

Delaware County Historical Society



*Delaware County*  
**Historian**

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*Our Vision: A community that values its history as it plans its future.*

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## DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORIAN

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We welcome contributions of original historical research concerning Delaware County, Ohio. Please send articles to the attention of the Newsletter Editor at the above address.

Welcome to our new **Historian**. With the retirement of our Executive Director, Donna Meyer, Becky Cornett has taken over the editing of this newsletter. Becky is involved with the Ohio History Connection, Radnor Historical Society, Big Walnut Historical Society and is a member of the Delaware County History Network. She has written about the history of Ohio and Delaware County in many publications, and will bring the history of the entire county to you. Welcome, Becky!

For my first column in the *Historian*, I decided to write about those people who make our organization **the** Historical Society of Delaware County that it is – our great volunteers! April is **Volunteer Appreciation Month**, and this organization would NOT EXIST without our volunteers. The Historical Society has the BEST VOLUNTEERS E-V-E-R. They are dedicated, they are hard working, and they ARE the Delaware County Historical Society.

Our **Museum and Exhibits Committee** members research, design, and develop the exhibits in our four museums. This group of experienced artists and historians works hard to bring history to life in our exhibits. In addition to being responsible for exhibits, they have committed to doing monthly “Make and Take” workshops, highlighting crafts that have been handed down from the 1800’s and 1900’s. This spring, they will be planting a Heritage Garden at our **Millworker Cottage**.

**Curriculum Support Committee** members are busy year-round, planning, designing, and developing experiences that bring history to life for students from kindergarten to middle

## Welcome Letter from Our President

school. They work with over 3,000 school children per year, teaching about the rich, local history of Delaware County. In addition, they supply resources, books, and activities to help the third-grade teachers in Delaware County schools who teach local history.

To make us better known in the business community, and in the historic preservation community, our **Historic Preservation Committee** has been busy organizing their first annual “Historic Preservation” Award, to honor those who take historic restoration seriously.

Since Delaware County is an historically agricultural community, we have a small, dedicated group of volunteers working on recounting the stories of agricultural through the barns that have been constructed in the county. They are taking a census of any barns older than 100 years old, photographing the barns, talking to owners, and documenting the history of the barns, so that future generations will understand their agricultural heritage.

The committee that has contact with the most adults is the **Programs Committee**. They are responsible for our monthly programs. First, they brainstorm the ideas for the programs. Then, they work to secure those who actually present the programs, and they make sure program presenters have all that they need for a successful program. They have planned an America250 program schedule for 2026 and now are working on 2027 programs.

We would not be a very good historical society if we did not do research and cataloging. Come to **The Cryder Research Library** and you will find volunteers at computers, looking up house histories, looking up little known facts about Delaware County, or searching Google to identify an historical artifact, cataloging the artifacts in our software system and putting them in storage so that others can retrieve the information or the artifact. This research is key to developing programs, developing exhibits, and developing the information and lessons for our school children. The researchers and catalogers are the cornerstone of our organization.

In addition to the above, we have volunteers who understand and care for an IT network and system that is as complex as any business system. And they do this at no charge. We have volunteers who reenact historic figures, repair our buildings, help park cars, take money for events, clean up after events, raise money, and keep track of how we spend money. They do it all.

The group that sometimes does not get the acknowledgement that they deserve is our board. This group of 10 people is dedicated to making the Historical Society an organization that will continue to be a vibrant, relevant asset to Delaware County. Each person takes the office of Board of Trustee very seriously, and I am very privileged to work with these talented people.

In 2025, our volunteers gave us 15,057 hours of their time, which, according to the Nonprofit Leadership Center equals \$463,605.03 in service. April is Volunteer Appreciation Month. THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS – YOU ARE THE BEST VOLUNTEERS EVER!!!



## A Crash Course on Ancient Delaware and Ohio

By Ronan Thompson



What comes to mind when you think of prehistoric civilizations in North America? The Aztec pyramids in Mexico? Or maybe the cities carved into stone cliff faces in Colorado? Those are stunning examples of pre-modern architecture in the most literal sense of the term, but there is one region of the continent that is often forgotten in popular history - the Midwest.

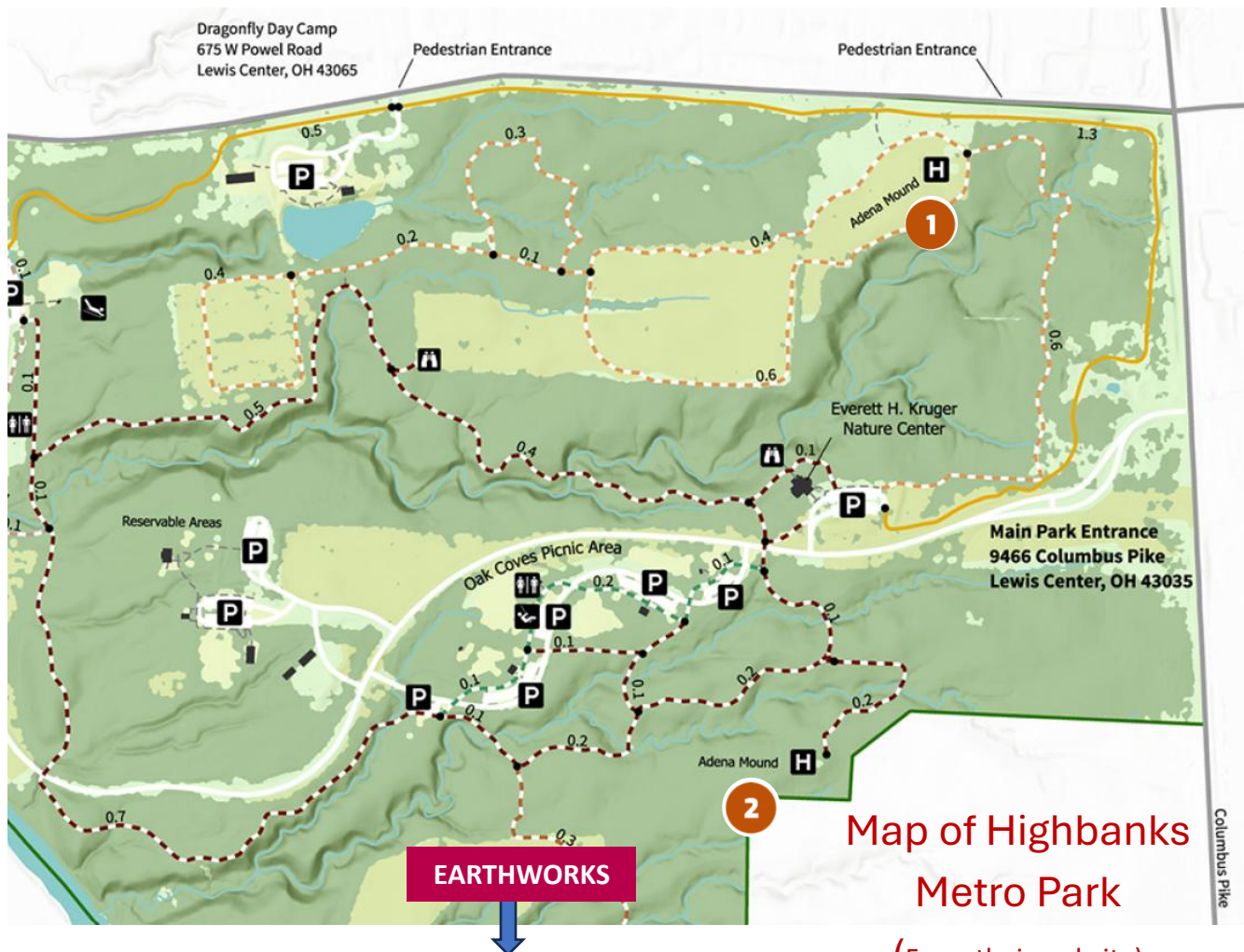
Ohio continuously has been inhabited for nearly 13,000 years, and was once the center of a nation-spanning trade network and an epicenter for spiritual and scientific activity. By the time the Roman Empire reached its peak of power an ocean away, indigenous Ohioans were building vast earthwork complexes and creating artwork made from materials sourced from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Coast.

