Getting the Kids (and us all) Involved

It’s not only about Snapchat (although yes, we have one now). It’s about creating memories and lasting impressions that make us all want to learn more. Whether that learning process takes us to social media, a library, or the family photo album is entirely up to the person, child, or family. The future of education and the role local history plays in that future has been a topic of conversation here at the Historical Society for many years. It is the reason our capital campaign includes a Teacher Resource Center and it is the reason we have provided increased classroom space and are looking into distance learning partnerships. For those of us who have yet to master Snapchat (I will admit to that) or who prefer to occasionally flip the pages of a book instead of typing into a search bar, we owe our future generations that opportunity to choose which learning method is best for them.

If putting selfie stations in every exhibit encourages people to see themselves in history, let’s do it. If holding genealogy workshops to create an embarrassing birthday gift for Uncle Eddie is going to help people preserve their family history, let’s do it. I tend to blend old and new schools so you’ll most likely find me searching through microfilm, getting my hands dirty in old maps, and posting my finds on Facebook. Here’s to the encouragement of history enthusiasts of all ages. Welcome!

-Elizabeth Connor, Executive Director

Scout Jamboree

August 5-7, 2016

So many people have been asking, and we’re finally making dreams come true. It’s our first Scout Jamboree for boy scouts and girl scouts! Bring your tent (or sleepover in the museum) and get ready for a weekend full of historic crafts, geocaching, blacksmithing, cooking, storytelling, and badge-earning. Please download the registration forms on our website to take your first step towards earning a Lake County Heritage Badge!

More info and registration forms: http://lakehistorycenter.org/programs-and-events/

Civil War Reenactment

May 27-29, 2016

Our Civil War Reenactment is back! Schools, groups, and homeschoolers are joining us for Civil War Education Day on May 27, and the public is joining us for a weekend full of cannon blasts, music, speakers, and living history villages all set in the 1860’s. We are welcoming the 7th Battalion of the Army of Northern Virginia along with Birney’s Division of the Union Army as the commanders of this year’s reenactment.

More info and registration forms: http://lakehistorycenter.org/programs-and-events/
Research Request Brings Lost Relatives Together

The Historical Society receives numerous research requests every month, and many of them are from out of state. In 2016 we are on track to double our research requests from 2015, and in 2015 we doubled the requests from the year before. This increase in research requests is probably due to our online presence. On our website, there is a place to submit a research request through e-mail.

Recently, the LCHS received a research request from an individual trying to verify his lineage for the Mayflower Society. For this organization, primary sources (original documents) are necessary. This individual was related to the General Edward Paine family through Paine’s second wife, Elizabeth King Paine, and their son Charles H. Paine. It was through Elizabeth King Paine that the individual was tied to the Mayflower families.

The LCHS had an abundance of information regarding the Paine families, but the difficulty we found was trying to tie Charles H. Paine to his mother Elizabeth Paine. Most records the LCHS had named General Paine’s wives, then listed all the children without respect to the particular mother. In addition, most of the records the LCHS have are not primary sources.

However, in one of the Paine family genealogy records there was a typed transcript of a family Bible record made in the 1980’s. This seemed to bring some hope since a family Bible record would be considered a primary source, and the LCHS had held a Paine family Bible in its collection. But the Bible LCHS had turned out not to be the same Bible from which the transcript was made, and the transcript by itself would not be acceptable as a primary source.

It seemed like the end of the trail, until it was noticed that there was a person to contact listed on the transcript. It was a long shot since the transcript was dated several decades ago, but the researcher was given the contact person’s information.

The contact was successfully reached, and it turned out that the individual was a distant relative that the researcher had not known about. The two became acquainted and shared many family notes. The Bible from which the transcript was made was still in the possession of the contact and he was happy to provide images of the page that had been transcribed thus providing the researcher with evidence of a primary source of his lineage.

