

# Delaware County Historian

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## Meeker Acquisition Moving Closer

By Roger Koch

Our acquisition of the Colonel Forrest Meeker Homestead, currently occupied by Garth's Auctions, on Stratford Road at US 23 is progressing through the rezoning process with the City of Delaware.

The redevelopment plan for the portion of the property that is now a metal pole building and its gravel parking lot on the corner calls for a gas station/convenience store that will look like a pair of nineteenth century limestone and wood farm outbuildings. The remainder of the picturesque 6-acre hillside homestead, including the historic 1812 house and large stone-end barn, will be donated to the Delaware County Historical Society for use as a museum, office and education center depicting a pioneer era homestead. The rezoning will permit the use of the historic buildings as a "community cultural

institution," as well as the 2 acres on the corner as a gas station/convenience store, and will guarantee the preservation of the historic buildings with deed and zoning restrictions. All of this will be made possible by Turkey Hill Minit Markets, the company building the gas station, and the generosity of Tom and Carolyn Porter, owners of the property.

As of this printing, the zoning proposal and preliminary design for the joint project has received the approval of the City Planning Commission and the City Council. The final development plan will appear before both boards in the coming months, and will deal with the final details of traffic engineering, landscaping, and signage.

Garth's Auctions will be relocating to new, larger facilities in the Delaware area sometime in 2011 or 2012, but will be continuing where they have been for over fifty years until their new barn is ready.

### Meeker House

(Photo by Matt Kear)

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# Program to Highlight Vincente Minnelli

By Traci Cromwell

Did you know that Delaware touched a boy's life in such a way that he later portrayed his memories of the town in his movies? Do you know what school he attended? Where he worked? The homes he lived in? Join us the last week of March to find out.

DCHS is proud to bring Author Mark Griffin to town to introduce his biography of Vincente Minnelli. During the last week of March, Mark will be in and around our community doing many things. The Society will be hosting an event celebrating the Minnelli family ties to Delaware at the St. Mary's auditorium. The evening will contain a slide show, a display of talent from our local youth, and a presentation from Mark. This free event will be educational and fun for the entire family.

Some highlights of *A Hundred or More Hidden Things: The Life and Films of Vincente Minnelli*:

*He was the Oscar-winning director of such cinematic classics as Meet Me In St. Louis, An American In Paris, The Bad and the Beautiful and Gigi. And he was equally well known for*



**Vincente Minnelli**  
(from Wikipedia)

*his tumultuous marriage to the legendary Judy Garland. But Vincente Minnelli has always seemed enigmatic and unknowable -- until now. As author Mark Griffin persuasively demonstrates, Minnelli's personal life and conflicted sexuality informed his films to such a degree that his filmography can be 'read' as a captivating autobiography in code. A Hundred or More Hidden Things draws upon over 100 interviews with those who knew Minnelli best - including such icons as Kirk Douglas, Angela Lansbury, Lauren Bacall, Tony Curtis and George Hamilton. Featuring over 70 photographs (many never-before-published), this definitive biography turns the spotlight on Hollywood's "elegant director," revealing long-kept secrets at the heart of what made Minnelli a true Hollywood genius. - www.ahundredormorehiddenthings.blogspot.com*

*A Hundred or More Hidden Things: The Life and Films of Vincente Minnelli* will be available March 1 from bookstores everywhere. Please stay posted for more details on this exciting event.

## DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

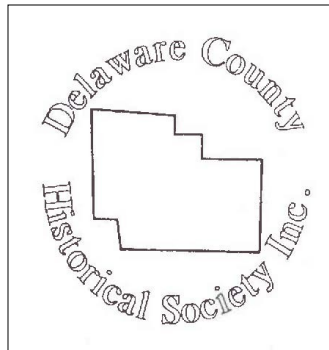
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Contributions of original historical research concerning Delaware County, Ohio, are welcome.

Send your contributions to the attention of the Newsletter Editor at any of the above addresses.