The Hopewell Culture (c. 100-500 C.E.) did not adhere to colonial state borders. It was named after Mordecai Hopewell, the owner of a farm in Ross County, Ohio, where the first mound group was discovered by archeologists.

The architecture isn't just visually impressive. The geometric construction of the Octagon and Great Circle earthworks in Newark, Ohio, together with the earthworks in Ross County, feature large rectangular structures that align with the 18.6 year long lunar calendar. The circular earthworks that connect to these rectangular structures all are identical in diameter, even comparing the structures in Ross County to the ones in Newark that are 60 miles away! This observation demonstrates that the ancient/prehistoric Hopewell had a complex understanding of geometry and astronomy, as evidenced at the [Hopewell Earthworks](#), which are administered by the National Park Service, and recently have been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Ross County earthworks have been administered since 2023 by the National Park Service - UNESCO World Heritage inscribed sites, and Newark hold superlatives for grandeur, Delaware County had its fair share of earthworks, but most of the mounds were destroyed by European settlers. Some are still visible today, but are located primarily on private property. The Archeological Atlas of Ohio (1915) reported finding 75 visible earthworks in Delaware County, including 61 mounds at the time of its publication.





Map of Highbanks Metro Park  
(From their website)

The Hopewell weren't the first or the only culture to create mounds in Ohio. The Adena Culture (c. 500 BCE-100 CE) left behind burial mounds and earthworks all over the state, including those at **Highbanks Metro Park** in southern Delaware County. Mound I is in a prairie in the northeast section of the park, and Mound II is in the south-central section. These conical mounds are consistent with burial sites of the

Adena period. The earthwork enclosure, believed to be the work of the Cole culture (800-1300 CE), is located along the western edge of the southern section. The trail leading to the Overlook passes through an opening of the earthwork. The above map of **Highbanks Metro Park** shows where to find the mounds and earthwork enclosure.

[Full Map of Highbanks Metro Park.](#)

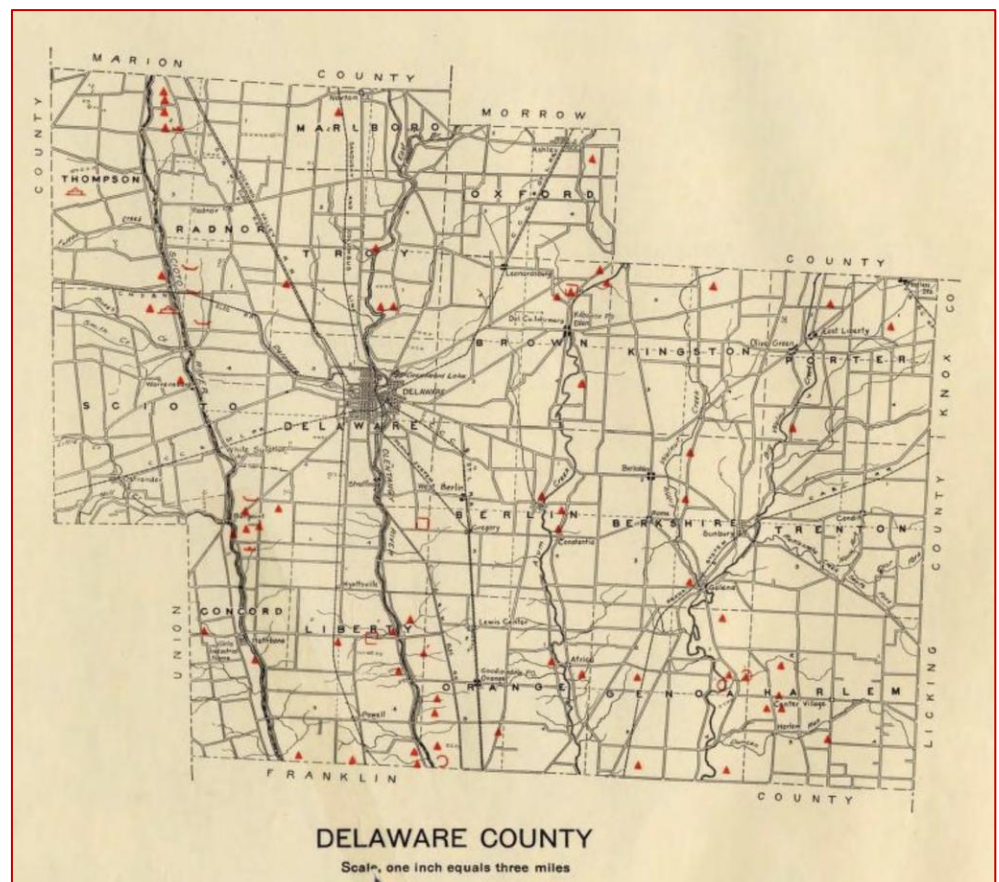
The Adena people are believed to be responsible for giving Ancient America ideas such as the use of smoking tobacco, the creation of clay pottery, and possibly even the development of small-scale agriculture. The Adena Effigy Pipe artifact, found in 1901 during archeological excavation of the Adena Mound on the estate of Governor Thomas Worthington in Chillicothe, is the official artifact of the State of Ohio. The [Icon of Ancient Ohio: The Adena Pipe](#) article by Dr. Brad Lepper of the Ohio History Connection provides more details.