This research request was satisfying on several levels, but most satisfying was that two distant relatives were united through the research request – a connection that might never have been made if not for the Lake County Historical Society.
2016 Lake County Historical Society Outreach and Membership Drive
July 11-16

For one week only, join us and bring your friends for six days of free programs and exhibits, brought to locations near you! In our first Outreach Week, we are bringing location-specific programs and traveling exhibits to six historic locations in Lake County. Each evening, the program begins at 7pm. We will give you a 20 minute presentation, only heard once, and then let you explore that location’s archives and collections pieces from our collection and others’.

This program is designed to provide a great week of programming, but also to introduce new members to the Historical Society. Bring your friends and RSVP for all programs at 440-639-2945.

Willoughby Hills Grange: The lights turned on for the first time in Willoughby Hills and The Grange welcomed in a new age. Kick off the Historical Society’s outreach and membership drive and learn more about the Willoughby Hills Grange on July 11 at 7pm. Learn more about the rich history of The Grange and the group that inhabited it during this free presentation.

Old Council Hall (Mentor): Did you know that President James A. Garfield was an ordained minister before he entered office? Visit Old Council Hall in Mentor to see where President Garfield preached and support the Lake County Historical Society on July 12 at 7pm at the second stop in the drive. Don’t miss out on this opportunity to enjoy a free presentation and learn about the little known history of Mentor and the Lake County Historical Society!

Unionville Tavern: Could you stand up to a slavecatcher, even though it was against the law to lie to them? Learn about the daring citizens of Madison, Ohio who decided that protecting Lewis and Milton Clarke, two runaway slaves, was more important than following the law. Join us at Unionville Tavern for this free presentation and support the Lake County Historical Society as we make our third stop in the drive on July 13 at 7pm.

Coulby Mansion: Step into the lap of luxury for the night and learn about millionaires mile and the rich history of Wickliffe. Learn about the families and the scandals that called Millionaire’s Mile home. Join the Lake County Historical Society at the Coulby Mansion on July 14 at 7pm for the fourth stop in the drive for this free presentation!

Eastlake Log Cabin: The Great Depression was a time of hardship for many people in the world, and Lake County was no different. Learn about the humble origins of the Eastlake Log Cabin, now the Cabin of Willowick. Enjoy learning about the hardworking people of the County and discover new opportunities with the Lake County Historical Society during this free presentation. This fifth stop of the drive is July 15 at 7pm.

The Final Stop: A Prohibition Party

Underground Prohibition Party: Speakeasies, bootleggers, and moonshiners all lived in the era of prohibition. Take a step back to the 1920s and join the Lake County Historical Society in an Underground Speakeasy at The Art Gallery. Cheers to the Lake County Historical Society at the final stop of the membership and outreach drive! Enjoy a free presentation about the Underground Liquor trade of Lake County during the Prohibition Era. You may even get a treat...shhh, the password for entry is “Have you learned your History”.
The capture of Milton in Ohio, by the kidnappers

The story of Milton Clarke, fugitive slave captured in Lake County, Ohio, is a well-known story, but it is only part of a bigger story of three brothers who made frequent public appearances speaking out against the “Slave System” of the pre-Civil War United States. It is only part of the story of Lake County’s role in the abolitionist movement; a part which made it a well-known haven for fugitive slaves.

Milton was the brother of Lewis and Cyrus Clarke all three of whom had escaped from the same slave owner in Kentucky. Milton is locally famous, but he and Lewis and Cyrus became quite well known in the US and Canada. Lewis’s story can be read online in its entirety at http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/clarke/clarke.html, and it is very compelling reading. The following is an excerpt from the preface to the Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke, During a Captivity of More Than Twenty-Five Years, Among the Algerines of Kentucky, One of the So Called Christian States of America. Dictated by Himself: Lewis Garrard Clarke, 1812-1897:

For the two last years, I have had the most ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with Mr. Clarke. He has made this place his home, when not engaged in giving to public audiences the story of his sufferings, and the sufferings of his fellow slave. Soon after he came to Ohio, by the faithful instruction of pious friends, he was led, as he believes, to see himself a sinner before God, and to seek pardon and forgiveness through the precious blood of the Lamb. He has ever manifested an ardent thirst for religious, as well as for other kinds of knowledge. In the opinion of all those best acquainted with him, he has maintained the character of a sincere Christian. That he is what he professes to be,—a slave escaped from the grasp of avarice and power,—there is not the least shadow of doubt. His narrative bears the most conclusive internal evidence of its truth. Persons of discriminating minds have heard it repeatedly, under a great variety of circumstances, and the story, in all substantial respects, has been always the same. He has been repeatedly recognized in the Free States by persons who knew him in Kentucky, when a slave. During the summer of 1844, Cassius M. Clay visited Boston, and on seeing Milton Clarke, recognized him as one of the Clarke family, well known to him in Kentucky. Indeed, nothing can be more surely established than the fact that Lewis and Milton Clarke are no impostors. For three years they have been engaged in telling their story in seven or eight different States, and no one has appeared to make an attempt to contradict them. The capture of Milton in Ohio, by the kidnappers, as a slave, makes assurance doubly strong. Wherever they have told their story, large audiences have collected, and everywhere they have been listened to with great interest and satisfaction.

There are many local accounts of the story of the capture of Milton Clarke “by kidnappers”; some confusing Lewis for Milton, some saying it all occurred in Oberlin, Lorain County, some saying Milton was the only Clarke involved, some accounts saying it was due to Lewis’s escape from Kentucky that the slave catchers were sent to Ohio.

The best account, of course, is a first-hand account, and Lewis gives us that in his narrative for he was there when Milton was captured:

Soon after the escape of Cyrus, the Goths and Vandals of Kentucky made an irruption into Ohio, going about like Satan, seeking whom they might devour. Their special object of attack, however, was brother Milton. In August 1842, Milton and myself went up to Madison, Lake county, Ohio, to spend a few days. Milton went in a private conveyance with a widow lady named Cole, and her daughter. I went in the stage. Mrs. Cole and daughter spent their time at Dr. Merriman’s. Milton and myself were the guests of a Mr. Winchester. We set out to meet with the family on the Sabbath, and in the evening gave some account of our sufferings while in bondage. Postlewaite and McGowan, two pirates from Kentucky, were in the neighborhood at this time, waiting like beasts of prey to leap upon their victim.

Monday morning, my brother and myself, with two or three of Mr. Winchester’s family, rode up to Dr. Merriman’s to see the sick daughter of Mrs. Cole. Milton sat a few moments in the carriage, and the sick daughter of Mrs. Cole and a child of Dr. Merriman came out and wanted a ride. He had driven only a mile or two, when a close carriage met him, and turning directly across the road, several persons leaped out and stopped his horse. He had no suspicion who they were, and asked what they wanted. If they wanted money, he had but half a dollar, he told them, and they were welcome to that. They replied, “We do not want your money, but you.” Four men were now around him, and one of them ordered him to get out of the buggy—“Have you we will, dead or alive.”

As he jumped from the carriage, and struck the ground, they all leaped upon him, bent his head down to the ground, and bound him with a rope. The horse, which he left turned out of the road, upset the carriage, and tipped out the little girls; the sick one never recovered from the shock she received. Milton appealed to them to take care of the children, who were screaming in a frightful manner. The only reply was, that if they did not hold their tongues, they would cut their d—d throats.

After Milton was bound, he was carried to Centreville, before a magistrate called Page. The agents of Mr. Logan of Kentucky, had power of attorney to seize and bring home, wherever found, one Milton Clarke, the property of the said Logan. These man-hunters were provided with papers, by which they could identify him, and had also recommendations from some of the leading men in Kentucky. They employed a miserable read-eater of a lawyer, who calls himself Robert Harper. This less than man was ready to betray innocent blood for less than thirty pieces of silver. The examination was continued before the magistrate for several hours. The result was, that Milton was delivered over to those whose tender mercies are cruel. Meanwhile, the friends of the slave had not been idle. They had procured two writs, one from Lake county, to arrest Postlewaite & Co. as kidnappers, another from Ashtabula county, to take the body of Milton Clarke.