## “Our Shared History” Digital Collection Launched

By Carol Holliger

Ohio Wesleyan University Archivist

The OWU-DCHS collaborative project, ***Our Shared History: Delaware, Methodism, and Ohio Wesleyan University***, funded by an LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant, officially launched on January 21, 2010. From October of 2008 through September of 2009, volunteers from the Delaware County Historical Society worked with librarians from Ohio Wesleyan University's Beeghly Library to produce a digital story about the interrelated history of the city of Delaware, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Ohio Wesleyan University.

Participants from the Delaware County Historical Society were Brent Carson, Sandy Wicker, Maggie Webb, Joe Diamond, and Rex Welker. These folks worked in tandem with OWU Digital Librarian, Emily Haddaway, and Archivist, Carol Holliger. Haddaway is responsible for the OWU Historical Collection and Holliger is responsible for the Archives of Ohio United Methodism. Images and texts for the digital collection were culled from three collections – the DCHS/DCGS Library, the OWU Historical Collection, and the Archives of Ohio United Methodism.

Selection of material for the collection (which focuses on the 19th century) was done by Holliger, Haddaway, Wicker, and Webb. An Indus planetary book scanner was purchased by OWU with LSTA grant funds. The actual scanning of items was done by Haddaway and a contingent of OWU students. Over 3,150 images and document pages were scanned and uploaded to the OhioLINK Digital Resource Commons. The same group that selected material then went to work describing it. Each item in the collection has an historical description. Several experts were asked to help with this process, including Brent Carson, who spent four days at OWU vetting the Delaware image descriptions. Linda and Dick Browning's ***Delaware the Way We Were*** (2008) was invaluable as we sought to describe downtown businesses, and you will notice that they are quoted several times. Researchers from the Delaware County Genealogical Society, Millie Barnhart and Connie Minor, were particularly helpful to us as we sought to write accurate biographies of Delaware's famous citizens. The ***Delaware Gazette*** gave us permission to use many historical articles for the collection. Many local churches in town worked with us to get their histories included.

Though the collection is primarily centered on 19th century events, we did include materials about

events that are part of Delaware's DNA – the 1913 flood, the Old City Hall fire, the William Street UMC fire, and the Bun's fire. Scanned material includes photographs, manuscripts, maps, published & unpublished histories, pamphlets, postcards, scrapbooks, and papers presented to the Delaware County Historical Society. Several chapters of Ray Buckingham's ***Delaware County Then and Now*** were scanned and uploaded, as well as his complete monograph on Moses Byxbe. Other familiar items were scanned – Marilyn Cryder's pamphlet ***Delaware Ohio: A Walk Down Sandusky Street***, Robert B. Power's paper ***A Look at Sandusky Street Fifty Years Ago***, and biographies from James R. Lytle's ***20th Century History of Delaware County, Ohio and Representative Citizens***.

There is a merged timeline on the ***Our Shared History*** home page. It includes important events in Delaware history, Methodist history, and OWU history. It is a PDF document and can be searched via keyword by the user. A “Getting Started” instruction sheet is also available on the home page to assist users who want to do more advanced searching. Typing keywords into the Full Text Search box is the easiest method of searching. For example, typing the word “Merrick” brings up images and text related to both Merrick Hall and Frederick Merrick. A more precise method of searching involves the link on the left hand side “Browse this collection by subject.” One can search under the subject heading “Merrick Hall (Delaware, Ohio) – History” to get material on the building or “Merrick, Frederick, 1819-1894” to retrieve information on former Ohio Wesleyan University President Merrick, the man.

A colorful bookmark has been created to advertise the digital collection. We will be sending letters, bookmarks, and a “Delaware Trivia Quiz” to local social studies and history teachers in an effort to make them aware of this new resource. Our hope is that children and teen-agers will be able to make use of the collection and perhaps get excited about local history. Bookmarks will also be available at libraries and historical societies.

Our Shared History is located at <http://drc.owu.edu/handle/123456789/3>. There is currently a link to the site on the DCHS/DCGS web site and the Delaware County District Library web site. Some of the churches in town have also linked to the collection. We hope that many more organizations will consider creating links to our new resource.