So, when did people first decide that the future Delaware County was a good place to make a home, and why? The Middle Archaic Period (6000-3000 BCE) is believed to be when

populations in the state began to increase beyond small bands of hunter-gatherers. As the Earth began to warm and summers lasted longer, the fertile river valley between the Olentangy and Scioto rivers offered everything an ancient society could ask for - think Mesopotamia, but in the Midwest.

Larger groups began to settle in semi-permanent villages, traveling further north in the summer to mine the copper deposits around the Great Lakes. The earliest evidence found by a team of archaeologists at Cambridge University Press for copper working in the Midwest dates back at least 9500 years, making metal working in America contemporaneous with its emergence in the Middle East.

**Mounds and earthworks in Delaware County, Ohio.**  
**Archaeological Atlas of Ohio**  
**(1915)**



Just as some people have been skeptical of the Hopewell people's in-depth knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, discussions surrounding metal working in prehistoric America have tended to be dismissive of the ancient peoples' abilities. For a long time, the fact that ancient Americans never developed wide-scale production of metals such as bronze and steel was used to justify beliefs that they were less developed than metal-working cultures in Europe. However, archaeologist Michelle Bebber of Kent State University has recreated various copper tools and weapons created by these archaic cultures. She came to a very different conclusion. In her experiments, bone and stone tools performed just as well as copper, and were far easier and quicker to make. Bebber writes that the cultures making these tools were "highly innovative," and would "regularly experiment with novel materials," so it would make sense for them to move on if copper just wasn't worth the trouble.

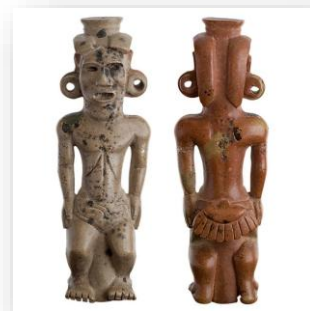
Temperatures generally continued to rise in the Late Archaic period (3000-1000 BCE), and settlements became more permanent, freeing up time for these early Ohioans to focus on art, agriculture, and trade. Northern settlements continued to mine and work copper to produce tools, jewelry, and weapons that were traded "on an almost industrial scale," according to archaeologists E.J. Neiburger and Sarah Shulman in *Central States Archaeological Journal*.

Adena, Hopewell, and other Woodland Cultures (1000 BCE-100 CE) evolved from these Archaic Copper Working Cultures. The introduction of pottery was a major game changer, allowing people to store and transport large quantities of food. Agriculture began to become a major source of sustenance, and evidence of complex ritual activity and social stratification began to appear in the archaeological record.

Like so many great civilizations, prehistoric cultures of Ohio disappeared from the record quite suddenly. There was not one thing that could have destroyed such a massive civilization. Archeologists and historians believe that a combination of cooling climates, increased warfare, and natural disasters all contributed to the fall of the Woodland Civilizations. Despite these factors, many holdovers from these ancient cultures were carried into later civilizations. Some groups continued to inter their dead alongside those laid to rest in much older mounds, up until about 1000 CE.

Today, we recognize and commemorate these indigenous people whose history is indelibly imprinted on Ohio. For in-depth information, see *Ohio Archaeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio's Ancient American Indian Culture* by Bradley T. Lepper (2005) and the 2026 book *Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks: Landscape Monuments of the Ancient Ohio Valley* by John E. Hancock. A six-part series about the ancient Ohio earthworks, "Stories Written on the Land" is offered by WOSU Public Media on YouTube.

### ADENA PIPE ARTIFACT



***Editor's note:*** The original version of this article, with footnotes and references, was printed in *Ohio Wesleyan University's September 18, 2023 [Trident](#), the publication of the Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program. Used by permission. The article has been edited for clarity and length, and includes new information.*

## Delaware County Agriculture: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

By Becky S. Cornett with Mary Fleming

The value of Ohio land throughout history cannot be overstated – from the experiences of the Ancients to our decades as part of the Ohio Country through statehood in 1803, to the present – Ohio’s soil is some of the country’s best. Agriculture is still Ohio’s #1 industry – one in eight Ohioans is connected to farming or production in some way. In the 2026 issue of *Growing Ohio*, Brian Baldrige, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture says: “Ohio’s diverse food and agriculture industry is the foundation on which our state was built and continues to lead us into a plentiful and prosperous future.” There are 74,000 farms in Ohio; 95% are family farms. It may be a surprise to some people, but there are 39,100 *new* and beginning farmers in our state! Ohio ranks #1 in the U.S. for Swiss cheese production, #2 for eggs, #5 for soybeans and pumpkins, #7 for corn and grain, #8 for hogs, and #9 for turkeys. In 2024, Ohio dairy farms produced 5.7 *billion* pounds of milk.

Delaware County’s farmland has decreased over the last decades due to rapid urbanization,



but agriculture is still a foundational industry with over 700 farms and related businesses. According to the latest available USDA Census of Agriculture (2022), the county’s top crops in acres are: soybeans by far, corn for grain, wheat for grain, and hay. Hogs lead the way in livestock inventory, followed by layer chickens, cattle, horses, sheep, pullets, goats, and broilers.

Our farms represent a wide variety of types and purposes: traditional production farms, large livestock operations, and our famous horse farms - but also horticulture and floriculture, community-supported agriculture (CSA), homesteading, niche farming such as growing hops for breweries, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, and herbs for restaurants or gourmet markets, herbs and flowers for gift shops, cut flowers for local shops or by subscription, bees, Christmas trees, hemp, etc. Delaware County also has popular agritourism opportunities.

Fleming also points out that there are millions of everyday products that use raw materials and agriculture byproducts such as medicines and medical products, paint, adhesives, cosmetics and lotions, soap, detergent, insulation, biofuel, clothing, shoes, brushes, biodegradable plastics, and many more.

Ag tech innovation is an important and increasing component of farming in Delaware County, fostering precision agriculture: use of drones for spraying, mapping, and monitoring; satellite-based land management; artificial intelligence (AI) for predictive analytics and yield forecasting as well as robotics and autonomous equipment, and for water management and drainage. Our county has the advantage of the proximity of Ohio State University’s Agtech Innovation Hub and companies such as Heritage Cooperative to

facilitate modern agricultural solutions and optimize results.

The agriculture and agribusiness industries are facing strong headwinds with increasing input, operating, and production costs; squeezed margins, unpredictable federal ag policy, global market challenges, and an uncertain domestic and global economic outlook. Delaware County’s Economic Development Strategic Plan (2023) reported that our county’s crop acreage is more diversified than other counties but also reflects Ohio’s high standing nationally in corn and soybean production, with 91% of Delaware County acreage devoted to those crops. The county’s top commodity crops by cash receipts are soybeans, nursery and greenhouse, and corn. Combined, the county’s corn and soybean production account for 67.7% of the county’s crop commodity cash receipts – reflecting vulnerability to global disruptions in those markets.