The road that lead from the place of trial was between the two counties. Great numbers were by this time gathered together. They so managed to throw obstructions in the way of the carriage, that it could make only a zigzag course until both writs were served. Milton was released and taken into Ashtabula county and permitted to go free, the kidnappers in great wrath were taken in an opposite direction, and after a while they were permitted to return empty handed to Kentucky.

Sketch of Milton Clarke
Many of the inconsistencies of today’s local accounts can be traced back to Lewis’s own account. The Lorain County version probably stems from the fact that Milton was living in Lorain County and that is where Lewis finally catches up with him after his own escape from Kentucky. Milton had been living there freely for many years. In contrast to most local accounts, Lewis makes it clear that the reason for the slave catchers being dispatched was because he had successfully returned to Kentucky to free the youngest brother, Cyrus. And it is clear from Lewis’s account that Milton was the target of the slave catchers.

You might wonder how anything can be added to a first-hand account. But even first-hand accounts can leave a lot to be desired. Though likely not 100% accurate, the most complete local account of the Milton Clarke story can be found in the 1878 Williams Brothers History of Geauga and Lake Counties. However, by virtue of the account being written 30 plus years after the events, there are probably errors. Putting the two accounts together – Lewis’s and the Williams Brothers – a pretty clear picture can be formed and the many players involved come into clearer focus.

Other than Milton, Lewis, and Cyrus, the first local character mentioned in Lewis’s account is a judge named “Page.” This judge was David R. Paige who was an Associates Common Pleas judge for Lake County from 1840 to 1846. His home was in Madison where the trial would have taken place. The next local character mentioned was the “toad-eater” lawyer, Democrat Robert Harper. Harper was a resident of Ashtabula County, and his home is still standing just over the county line – Shandy Hall - which is a house museum operated by the Western Reserve Historical Society. Harpersfield of Ashtabula was named for Robert Harper’s family, and the Centreville of Lewis’s account was present day Madison Village.

In the Williams Brothers account, the second and third judges Lewis mentioned were Judge John Cunningham of Ashtabula County, whose house was across the road from Unionville Tavern, and Judge Jonathan Warner of Jefferson. Other significant characters in the story were Philander Winchester of the Painesville Telegraph and Sheriff John Prentiss of Ashtabula County. Finally, the eminent Seth Marshall of Painesville was involved. Marshall was a leader in the Underground Railroad hiding hundreds of fugitive slaves in his barn on Bank Street and smuggling them to Fairport Harbor in cargo containers he used in his merchant business.

According to the Williams Brothers account, after Clarke was taken into custody by the slave catchers, the community became alerted to the situation and began to protest Clarke’s capture. The crowd gathered at Unionville Tavern where it grew to the point that a riot broke out; especially when Robert Harper, mounted a crate of some kind, and tried to make his case to the crowd for returning Clarke to Kentucky. While Judge Paige heard the case of Postlewaite and McGowan, members of the protest crowd approached Judge Cunningham to see if something could be done to help Clarke. Cunningham swore out a warrant for the arrest of the two slave catchers for assault and battery on Milton Clarke. However, the crowd, Clarke, and the slave catchers were all in Lake County. How were the villains going to be arrested? Enter Judge Warner who issued a summons of all parties to his court in Jefferson. The crowd learned of the warrant and the summons, and somehow jostled the two slave catchers across the street and into Ashtabula County where they were immediately taken into custody.

After that the question of what to do with Milton Clarke arose. Prentiss, Marshall, and Winchester stepped forward and offered to escort Clarke on to Jefferson in compliance with Judge Warner’s summons even though it was late at night. Sometime during the ride to Jefferson, Clarke was accidently-on-purpose lost in the woods.

Clarke eventually made his way to Canada where he and his brothers reunited. They returned to the United States; Lewis and Milton making their homes in Ohio, and Cyrus making his in New York.