Ohio Wesleyan was recently notified that our project earned one of four LSTA “Exemplary Program” awards for fiscal year 2009, an award we share with all of you who worked so diligently to bring the collection to life. Thank you DCHS!

## Report of Members and Donors

**By Kris Prengaman**  
Membership Chair

Big changes are afoot for the DCHS and your membership committee is working to stay on top of them all. I like to think of it as the Meeker House Challenge- can we get enough Delaware Countians interested in this new acquisition to join the Society and support our programs and financial goals? And will we be able to sign up dozens of new volunteers to help our existing crew turn Meeker House into a first class museum, develop and catalog our collections of historical items, and maintain Nash House as beautifully as it has been in the past? With your help I think we can do it all.

Since word of the donation by the Porters began to be discussed in September, we have already signed up 51 new memberships for 2010, including my family. Owning the Meeker House and Barn is such an exciting opportunity, offering endless possibilities for programs and exhibits to further our mission, that we know there will be many new members yet this year. If you know

of someone who would like to join, please share this newsletter with them.

Plans are under way for the 2011 membership drive to kick off in October, in conjunction with a celebration of Rutherford B Hayes' birthday. Membership rates will be going up, after staying the same for 30 years. We will be printing new materials and making a few changes in the donor levels, possibly to include a new "Corporate Sponsor" category for business donors who would like to see their names included in this newsletter or in our museum buildings.

This year the membership committee is also tasked with getting the volunteers organized. We hope to have a new software program installed on the computer in the Library sometime this month. With that we will be able to easily keep track of what kinds of jobs you would enjoy and then create committee lists to pass out to key volunteers who will be in touch with you as needed. Of course for this to work we need to hear from you about your volunteer interests, how best to contact you, and

what are your preferred times to volunteer. Just send an e-mail to the Society's address, dchshistory@verizon.net, to let us know your preferences.

Whether you want to help with historical research, or leading tour groups, setting up exhibits, or organizing fund raising dinners you will meet great people from all over Delaware County and you will look forward to seeing them again. So we will also plan some events that are just fun for everybody and an annual volunteer recognition party to say thank you for a job well done.

I look forward to meeting you all in the upcoming year. Help us take on the Meeker House Challenge by bringing your friends to visit the museum, sign up for volunteering, and spread the word about the Society's programs and events. Our goal is to be active and involved with the whole Delaware community, to greatly increase our membership role, explore our past and preserve our future, and to have a good time doing it.

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## Life Members

Raymond B. Austin American Legion Post 115  
Duane & Charlene Alward  
Connie Augenstein  
Alice Baker  
Margaret Bouic  
Marianna Pollock Bowman  
Richard & Linda Browning  
Judith Brozek  
Brent Carson  
Charles & Kay Caudy  
Marilyn Cryder  
DeVore-Snyder Funeral Home  
Dotty Florance  
Max E. Griffith  
Mark & Carrie Hickman

Jack Hilborn  
George & Marilyn Hoffman  
Harry Humes  
Roger Koch  
Evelyn Lee  
Georgia Manos  
Robert & Betty Meyer  
Ottawa Bota Farms (Tim & Renee Calvin)  
Larry & Susan Ratcliffe  
Barbara W. Reed  
John & Libby Reed  
Bob & Nancy Rietz  
Sam (Ed) Rogers  
Henry E. Shaw, Jr.  
Sharlene & Buck Shoaf

Joyce Winter Siegley  
Marjorie Snook  
Clay Snyder  
Jenora Stilwell  
Kris Thomas  
John Tombarge  
Ezra Vogel  
Sally S. Wildman

## New Members: October 2009 to January 2010

Debbie Aburmaieleh  
Margo Bartlett  
Alex and Mimi Boeriu  
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Cocherl  
Karen Coffman  
Rodger Collom  
Traci Cromwell  
Carolyn and Robert Diersing  
Ray and Judy Domire  
Donna Donnelly  
Bill and Martha Edmonds  
Mike Edmonds  
Marjorie Finnegan  
Rob Fogle  
Marianne Gabel  
Bob Gitter  
Jerrold E. Heston  
Mark and Carrie Hickman  
Ralph and Diane Hodges