The strategic plan report points out the decline in agricultural acreage here (6.5% from 2020 - 2022) while developed land increased by 13.1%.

This trend is likely to continue as the county population – and resulting demand for housing, business, and commercial space - continues to grow. Keeping the character of Delaware County as a place that offers important historical sites and venues, including the wonderful recreated Depression Era Gallant Farm; pumpkin festivals, farm camps, a farm toy show, strong 4-H programs that build leadership skills, numerous farm markets, many historic barns and Century Farms, homesteading workshops, farm-to-table classes, equestrian centers, country wineries and breweries, fields of crops that become products necessary for everyday life, and last, but not least: beautiful rural vistas – will take concerted effort and careful planning, engagement, and commitment among all stakeholders.

It is interesting to review the 1912 agricultural statistics for Delaware County, noting the types of crops, the large acreage in fruit, and the large number of sheep (48,821). Also note the valuation of the 10,120 horses: \$1,187,381 (about \$40 million in 2026 dollars).

**AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, DELAWARE COUNTY.**  
(Compiled from Assessor's Returns, May, 1912.)  
Total number of acres in county, 237,846.

	Acres sown 1911.	Bu. produced 1911.	Acres sown 1912.
Wheat .....	19,010	284,103	16,047
Rye .....	1,282	14,012	901
Oats .....	10,020	228,186	14,818
Barley .....	63	.....	11
Corn .....	37,722	1,417,493	41,815
Ensilage corn .....	1,535	.....	1,298
Peas .....	70	3,500 lbs.	
Irish potatoes .....	482	32,080	444
Meadow .....	41,899	44,188	
Clover .....	8,995	9,926 tons.	
Alfalfa .....	459	1,276 tons.	

Gallons of milk produced, 1911, 632,581. Butter made in home dairies, 484,628 pounds; in creameries, 1,509,836. Eggs produced, 1,160,637 dozen.

Acres in fruit—Apples, 2,162 acres, producing 161,581 bushels in 1911; grapes, 2 acres; peaches, 38 acres, 1,873 bushels; pears, 26½ acres, 2,067 bushels; cherries, 15¼ acres, 475 bushels.

Acres cultivated, 1911, 73,362; acres in pasture, 144,888; acres woodland, 17,493; acres lying waste, 2,102.

Animals owned—10,120 horses, valued at \$1,187,381; 17,089 cattle, valued at \$440,227; 201 mules, valued at \$23,190; 48,821 sheep, valued at \$154,075; 21,183 hogs, valued at \$156,900.

**FAIR DATES, 1913.**

The Pumpkin Show—October 8, 9, 10 and 11.  
Rome Fair—September 18 and 19.

Source: *The Delaware, Ohio Blue Book: Some Facts and Figures 1913.*

**Editor’s Note:** This article is based on an interview follow-up to a talk given by Mary Fleming at the 2025 annual meeting of the DCHS. Fleming is the president of the Delaware County Farm Bureau, and a farmer whose ancestor, Daniel G. Thurston, was the first permanent settler of Brown Township in 1817. Fleming also is a fierce advocate for the agriculture community and Delaware County.

## In Memoriam

By Donna Meyer,  
Retired DCHS Executive Director

I rarely saw her without a smile. And she rarely turned down a project. I am speaking of longtime DCHS volunteer Jan Fleischmann, whom we sadly lost this January to cancer.

Jan wore many hats during her years with the Historical Society. She devoted countless hours as a Board member, serving as Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President of Operations, and Vice President of Development. As an excellent writer, she contributed numerous articles to the *Historian* newsletter. One of her most memorable pieces—*Ghost Signs “Haunting” Downtown Delaware* (2018)—was the product of extensive research into the fading advertising murals that still mark our city’s past.

Jan especially shined at our First Friday table, always ready to greet visitors and share information about our organization. She was an avid gardening volunteer, never hesitating to pull a weed or tidy a flower bed. She delighted in dressing up in period clothing as a docent at the Historic Jail and Sheriff’s Residence, the Meeker Museum, at DCHS events and tours, and during the Ghost Walk in downtown Delaware.

Her volunteer spirit extended well beyond the Historical Society. She was an active member of the **Northwest Neighborhood Association**, helping with their events, and lent her energy to the **Boardman Art Park** and the **Stratford Cemetery**, where she cleared brush and weeds from around historic tombstones. Even hip replacement surgery barely slowed her down—she was back at it within weeks.

As the Society “grew up” following the acquisition of the Meeker property in 2010, Jan worked tirelessly to help guide DCHS into its next phase. She helped establish policies and procedures, including our records retention policy. A natural organizer, she labeled nearly everything. Her methodical style and drive for order were, she often joked, the product of her German heritage.



**Janis "Jan" Dora Fleischmann**

August 4, 1947 – January 13, 2026



Jan grew up on a farm in Medford, Wisconsin, where winter temperatures routinely dipped to 20 below. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in Library Science, and went on to serve as an academic librarian in many capacities—at Wayne State University, Ohio Wesleyan University as a reference librarian, and at Grady Memorial Hospital, where she verified credentials for incoming staff. Around 1985, she began working at OCLC, the global nonprofit library organization known for its shared technology services, research, and community programs.



Jan also was an avid hiker, adding the Teton Mountains to her list of conquests, and a member of the Central Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club, where she met her husband, architect Roger Koch. After years together, they decided to marry in the simplest—and most frugal way possible. Their research led them to Colorado’s self-solemnization process, which requires only a \$20 license and personal vows. Standing atop a postcard-worthy mountain pass, they became husband and wife. Jan kept her own last name, laughing that she wasn’t particularly fond of his. The two shared a love of the outdoors and of bluegrass music, and they often could be spotted at concerts across Ohio.



Jan’s passing leaves a large gap in the heart of the Delaware County Historical Society, as well as my own. Her dedication, warmth, and tireless service enriched our organization and community in ways that will be felt for years to come. Rest easy, Jan. You deserve it.

# Delaware County Makes Art! Get Ready for the Delaware County Arts Pass, Coming in May!

On May 5 at 7pm at the Barn at Stratford, the DCHS is planning to unveil an Arts Pass as part of the county's America 250-Ohio celebration. The Ohio 250 theme for May is "Ohio Creates: Arts, Culture & Literature," focusing on celebrating the state's rich history of artists, performers, writers, and cultural contributions. The Arts Pass is designed to highlight our county's many opportunities to experience the arts in many forms: painting and drawing, sculpture, pottery, photography, architecture, music, theater, dance, film, literature and poetry, decorative, culinary, and media. Delaware County offers a wealth of opportunities. Everyone is invited to discover our county's bounty, including performances, classes, exhibits, festivals, events, museums, galleries, readings, and publications. Don't miss the opportunity to celebrate our communities' treasures.