Local legend has it that Milton met Harriet Beecher Stowe and was her consultant for the book Uncle Tom’s Cabin. However, it is more likely that it was Lewis or all three brothers together who worked with Stowe on the famous book that became the flashpoint of the Civil War.

One of the interesting aspects of Lewis’s narrative is his comparison of culture in Kentucky with culture in Ohio. He draws a most pleasant picture of Ohio contrasting it with a dark and barbaric Kentucky. Perhaps it is because he viewed Kentucky through the eyes of slavery and Ohio through the eyes of freedom:

The slaveholders are continually telling how poor the white people are in the free States, and how much they suffer from poverty—no masters to look out for them. When, therefore, I came into Ohio, and found nearly every family living in more real comfort than almost any slaveholder, you may easily see I did not know what to make of it. I see how it is now—every man in the free States works; and as they work for themselves, they do twice as much as they would do for another.

In fact, my wonder at the contrast between the slave and the free States has not ceased yet. The more I see here, the more I know slavery curbs the masters as well as the slave. It curbs the soil, the houses, the churches, the schools, the burying-grounds, the flocks and the herds; it curbs man and beast, male and female, old and young. It curbs the child in the cradle, and bumps curses upon the old man as he lies in his grave. Let all the people, then, of the civilized world get up upon Mount Ebal, and curse it with a long and bitter curse, and with a loud voice, till it withers and dies; till the year of jubilee dawns upon the South, till the sun of a FREE DAY sends a beam of light and joy into every cabin.
Welcome New Members!

Ms. Elaine Abrams  
Senator John Eklund  
Ms. Suzanne Miller  
Mr. and Mrs. Darlene Speakman

A special thank you to all of our members who have renewed their memberships this year. There are too many names to list here, but we hope to see you at our upcoming events. Life & Platinum members are listed on a plaque in the lobby. Please visit soon!

Underground Railroad Tour and Theatrical Dinner - June 18, 2016

Join us for a drive-it-yourself tour focusing on the underground railroad in Lake County and Ohio. Cathy Nelson from the Ohio Humanities Council will talk on the Ohio Underground Railroad at the Lake County History Center, Unionville Tavern will re-create a modern reenactment for visitors to step into the famous Milton Clarke slave escape that inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” and St. John Baptist’s will tell their 175 year history as the first African American mission in Painesville. As you drive past Underground Railroad stations and abolitionist homes (maps provided online or at the museum), participants will come back to the History Center for a BBQ meal in the LCHS event barn and listen to a dramatic reading of the Milton Clarke story. This is the first time a dramatic reading will have been done, and the first time residents will be able to physically step into the shoes of the Kentucky slave catchers, runaway slaves, and abolitionists of Unionville Tavern’s most famous incident.

Program starts at 12pm noon at the Lake County History Center. Program at St. John’s Baptist is at 1:30pm. Program at Unionville Tavern is at 3pm. Map costs for self-driving tour are $2/map. Tickets for the dinner and dramatic reading are $30/ea or $55/couple. Proceeds benefit Lake County History Center and the Unionville Tavern Preservation Society.

The Lake County Historical Society Presents:

Dr. Ware Petznick  
Executive Director of the  
SHAKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

“White Gloves Required? Preserving Your Precious Things”

Discussion will include:
- Before Touching the Artifact
- Agents of Deterioration
- Textile Cleaning
- Furniture Storage
- Silver
- What a Conservator Should Do

May 12, 2016 at Heritage Hall, Lake County Historical Society  
May 12, 2016 at 10:30 am-1:00 pm  
Box Lunch Included  
Museum Tour Included  
$25.00 per person

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED  
Call 440-639-2945

Photo credit: Johnny Joo, Unionville Tavern
Amoris Historia
Join the History Center in welcoming a brand new program for 2016! Amoris Historia (Love of History) is a monthly book club for adults and children ages 12+. Each month will have a theme with an adult book and young adult book that readers can choose between. The third Thursday of every month at 1pm, the History Center will host the book club for discussion and an interactive activity that corresponds with the topic of the book as well as some insight into how the history of the world can always relate back to Lake County, Ohio. Each meeting will cost $5 and includes admission to the museum. Join us for one, or for them all!