Tom and Pat Hubbell  
Edwin C. Jebkins  
Mary Ellen Kelly  
Doug and Peg Kleinhenz  
Hillary Kline  
Nick Lantz  
Don Lateiner  
Lyman Leathers  
Anita and Joe Lieser  
Dave and Marylou Lovell  
Bill McCarty  
Blake and Molly Michael  
Marilou Mitchell  
Paul Monks  
Dan and Mary Morrison  
Jim and Roxanne Newton  
Kathy Nunn  
Tom and Kris Prengaman  
Tiffany Rankin

Trace Regan  
Bob and Nancy Rietz  
Gail Russell  
Kathryn C. Schwartz  
John Scott  
Frank Seebode  
Benny and Joan Shoults  
Cindy Skipworth  
John and Peter Smith  
Dave and Teresa Staats  
Rene and Jennifer Villanueva-Henkle  
Nathan Vonada  
Mr and Mrs. William Warner  
Mike and Theresa Watkins  
William and Donna Wheeler  
Sally Wildman

## Grants Received, Donors, and Sponsors

### Grants

The William Street United Methodist Church Foundation, Inc.  
– grant of \$1,000 for archive boxes to protect garments in October 2009

**Thank you to board members and other volunteers for their many targeted cash and in-kind donations.**

### Donors

DigiCo Imaging – contribution in exchange for historic photographs used in the new Kroger store  
Adam Lefevre – 50% of historic photograph sales  
Sylvia Vance – in memory of Waid Vance

### Donors – Meeker Homestead

Jim & Judi Freed  
Shirley Hooker  
Carole Kern  
Charlotte Gallant  
Carrie Kiefer  
Richard & Betty Smith

Dave & Teresa Staats  
Christine Stelloh-Garner

### Donors – Porter Memorial Fund

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Jim & Sue Aufderhaar  
Dennis & Janet Bemiller  
Doug Bemiller & Nancy Serafino  
Martin & Donna Bemiller  
Steven & Greta Bemiller  
Shirley Boyce  
Brent Carson  
Edmund & Diana Cox  
Jack Fay  
George & Marilynn Hoffman  
Ryan & Kellie Jeffers  
David & Jeanne Kessler  
Lee & Maxne Oswalt  
PA4.Com, Ltd./Anderson  
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Samaha Antiques  
Sandusky Street Antiques  
Gary & Carolyn Skinner  
Smith-Feike-Minton, Inc.  
Nancy Wagner  
John & Sandra Warfield

### Sponsors – In-Kind and More

Growing Friends Garden Club  
Jordan Home Maintenance  
Northwest Neighborhood Association

### Sponsors – Members who gave \$100 or more

Marianne Gabel & Don Lateiner  
Janell Kuck  
Lyman Leathers  
Manos, Martin, Pergram & Dietz  
Bill & Janet Oberfield  
Kermit & Ada Payne  
Bill & Kay Rietz  
G. Michael & Denise A. Riley  
Robinson Funeral Home  
Mike & Margie Shade  
Dennis & Linda Sheets  
Bill & Marty Stroud  
Barbara Hall Thatcher Williams  
Willow Brook Christian Communities  
Donald & Kathleen Wolf

## Easter Egg Collection Donated In Honor Of Hayes

Delaware, birthplace of Rutherford B. Hayes, has had little to show visitors who come in search of connections to the president. Both of his homes have long since been demolished. There have been virtually no items related to Hayes on display at our museum--that is, until recently.

A rare collection of memorabilia connected to the annual White House Easter Egg Roll has been anonymously donated to the DCHS. It was believed to have been the largest privately owned collection. Now it is showcased in the museum. Jeff Burnett, a political memorabilia collector and dealer from Ashland, Ohio, has specialized in White House Easter Eggs. He believes our collec-

tion is exceedingly rare and the only known collection to be on public display. Burnett added, "Delaware is fortunate to have obtained such a treasure."