ARTS  
CASTLE



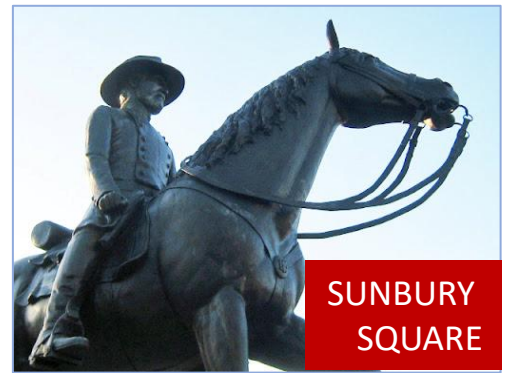
OSTRANDOORS



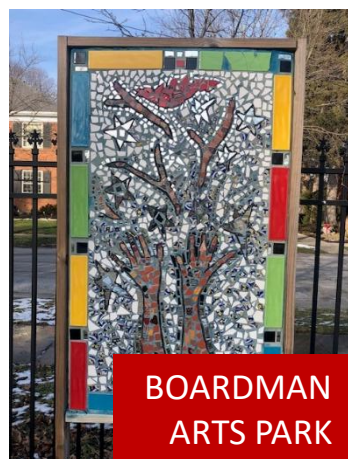
ROSS ART MUSEUM



Your home for first-run movies



SUNBURY  
SQUARE



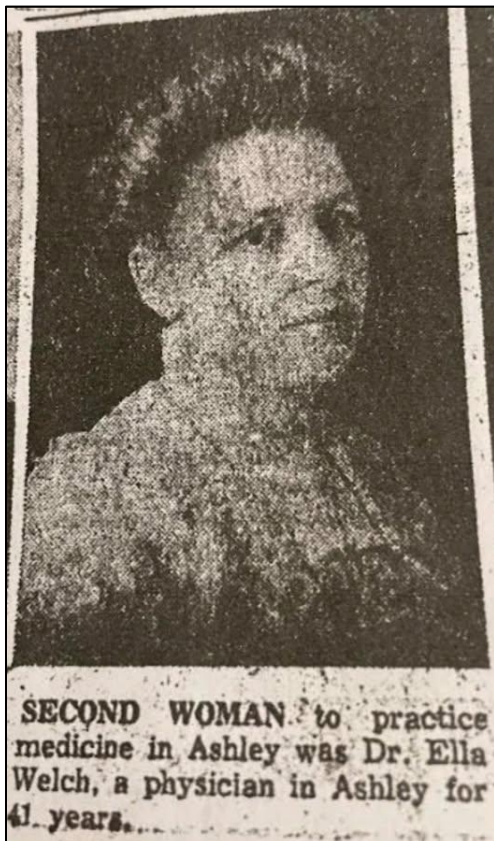
BOARDMAN  
ARTS PARK



OWU GRAY CHAPEL

## People of the Past...

Born in Delaware, Ohio, VanDeman was an intelligence officer in the Army who is credited with being the “father of military intelligence.” He earned both law (Harvard) and medical degrees (Miami Medical College, Cincinnati) and worked for a time as an Army surgeon before developing a keen interest in military intelligence. Overcoming naysayers and bureaucracy, Van Deman oversaw the Military Intelligence Division (MID), which was the forerunner to the Defense Mapping Service, the Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC), the Intelligence Command, the Industrial Security organization, the National Security Agency, and the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School. In 1919, VanDeman was the senior American intelligence officer and Chief of Counter-intelligence for the Paris Peace Commission. He retired in 1929.



### Major General Ralph Henry VanDeman, US Army (1865 -1952)



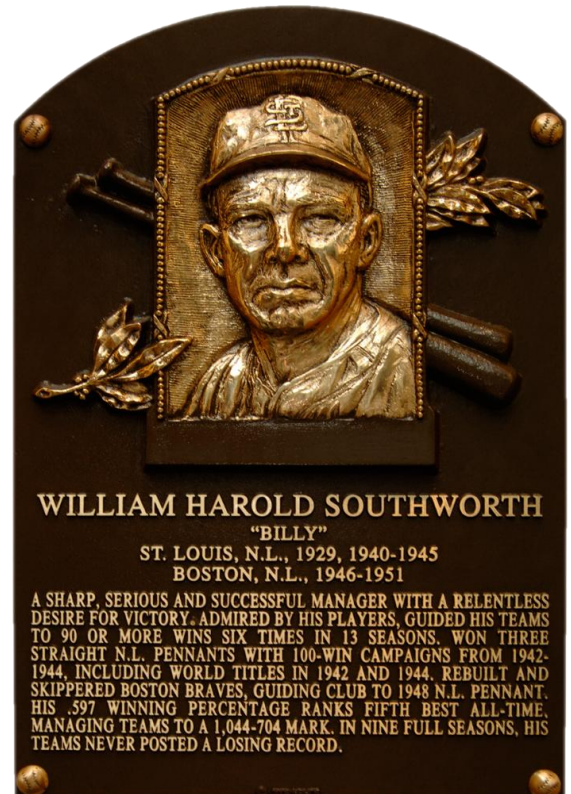
Photo: c. 1918, Warfare History Network

### Dr. Ella Welch (1863-1935)

The second woman to practice medicine in Delaware County, Ella Dennison Welch, was born in Peru Township, Morrow County. She first studied medicine with Dr. G. Foster of Olive Green (1889). In 1891, she entered Toledo Medical College, graduating in 1894. Welch practiced for 41 years in Ashley, until her death at age 71. Her office was at 120 E. High St., which also housed the dental office of her son, Dennis Welch. Her obituary noted that Dr. Welch was active in community life, serving on the County Board of Health, and was a charter member of the Eastern Star. Welch’s husband, Rodman, preceded her in death by 11 years. Her sisters, a half-brother, four grandchildren and a great-grandchild all lived in Ashley.

### Billy Southworth (1893-1969)

William “Billy the Kid” Harold Southworth was an American outfielder and manager in Major League Baseball, whose St. Louis Cardinal teams won the World Series in 1942 and 1944. He had winning records as a manager in each of his nine full big-league seasons. He managed 1,770 games during his career. Born in Nebraska, Southworth grew up in Columbus. When he retired from baseball, he moved to a farm in Trenton Township. He is buried in Greenlawn Cemetery. In 2008, Southworth was inducted posthumously into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Visit the tribute marker to Southworth at 12211 Hartford Road (County Road 44), East of Sunbury, Ohio.



