000 toward the re-surfacing of our parking lot. **Bill Knadler, Chris Harlan, Roger Dickman, Carol Kocher, Mary Carabin, John Schumm, Matt Burr, Dan Rood, Sue McCreery, Pat Mak, Herbert Johnston, Jr.** - Eagle's Trustee.



Annual Picnic



On June 17, the annual Firelands Historical Society picnic was held at the home of Mary Carabin. The weather was good and 25 members attended. Afterwards, Mary gave a tour of her 1840 country home.

Norwalk Garden Tour

The Norwalk Garden Tour which is sponsored by the Firelands Historical Society and the Huron County Master Gardeners took place on Saturday, July 11. 90 people toured the five featured gardens on a beautiful warm and sunny day. This is a money making event for the FHS as tickets for the event are sold for \$10 each and the money received is used to maintain our two buildings.



Imagine Norwalk

This summer on every other Friday night "Imagine Norwalk" has brought the streets of Norwalk to life starting in June thru late August. It has become a city-wide celebration of all that Norwalk has to offer, including the retail stores, music, art, dining and more. This year we opened the museum free to the visitors on the three Friday's in July. A total of 190 people took the opportunity to visit. We wish to thank ***Foghorn Designs, Mak's Art Studio, and Norwalk Economic Development Corporation*** for pledging \$100 each for sponsorship of this event.



Volunteer, Laural Rehnborg explains to several young visitors the workings of a wringer washing machine.

A Lonely Little Petunia

We wish to thank our volunteer, Anna Bristol, for again this year planting flowers next to stairs leading from our upper parking lot to the Laning-Young building. Somehow a little seed made its way between the cement wall and driveway below, and has bloomed a pretty pink flower for several weeks all by itself.



A Museum Landscape Change

If you live in the Norwalk area and pass by the museum you will see a change in the landscape appearance on the north side of the museum. The tree next to the museum has been removed, due to its size and the damage it was causing to the wood siding of the house.

Recent Deaths

We recently learned of the deaths of two very valued former museum hostesses. They are Pauline Hamer who died on April 22, 2015 at age 93, and Marjorie Harper who died on August 9, 2015 at age 82 years. These ladies worked at the museum for many years and were always ready and willing to help. We offer our condolences to their families.



Marjorie Harper

History of Norwalk's Glass Block Department Store

In the spring of 1893, Harry Hoyt, a former North Fairfield merchant and his partner, Caleb F. Jackson, who was a local area native and was selling dry goods in Minneapolis joined partnership and purchased the lot at the corner Benedict and West Main from the Methodist Church. The Methodists then built their new building at the corner of West Main and State Street which still stands and is in use today. The partners tore down the old church building and then built the five story department store on the location. The building was constructed of brick, Superior brown stone, and iron and had an unusual amount of plate glass windows, from which the building got its name the "Glass Block".

The company operated its own electric lights and power system. In the winter the building was heated with exhaust steam from the engine, and the surplus utilized by heating adjoining stores and offices. As a special protection against fire, a stand pipe extended from basement to roof connected with the city water main, and also with a Hydraulic Elevator Pressure Tank, assuring ample water pressure upon every floor. A regular organized fire company was formed from the ranks of the employees upon every floor in the building as precaution against fire. The building had an elevator for easy access to every floor of the five story building.

Soon after opening, Mr. Jackson bought out his partner, Harry Hoyt, and added the building to the west as an annex in 1902 and leased the Merritt Block to the south on Benedict Avenue in 1908.

The department store of course attracted many people from northern Ohio who could easily come to Norwalk via the Interurban Railway System. In seven years, the store's sales aggregated nearly two million dollars. Their constant aim was to handle only such grades of merchandise to give the customer perfect satisfaction. This was a complete department store. They sold something for everyone from wearing apparel, household items, stoves, groceries, and included a pharmacy. The basement area sold crockery and house furnishings. They also had a meat department and lunch room. A refrigerator (15 x20 feet) was built under the sidewalk area which acted as a cold storage plant.

All went well until the fateful day of Sunday, August 5, 1923, about 12:30 p.m. as workmen were filling the carbide-ammonia unit of the refrigeration under the sidewalk area along West Main Street. The substance exploded, killing Leo Schlachter and Charles Witter. A lady, Mrs. Elizabeth Sipple, was waiting for the streetcar to take her to West Main and was thrown into the basement wreckage and died the next day. The building did suffer great damage, but was used a few more years as a department store.

After the department store ceased to exist, the upper floors were used for a time by a raincoat factory. In 1950 the dome was removed, and in 1952 the top three stories were removed and some remodeling was done to the outside. In 1959, a fire damaged the basement and first floor. Kaiser Wells Rexall Drug used the first floor of the building in the late 1940's to the early 1970's, until they built their new building on Benedict Avenue. Today, the first floor is being used by North American Martial Arts Institute.

THE GLASS BLOCK

We buy and sell for CASH. One Large Store costs less to manage than ten small ones, hence we can afford to sell our goods on Smaller Margins than by the old plan of doing business.

DEPARTMENT STORE.

FIRST FLOOR.

Dry Goods,
Jewelry and Silverware,
Drugs,
Confectionery,
Gents' Furnishings,
Stationery,
Buttericks Patterns.

BASEMENT.

Crockery and Glassware,
House Furnishings,
Meat Market, Stoves,
Groceries and Provisions,
Lunch Room.



