

History at a Glance

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Heritage Tourism in Ohio and Your Community

The following are excerpts from Mark Holbrook's presentation in the county as part of our heritage tourism grant from the Ohio Humanities.

The estimated number adults in the state of Ohio who are interested and engaged in history is 2% of the adult population, or 140,000 people across the state (16k per county). Meanwhile there are 600-650 history attractions in Ohio, or equals 233 state residents for each attraction. That's not much to go around (unless we consider our tourism potential).

Which is more popular, sports or museums?

Attendance for ALL major league sporting events and theme parks for one year +483 million. In contrast, there are about 850 million visits each year to American museums, or more than 2.5 visits to museums by every single person in the United States!

Did you know?

- Museums employ more than 400,000 Americans.
- Museums directly contribute \$21 billion to the U.S. economy each year. They generate billions more through indirect spending by their visitors.
- 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural or heritage activities. These travelers—including visitors to museums—spend 63% more on average than other leisure travelers.
- Museums serve every community; about 17% of museums are located in rural areas with fewer than 20,000 residents. Other museums reach these communities with traveling vans, portable exhibits and robust online resources.

History-based organizations are the essence of what makes any community unique.

People are always being stimulated, entertained, and amused. What people truly crave is to do. To create. To experience. To understand. To grasp. To imagine. It is our job as museums and historical places to break that chain of passivity and open up an entirely different world. To let them define the experience on their terms and not ours. Are you willing to take the step necessary to do that? Which is more important, preserving history or sharing it? We as the history community do not own history. It belongs to all of us. We are the caretakers.

What does this have to do with Auglaize County?

As part of the Auglaize County Historical Society's heritage tourism grant, three mystery tourists (tourism professionals themselves) visited the county, touring dozens of sites. Their subsequent reports let us know what our history sites are doing well, and what we could be doing better. Here is a summary of one of the reports:

Auglaize County has a wealth of heritage destinations from which to build a successful heritage tourism experience. While I only had time to visit a portion of those destinations, additional study online revealed strong local history organizations, many looking to make impactful improvements to their sites and organizational approaches. This is encouraging.... The A.C.H.S. is showing great leadership in working closely with the local organizations to create a comprehensive whole.

As that work continues, an overarching strategic theme for the county's interpretation is needed. In evaluating the current resources and the history of the area, I believe that theme should be German immigration to the region. The stories of immigration, maintaining culture in a new place, eventual assimilation, and community pride in ancestry and heritage are common to us all and a relevant foundation for a county-wide interpretative plan. Combining this project with the 2014 needs assessment, and the engagement of a person or organization to assist in creating an interpretive plan for the county will result in a more seamless experience for visitors that avoids conflicting information, creates a greater sense of place, and will provide a compelling through line for talking about the history of the area.

As the process of creating an interpretive plan takes place, the various organizations involved, as a benefit of working together more closely, will begin to understand that their local stories are part of a larger story of the county, state, and country. While uniqueness of place is vital to a successful heritage tourism project, the visitor experience must be relevant to all. This can be best accomplished when that uniqueness is framed in such a way that visitors see themselves as part of the continuum of history and thus feel connected to others. The stories of the people of Auglaize County, while unique, are valuable to visitors only if they are told in such a way that the term 'our stories' is inclusive and welcoming.

THE NEXT STEP: Auglaize County in Motion!

More in a special holiday edition of the newsletter...