### ...And People of the Present

#### Tracy Peyton



Tracey Peyton is the Managing Director of the historic Strand Theatre in Downtown Delaware. It is one of the few remaining independent theaters offering first-run movies. During her 10-plus years there, Peyton has garnered *national* attention for the Strand with a monthly sensory program, and *state* attention with the Historical Theatre of the Year Award in 2021. The theatre also received the Delaware Main Street Business Innovation Award in 2021, and the Delaware Chamber of Commerce’s Quality-of-Life Award in 2018. Prior to her current role, Peyton worked in radio, hospitality management, and conferencing. She produced concerts for the Pro Football Hall of Fame Ribs Burnoff, where she worked with The Four Tops, The Romantics, Hall and Oates, and Rick Springfield. After a very successful “Illuminate the Strand” fundraising campaign, the new blade and marquee, offering a distinctive Old Hollywood “vibe,” were dedicated on January 9, 2026.

**Emma Hawes**



Emma Hawes was born and raised in Delaware, Ohio. Her parents are Richard and Jane Hawes; Jane is the Director of Communications for the Delaware County Commissioners. Hawes took her first dance classes with Jill Garlock at The Arts Castle in Delaware and enjoyed competing in swimming for local teams. She attended St. Mary School in Delaware before enrolling at Canada's National Ballet School to complete her academic education and ballet training. After graduation, Hawes joined the National Ballet of Canada in Toronto as a corps de ballet member, rising to the rank of first soloist. In 2018, she joined the English National Ballet in London, U.K., where she was promoted to lead principal in 2023. She has performed at the Kennedy Center and the Royal Albert Hall, and as a guest artist with the Royal Danish Ballet and the Kazakh National Opera and Ballet.

Roxanne Amidon is a 29-year resident of Delaware. She spent the first 30 years of her career in the technology sector as a manager at CompuServe and Sterling Commerce, as VP of Implementation Service for ECO Outlook, and as e-Commerce Director and Director of Strategic Planning for Wendy's International. In 2014, Amidon started a design and renovation firm with her husband. Since 2016, Roxanne has worked on a passion project, serving as Executive Director for Boardman Arts Park. The property has evolved from an empty 2-acre lot that formerly held the Boardman Elementary School, to a unique outdoor art gallery and play space, including a gazebo, gardens, walking paths, and a plant library. A wide variety of festivals and events are held seasonally. Currently, the Whimsy Venue is under construction, to include enhanced grounds, a work-of-art performance stage, and year-round Kaleidoscope Glass House.

**Roxann Amidon**



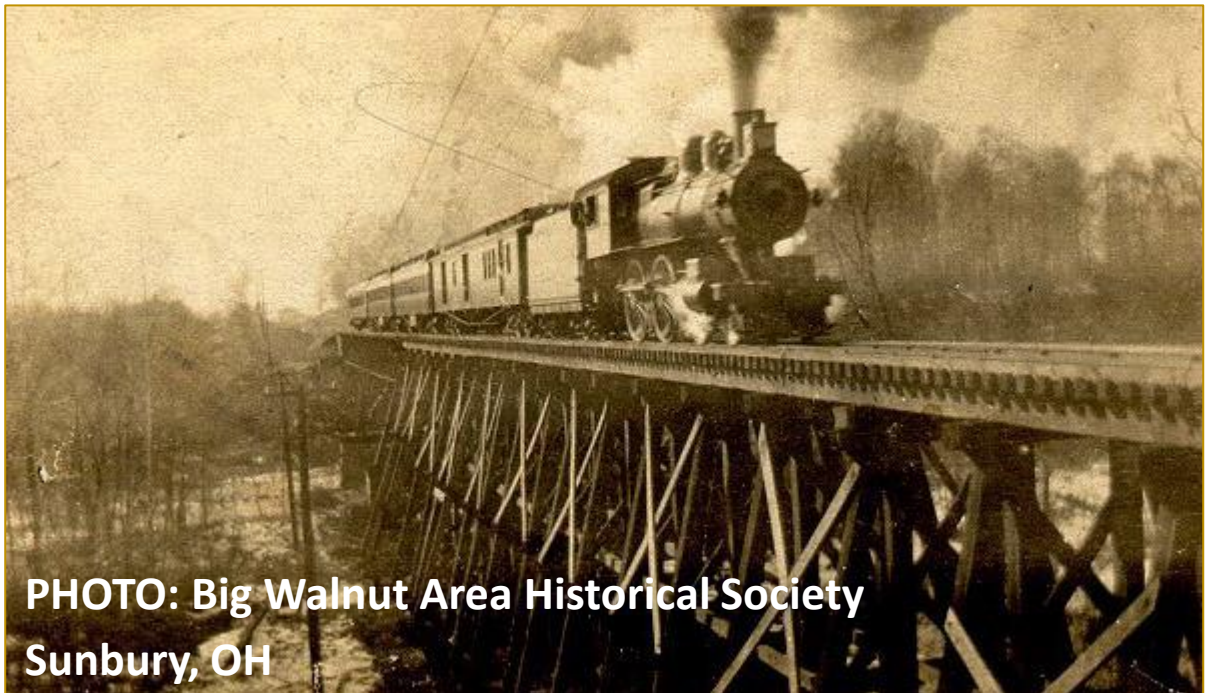
**A BLAST FROM THE PAST****Railroad was a Major Asset to Residents**

By Polly Horn

To get a railroad to go through your town, the residents had to contribute land and money to build the railroad. The early cost to get the railroad through Delaware County was \$100,000.

Galena paid \$13,500 and Sunbury contributed \$22,000 to get the Cleveland, Mt. Vernon, and Columbus Railroad to go through their villages. Farmers along the route donated land. Each community built a train station to accommodate freight and passengers, as well as provide water and fuel for the trains.

The railroad came through Trenton Township, but missed the community of Condit. The station was built south of Condit, and the crossroads became known as Condit Station.



**PHOTO: Big Walnut Area Historical Society  
Sunbury, OH**

In *Memories of Early Sunbury*, Louise Sedgwick wrote of her memories of the railroad coming to the community and the first passenger train in 1873: "I remember well when the first passenger train came over the road. I had measles and my Aunt Nett Armstrong wrapped me in a blanket and held me on her lap, and it was a big time."

Four passenger trains a day ran each way with an additional passenger train running south at 10:23pm. Low passenger rates boosted railroad business in 1936. That year, the Alf Landon Special went through the community.

***Editor's note:*** Landon was the 1936 Republican candidate for U.S. President, losing to incumbent President Franklin Roosevelt.

For years, people would go to the station to meet the train just to pass the time. Often, political candidates rode the train and gave speeches from the back of the train during its regular stop. Two young men decided to ride the cowcatcher on the front of the train from Centerburg to Condit, but the train did not stop so they road all the way to Sunbury and were very embarrassed when many people were there to see the train arrive.