DEPARTMENT STORE.

SECOND FLOOR

Cloaks and Suits,
Muslin Underwear,
Millinery,
Shoes,
Clothing.

THIRD FLOOR.

Carpets,
Draperies,
Baskets,
Upholstery,
Trunks,
Leather Goods,
Wall Paper.

4th & 5th Floors FURNITURE & STOVES

Take Elevator for All Upper Floors.

THE HOYT & JACKSON CO.,

NORWALK. - OHIO.

Lunch Counter in Basement.

Fashion Sheets Free.

We Recommend the Butterick Patterns.

Special Donation Thank You's

Ruth Stackhouse and Mary Carabin in memory of Pauline Hamer
The Bishop Family Charitable Foundation
Mary Carabin in memory of Marjorie Harper



Sally De Forest Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

One hundred years ago, a group of twenty-four women gathered at the North Pleasant Street home of Mrs. Caroline Strutton to discuss the creation of a local DAR chapter. Many of the women were members of the Sandusky chapter, Martha Pitkin, however, they felt they should organize a local chapter. From that auspicious beginning, the chapter was born. When it came time to name the chapter, "Firelands" lost to "Sally De Forest." It was not a surprising choice, since nine of these women were descendants of pioneer Sally De Forest Benedict; it was formally organized July 17, 1915.

The First Regency of 1915-1917 was: Regent, Mrs. Caroline Wooster Boalt Strutton; Vice-regent, Mrs. Agnes Benedict Wickham; Secretary, Mrs. Lois Latimer Tossell; Treasurer, Mrs. Charlotte Adams Taylor who served 1915-16, followed by Mrs. Frances Rood Sellinger, serving 1916-17; Registrar, Mrs. Bertha Turner Crecelius; and Historian, Mrs. Mabel Gallup Laylin.

World War I soon brought many demands on the patriotic new group. From its inception, the chapter met all obligations set up by the National DAR but, in addition, members established a girl homemakers' school, adopted a French war orphan; helped the state build a hostess house at Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, where they also sent 164 glasses of home made jelly. Local quotas were met towards two more national goals, \$100,000 in Liberty Bonds sold and restoration of the northern French town of Tilloy. They sent \$21 to purchase eggs for incubators in France as a result of the poultry industry being heavily damaged by the war.

After the war the chapter helped support Schauffer School in Cleveland, where girls were trained to help many non-English speaking immigrants become integrated into America; and in Norwalk helped set up the Opportunity School to educate slower pupils. For some years, members had considered buying the Wickham home on West Main Street, and George Titus offered to contribute \$500, but this was still beyond their reach financially. After Mr. Titus' death and during Mrs. Mary Battle's term as regent, W. A. Fisher, administering his father-in-law's estate, bought a house and presented it to the chapter as a memorial to Mr. Titus. In March, 1929, the house at 63 West Main Street became the chapter's home.

Members were deservedly proud of their new headquarters as they were the only chapter in Ohio to own a house.

Activity flourished in the new setting. Building up a file of material for genealogical research was a project of great significance. DAR lineage books were rebound in cloth to preserve them; marriage and other court house and cemetery records were copied and indexed. Membership grew and a Junior group was formed—two of its members served as Pages at National Congress.

World War II erupted during Mrs. Gladys Bateham's term, and the Chapter gave a speech in the house for volunteer Red Cross work; raised money toward a mobile Blood Unit and the National Blood Plasma Project. Juniors sent Christmas boxes to approved schools, made scrap books and buddy bags, and raised money. The Roll of Honor begun at the opening of World War I was brought up-to-date to record names of family members in the armed forces.

Of special note, Sally De Forest Benedict's name was inscribed in the National Patriots Bell Tower at Valley Forge National Historic Park as one of our first postwar projects. The beauty of the historic rolling hills of this park is enhanced by the stately presence and noble sound of the National Patriots Bell Tower, a gift of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Completed in 1953, the tower and its carillon are living memorials dedicated to the memory of General George Washington. Another accomplishment was a gift of 3,000 books to help start a new library in Monroeville after the town hall was destroyed by fire.

In 1960 it was realized that continuing maintenance of the chapter house was draining away funds that could be put to better use in supporting the many worthwhile DAR projects; and it was decided to give up the house and meet in churches or members' homes; books in the genealogical library were donated to the Norwalk Public Library.

At the urging of a previous Regent, Ina Day Grotton, Ina's friend, Edna Maye Frank, bequeathed the chapter a share of her estate; in 1964 the chapter received 122 shares of oil company stock. No one could then foresee the great expansion in oil stocks, but these have grown until we now own many shares of dividend-paying stock. This has given our chapter enviable financial security. We can give generous support to national and local projects without raising dues or conducting fundraisers.

In 1926 the chapter bought a chair for Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Following in 1963, the chapter presented an American pewter teapot to the Ohio Room in the DAR Museum. Then, in 1999 another chair was gifted to them.

With the centennial anniversary, the chapter has initiated a multi-year project to beautify Woodlawn Cemetery with landscape improvements. Members are actively involved with the Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky, and other projects to honor and benefit military veterans. The chapter also co-sponsored an exhibit at Firelands Historical Museum, "It's Revolutionary!" in commemoration of their one hundred years in Norwalk.

Anna Bristol

BUSINESS NAME

Firelands Historical Society
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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.com

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.com.