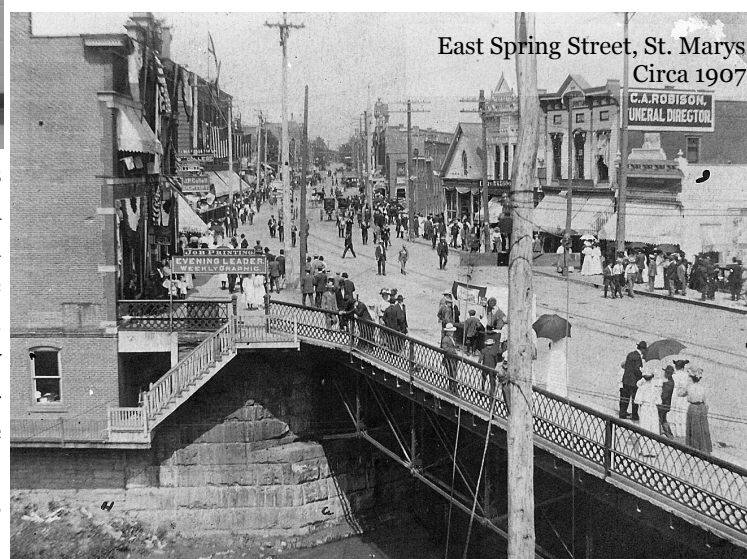
MOONEY MUSEUM TO RE-OPEN on DECEMBER 6!

The trustees of the Auglaize County Historical Society are pleased to announce that the Daniel Mooney Museum, 223 S. Main St., St. Marys, will celebrate its grand re-opening on Sunday, December 6, from 1 to 5 p.m. Please plan on joining us to tour the renovated facility and experience the newly redesigned exhibit spaces. MORE INFORMATION TO COME!



The Girty Half-Dozen successfully defended their title as the *Smartest People in Auglaize County* for the second year in a row during the annual Trivia Contest, sponsored by the Historical Society. Team members included Mike Lynch, Buzz Howard, Fred Hullinger, Brice Brenneman, Dave McNeal, and Al Meinerding. Among their many prizes were the silver tray (pictured) and one-year memberships to the Society. Second place was awarded to the team known as the Smartest People in Wapakoneta. Thanks to the St. Marys Eagles, emcee Chad Doll, donors of the many prizes, & all who helped in any way.

The Historical Society's "Our Downtown: The Way It Was" initiative continues. We are looking for photographs of commercial buildings from the 1970s or earlier, to help document the beauty and importance of historic downtowns. If you have photographs we can borrow, scan, & return, please contact the Historical Society. Special emphasis in 2016: Eastern Auglaize County. We're even planning some programming with the White Memorial Library, Waynesfield.



RESEARCH by the Historical Society

Looking for information about family history, but short on time? Let the Historical Society help. ACHS president Chandra Hoffman has extensive experience in research, especially in genealogy, and is available to conduct research. The fee is \$15/hour. All fees are then donated to the Historical Society. Contact our office, 419/738-9328 or wallpaperproject@bright.net, for more information.

New Docents Needed

We're looking for more docents, both at the Mooney and Wapakoneta museums. If you like people and like history, this could be a great fit! We'll provide all the training, and your commitment could be as little as once every two months. Please call the office, 419/738-9328, or email auglaizecountyhistory@bright.net to learn more.

Staying in the Loop...

Don't forget that the Historical Society has begun sending out occasional e-updates about events and happenings. But you won't receive this information unless we have your email address! Please contact us, auglaizecountyhistory@bright.net, and we'll add you to the mailing list. Join the more than 500 persons who LIKE the Auglaize County Historical Society on FACEBOOK as well.

*The Trustees of the
Auglaize County Historical Society*

**Chandra Hoffman, president
Chris Burton, vice-president
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Diana Schneider has left the board (just temporarily, we hope) because of her very busy scheduled, teaching school, attending graduate school, and being a very good wife and a mom to three active and involved children. Sincere thanks to Diana for her years of service to the Board of Trustees!

**The Auglaize County Historical Society
expresses its sincere gratitude
for being remembered
in the estate of the late John Tomhafe.**

A resident of New Bremen and a life member of the Historical Society, Mr. Tomhafe died in late 2014. Mr. Tomhafe was also a member of the St. Paul United Church of Christ in New Bremen, a member of the New Bremen Historic Association, and of the Nickel Plate Historical Society of which was a past president. In his early days he worked at the former White Mountain Creamery in New Bremen and then became a Fireman and Engineer on steam and diesel locomotives with the Nickel Plate Railroad and the Norfolk & Western Railroad until his retirement. He then continued working for the former TRANCO of New Bremen, where he drove and delivered trucks after they had been repaired. Mr. Tomhafe's thoughtfulness and generosity, which was extended to several local organizations, helps ensure that the good work of the Auglaize County Historical Society will continue well into the future. We are extremely grateful.