The railroad not only made Columbus an easier trip, but it also served as mail carrier to the communities. Each train had a sorter to sort the mail after each stop. When this became too expensive, a post with a hook was installed near the tracks so the men on the train could hang bags of mail over the hook without the train stopping. This was discontinued in 1941, during Governor Frank Lausche’s term of office, when mail was shipped and sorted on vans or mail buses. Now, it is shipped by truck.

Ohio State University sponsored Farmer’s Institutes, which were educational courses, taught in the railroad cars while they sat on the siding. This brought the latest in agricultural and home economics to the rural communities. Extended courses were held in the Town Hall and called “Sunbury Institute.”

Spurs from the main railroad went to Blue Grass Grove along High Street to Hartford Road and to Camp Clifton north of Sunbury on Old 3-C Highway. These became summer resorts. Wild Bill’s Wild West Show came into town and unloaded on the siding east of Granville Street

to put on their show in the field at the bottom of the hill in the southeast corner of Cherry and Morning Streets.

In December 1956, a train was chartered to take the Big Walnut High School band and fans to the Cleveland Browns football game in Cleveland where the band provided the half-time entertainment.

Nestle, Landmark, Sunbury Mill, Carter Luber, Cellar Lumber, Galena Shale, Tile and Brick, and the quarries were big users of the railroad. The railroad changed hands many times with Pennsylvania Railroad the longest owner, until it was finally closed by Amtrak in 1984 – 101 years after the first passenger train.



***Editor’s Note:*** Polly Whitney Horn is curator of the Myers Inn Museum of the Big Walnut Area Historical Society (BWAHS), and a long-time local historian. She wrote this column as part of the series “Because You Asked.... And Now You Know” in the Sunbury News, April 8, 2019. Used by permission.



East Central Avenue and Lake Street Train Station, Delaware, OH.

## Collection Spotlight: McGuffey's Readers

### An Enduring Impact on US Society

William Holmes McGuffey (1800-1873) was born in Pennsylvania, but grew up in Ohio. At the time he published his first *McGuffey's Readers* series in 1836, he was a professor at Miami University. After a ten-year tenure there, he became president of Cincinnati College, and then president of Ohio University (1839-1843). He had been hired as a professor at Miami shortly after his own graduation. According to Dr. William Smith at Miami University, writing in 1973, McGuffey "influenced the formation of American thought in the West more than any other American."

Before McGuffey, many Americans learned from the Puritan New England Primer, which was stern. McGuffey's books soon eclipsed the Primer, and fifteen other sets that were published, selling 100 million copies by 1900. Five generations of Americans used the readers; McGuffey was known as "the schoolmaster of the nation."

The textbooks focused on learning to read via phonics; spelling, vocabulary, and moral lessons for a nation growing by leaps and bounds. Historians say that McGuffey's themes instilled a shared set of moral, civic, and industrious values, with a Protestant bent. McGuffey was an ordained Presbyterian minister, shaping American character and influencing the norms of society.

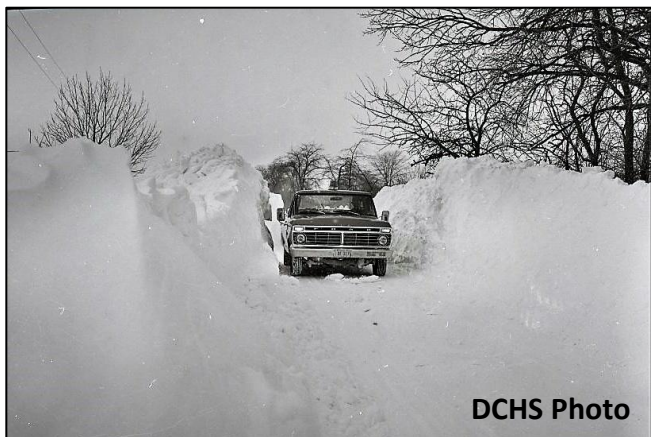
At least ten US presidents were educated using the readers. Theodore Roosevelt referenced McGuffey's story characters in his own speeches, aspiring to be like "Meddlesome Matty," a character in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

Luminaries such as Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, and the Wright Brothers were also McGuffey's Readers educated. According to The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, Ford considered McGuffey one of his great heroes because of his ability to spark young imaginations. Ford commemorated McGuffey's role in education by rebuilding his birthplace of Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, and constructing a school out of barn logs from the McGuffey farmstead in Ohio. The school served as the second-grade classroom for students attending Edison Institute Schools from 1934-1969.



**Students examining McGuffey Readers with DCHS Curriculum Committee instructors.**

Not everyone approved of the readers, citing omissions of stories and speeches of many great leaders, no mention of slavery, negative references about Native Americans, and emphasis on women in domestic roles only. Today, the readers, still in print, are used in homeschool settings, and by some private and charter schools.



DCHS Photo

## Aftermath of the Blizzard of 1978 – Delaware County, Ohio

Twelve to 15 inches of new snow fell on January 26, 1978, and near hurricane-force winds created drifts of 15-25 feet. By the end of the month, some areas had over 40 inches of snow on the ground. The storm paralyzed Ohio, resulting in record low barometric pressure. Fifty-four people were killed and 2,000 homes destroyed in Ohio.



**Slocum Hall Reading Room, Ohio Wesleyan University.** The 70-by-20-foot leaded glass skylight is the stunning focal point for the historic Reading Room. Slocum Hall was the OWU library from 1898-1966. The restored room and skylight opened in 2022. Eighteen glass portraits of famous thinkers line the skylight. Today, Slocum Hall serves as the Admission Welcome Center and hub for the OWU Connection program.



Mill Creek Cemetery  
Concord Twp. Delaware County, OH  
David K. Gustafson - 15 June 2002 ©

Photo: Find a Grave

**Grave of Sgt. William Warrington, Mill Creek Cemetery, near Ostrander, Ohio.** Warrington served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War from February 14, 1776 to Feb. 10, 1778. He enlisted with the 9th Virginia Regiment, 1st Virginia Brigade, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division. Warrington was transferred to the Commander-in-Chief's Guard on March 12, 1777. Sgt. Warrington served with General George Washington at Valley Forge and during the Battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Morristown, and Trenton.

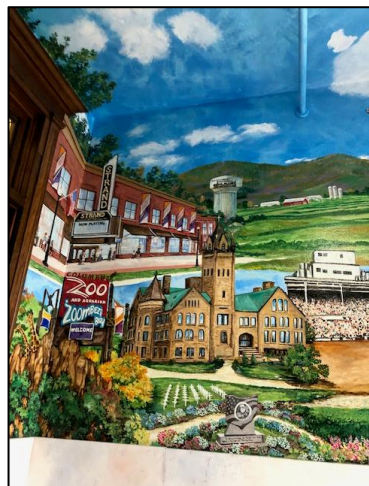


Photo: B. Cornett

Section of the mural in the vestibule of the Delaware County Law Library (old Carnegie Library) at 101 N. Sandusky St., Delaware. The mural depicts scenes of Delaware County history.