The collection includes 107 colorful wooden eggs and 43 glass eggs. Among other memorabilia donated are rare framed prints of Rutherford and Lucy Hayes from *Harpers Weekly* dated 1877. There is also a framed cabinet photo with an included autograph of the

president.

The collection was donated in honor of President and Mrs. Hayes who started the White House Easter Egg Roll. When the donor was asked why the collection was given to the Delaware County Historical Society instead of to the Hayes Museum in Fremont or to

the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., the donor said "For too long there has been little effort to promote Delaware as the birthplace of President Hayes. Perhaps this will spur others to donate items related to Delaware's history."



**Part of the Easter Egg Collection**

(Photo by Matt Kear)

### *About the Easter Egg Roll*

The White House Easter Egg Roll began in 1878 thanks to Rutherford and Lucy Hayes. Earlier egg rolls took place on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. Congress passed a law prohibiting the use of the grounds as a play area. On that Easter Monday in 1878, President Hayes passed by the Capitol in his carriage. He saw the children were upset because they were being kept off the Capitol grounds. President and Mrs. Hayes invited the children to the White House lawn thus starting the annual tradition.

## News and Notes From the Nash House

### OWU Vogel Lecture To Discuss 1960s Activism

From civil rights marches to Vietnam War protests on and off college campuses, America in the 1960s was defined by public activism. Research historian Pete Kakel, Ph.D., will discuss the impact of this activism at Ohio Wesleyan University when he presents "From Memory to History: Ohio Wesleyan in the Late 1960s."

Kakel, a 1969 Ohio Wesleyan graduate, will speak at 7:30 p.m. April 1, in Benes Room B of Hamilton-Williams Campus Center, 40 Rowland Ave. His presentation represents the 26th Annual Joseph and Edith Vogel Lecture, which seeks to promote a better understanding of the history of Delaware and surrounding area. The event, coordinated by the Ohio Wesleyan Department of History, is free and open to the public.

In 2003, he earned a master's degree in liberal arts from The Johns Hopkins University. In 2004, he earned a master's degree in holocaust studies (with distinction) from the University of London, and, in 2009, he earned a doctorate in modern history from the University of London.

Today, Kakel lives in Baltimore, and his primary research interest is the history and historiography of genocide. His first book, "The American West and the Nazi East: A Comparative and Interpretive Perspective," currently is under contract with Palgrave Macmillan, a global academic publisher.

Established in 1985, Ohio Wesleyan's Joseph and Edith Vogel Lecture Series is made possible by a generous gift from their son, Ezra F. Vogel, Ph.D., a 1950 Ohio Wesleyan graduate, native of Delaware, Ohio, and retired professor of East Asian Studies at Harvard University.

### Help Preserve Our Historical Legacy

Bequests have played an important role in the preservation of Delaware County history. Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. Please consider the Delaware County Historical Society when making your estate plans.

### Sandy Wicker Named New Librarian

The DCHS Board of Trustees recently named Sandy Wicker as the librarian. Sandy has a solid background as a librarian and volunteer leader. She earned a Master of Library Science from Kent State University and has worked in many types of libraries, including at Columbus State Community College, Grady Memorial Hospital, and the Museum of Biodiversity at The Ohio State University. Her cataloging experience with specialized collections will be very useful to us as we embark on cataloging our collections with PastPerfect software. Sandy has been a volunteer leader in scouting and her church for many years. We are fortunate to have one of our own experienced library volunteers and board members come forward to lead us in this key position.

Sandy will be announcing volunteer training sessions and regular hours soon.

### Wish List

Are you going electronic and want to get rid of your old files? We could use your discards:

- 4- or 5-drawer file cabinets
- Metal rail racks to hold hanging files
- New or used hanging files
- Magazine holders to organize magazines on a shelf

Contact Sandy at 740-369-3831 or [dchshistory@verizon.net](mailto:dchshistory@verizon.net)



The Nash House

(Photo by Matt Kear)

Delaware County Historical Society

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