**The Auglaize County Historical Society
extends its sincere sympathy to the family and friends
of Edward S. Noble (4/15/18—9/18/15),
a founding member of the Society.
May you find great comfort in the incomparable
legacy of his life and his accomplishments.**

Historical Society collaborates with Wapakoneta Chamber on WAPAWEEN event

The Historical Society will host a guided walking tour entitled "The History and Hauntings of Downtown Wapakoneta" on Wednesday, October 28, at 5 p.m. The tour is free; participants should meet in front of the Wapakoneta Chamber of Commerce Office, East Auglaize Street.

Participants will learn about some of the people who have inhabited downtown Wapakoneta over the years as shopkeepers, professionals, and residents. We'll catch the "spirit" that has made the downtown so important to the community's history and development.

The tour is expected to last approximately one hour. In the event of inclement weather, the group will meet in the basement of the Auglaize County Public Library for a virtual tour.

WapaWeen highlights the community's longstanding tradition of Halloween celebration by organizing a series of October events and activities around this holiday theme.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2016

The Auglaize County Historical Society is collaborating with the Auglaize County Public District Library to host a national traveling exhibit, "The Progressive Era: Creating Modern America, 1900-1917," which will be installed at the Wapakoneta Library from February 9 through March 9, 2016.

This exhibit includes letters, cartoons, pictures, and broadsides that illustrate America's transformation into a modern, industrial society. During the Progressive Era (1900-1917) a broad-ranging reform movement worked to make government more democratic, to lessen the effects of industrialization, and to regulate business.

"The Progressive Era" comes to us from the Gilder Lehrman Institute, New York City. Founded in 1994, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is a nonprofit organization devoted to the improvement of history education. The Institute has developed an array of programs for schools, teachers, and students that now operate in all fifty states, including a website that features more than 60,000 unique historical documents in the Gilder Lehrman Collection. Each year the Institute offers support and resources to tens of thousands of teachers, and through them enhances the education of more than a million students. The Institute's programs have been recognized by awards from the White House, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Organization of American Historians.

Auglaize County
Historical Society

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Check us out on FACEBOOK, too!



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The Auglaize County Historical Society collects, preserves, interprets, and shares the history of Auglaize County and its people through exhibits, programs, and publications.

ANNUAL MEETING on November 5 features *Johnny Appleseed*

The Auglaize County Historical Society will host its Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 5, 7 p.m., in the Parish Life Center of St. Joseph Church, Wapakoneta. Please use the Blackhoof Street parking lot to access the PLC.

After a brief business meeting, which will include the election of officers, attendees will discover "John Chapman's Westward Journey," presented by William Kerrigan of Muskingum University. The legend of Johnny Appleseed is based upon the life of a real person. Born into a poor Yankee family on the eve of the American Revolution, the young John Chapman headed west in the last years of the 18th century.

When John Chapman died in Indi-

ana in 1845, stories of the eccentric apple tree planter survived in the oral traditions of dozens of Midwestern communities where he had spent his life. In the decades after his death, many of these stories made it into print in regional histories and national magazines, and the legend of Johnny Appleseed was born. While many elements of the legend have remained the same over the last one hundred and sixty years, every generation has found its own uses for the Johnny Appleseed story, reinterpreting the meaning of John Chapman's life.

This talk recovers the life of the "real" Johnny Appleseed, teasing out fact from myth, and revealing the life of an extraordinary individual whose real story is more compelling

than the myth which emerged in the years after his death.

About Professor Kerrigan

William Kerrigan is the Cole Distinguished Professor of American History at Muskingum University. He is the author of *Johnny Appleseed and the American Orchard* (Johns Hopkins, 2012) and co-author of several local histories. He teaches courses on American History, Ohio History, the Civil War, and Environmental History.

Following Dr. Kerrigan's remarks the Historical Society will make a special presentation to the New Bremen Historic Association, after which everyone will enjoy apple-based refreshments! Join us!