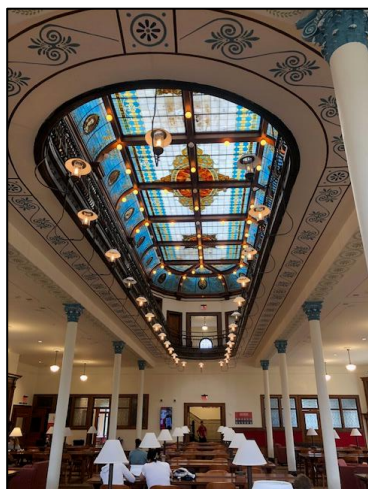


Photo: B. Cornett

## ***Announcing: RUD from Delaware***

*A new book about the childhood of President Rutherford Birchard Hayes.*

*Author: Brent Carson*

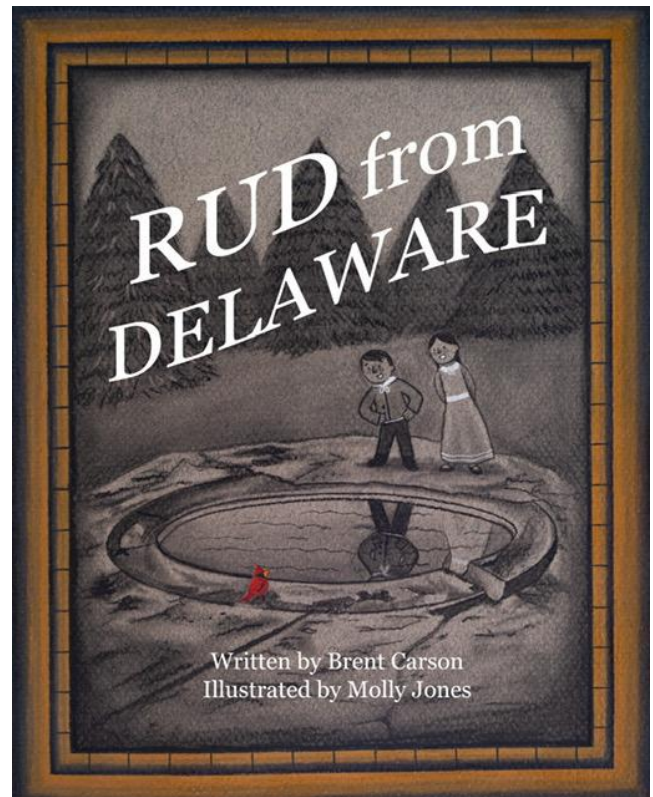
*Illustrator: Molly Jones*

A new children's book, which describes the early years of our 19<sup>th</sup> U.S. President Rutherford Birchard Hayes in Delaware, Ohio - is nearing its publication date. The book highlights Hayes' first fourteen years of life. Hayes' nickname "Rud" began in his youth and followed him through life.

Delaware County resident Molly Jones drew 18 illustrations to highlight the story. Carson and Jones began their collaboration two years ago. At that time, Jones was a junior at Buckeye Valley High School. Today she is a freshman pursuing a degree in fine arts at Otterbein University.

Carson described their collaboration as a wonderful venture. "Molly is so talented and so serious in creating her illustrations. It is no wonder that she has won both local and national awards for her art. It has been an honor to work with her."

The author decided to focus on Rud's connections to his hometown rather than on President Hayes' accomplishments as an adult. Carson spent his career as a teacher in the Delaware City Schools. He said, "My classroom was only one-half block from where my great-great-grandmother taught Rutherford and Fanny Hayes in a one-room stone school. Walking through the downtown or on the Ohio Wesleyan campus, I sometimes reminisce about walking the same streets and paths once followed by President Hayes."



This year we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country. There have been only forty-five individuals who have served as President of the United States, and most of them came from small villages or towns. For that reason, Carson and Jones chose to begin the book with a page of dedication: "Dedicated to the small towns and villages of America."

***Editor's Note:*** Submitted by staff with Brent Carson.

***Brent Carson currently is the President Emeritus of the Delaware County Historical Society.***





**Photos from our recent event, Dinner with the Presidents and First Ladies.**

Photos by Brad Cowan.



**DCHS OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES**

- Karen Cowan, President
- Eric Anderson, Executive Vice President
- Terri Ross, Vice President of Development
- Desiree Hoffman, Vice President of Board Operations
- Jeff Ross, Treasurer
- Nancy Reger, Secretary
- Ceena Baker, Trustee
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- Margaret Snyder, Trustee

**WE ARE AN**



**SUPPORTER**

Any audio-visual equipment and internet access provided by a grant from the Delaware County

Foundation.



Delaware County Foundation

# BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

*Join us for these programs in 2026!*

Programs are free unless otherwise noted. Members receive a discount for ticketed events.

## JANUARY THROUGH JUNE

**WHEN:** Tuesday, January 20, at 7:00 PM  
**WHAT:** Delaware County Inventors  
**WHERE:** Zoom Only  
**WHO:** Presented by Steve Schmitt, Society Volunteer

**WHEN:** Tuesday, February 17, at 7:00 PM  
**WHAT:** Delaware County Barns: Our History Lives  
**WHERE:** The Barn at Stratford\*  
**WHO:** Presented by Dick Leavy and Judy Hammel (Society Volunteers) with a panel of owners of these historic barns.

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 19, at 7:00 PM  
**WHAT:** Footprints in Flint: Delaware County's Ancient Past  
**WHERE:** The Barn at Stratford\*  
**WHO:** Presented by Steve Schenck, Society Volunteer

**WHEN:** Tuesday, April 21, at 7:00 PM  
**WHAT:** Delaware County: Transportation Crossroads  
**WHERE:** The Barn at Stratford\*  
**WHO:** Presented by Becky Cornett, Society Volunteer

**WHEN:** Tuesday, May 5, at 7:00 PM  
**WHAT:** Delaware County Makes Art—Passport Kickoff  
**WHERE:** The Barn at Stratford\*  
**WHO:** Presented by Society Volunteers

**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 16, at 7:00 PM  
**WHAT:** Limestone: A Delaware County Resource  
**WHERE:** The Barn at Stratford\*  
**WHO:** Presented by Steve Schmitt, Society Volunteer

Registration is on Eventbrite for all programs and events.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/d/oh--delaware/delaware-county-historical-society/>

Registrants can sign up to watch the live stream program via a YouTube link, for a small fee charged on Eventbrite.

Additional information will be posted on our website several weeks before each event:

<https://www.DelawareOhioHistory.org/programs-and-events/>

The Barn at Stratford  
2690 Stratford Road  
Delaware, OH

\*Alternate location TBD if The Barn parking lot is closed for construction.

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