May: Lincoln’s Assassination
Adult Book: Manhunt: the 12 Day Chase to Catch Lincoln’s Killer by James L. Swanson
Young Adult Book: Chasing Lincoln’s Killer by James L. Swanson

June: Man on the Moon
Adult Book: The Last Man on the Moon by Eugene Cernan
Young Adult Book: The Flight of Apollo 11 by Brian Floca

July: Art History
Adult Book: Girl in Hyacinth Blue by Susan Vreeland
Young Adult Book: The Smile by Donna Jo Napoli

Presidential Pups Day
The Presidents of the United States are studied throughout schools in America. However, the Lake County History Center wants to teach you about the most important members of the First Families, the dogs! Bring a blanket or lawn chairs to sit on and enjoy this outdoor presentation about the Presidential Pups on July 9. Tickets are $7 each and include a treat for your own pup. Although we love our dogs, they are not welcome inside the History Center so we can continue to preserve the history of Lake County within accepted museum standards.

Plant your own Farm
Did you know that the Lake County Poor Home was a working farm until the early 2000s? Come to the History Center at 11am on July 11 to learn the best tips and techniques for farming like the residents did at the Poor Home. After learning the history of farming at the County Poor Home, try your hand at it and plant some of your own food! Tickets are $7 and include admission to the museum.

Amateur Astronomy Night
Ever wonder how to find constellations or figure out which lights in the sky are satellites and which are stars? Join the Lake County History Center on June 4 at 9pm to learn more about the wonders of the night sky. Hot drinks and light snacks will be provided. Tickets are $20 for members and $30 for non-members. Advanced registration required.

Mother’s Day Tea
Presented by Northeast Ohio Nursery Growers
Show you Mom how much you love her and bring her to the Mother’s Day Tea at the Lake County History Center on May 7 at 1pm. While you are sipping on tea and enjoying some finger foods, learn about the language of flowers and the history of nurseries in Lake County! Tickets are $15 each. Advanced registration required.

Dine Around Series
Presented by Lakeland Community College and Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home and Cremation Center

May 11, 2016 at 6pm
Dr. Jacci Welling, a professor at Malone University, will be speaking about the Women’s Suffrage Movement throughout Ohio. She is one of the area’s leading experts and is certainly not one to miss. Join us at Vittorio’s Buon Appetito for a menu of chicken cutlet with lemon and herbs, linguini pasta, redskin potatoes, tossed salad, and green bean almondine. Cost: $35 members/$40 non-members.

June 9, 2016 at 6pm
Stephanie Liscio, LCHS Board Member and Ph.D. candidate in history, will be speaking on her special interest – the history and importance of baseball in Northeast Ohio. Stay afterwards for a 7pm home game of the Lake County Captains against Lansing. It’s a special promotion night at the game: Thirsty Thursday features a 25-cent Beer Happy Hour for one hour before game time, half-price domestic draft beer until 9 PM and half-price soda all game long. Cost for the program (game tickets are included in ticket price): $35 members/$40 non-members.

Ladies Who Lunch Series
Presented by Lakeland Community College and Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home and Cremation Center

May 18 at 12 pm
Join Madison Carper for a presentation on Ohio and Education. This program, presented to local PTA groups, is a great resource on the state of our current educational system, but also how our educational system came to be. Did you know that public schools didn’t come into existence until 1825? Our menu for this program is penne pasta with peppers, roasted tomatoes and sauce, caesar salad, dessert, and beverage. Cost $15.

June 15 at 12 pm
Join Madison Carper as she focuses on Ohio women who were involved in various space programs and expeditions. These women include: Mary Sherman Morgan, Nancy J. Currie, Judith A. Resnik, Kathryn D. Sullivan, and Mary Ellen Weber. Learn about the amazing things these women did.

To see our full events page and to register online, visit lakehistory.org
Save the Date for Civil War Reenactment Weekend May 27-29th

Julia (Morley) Gillet was said to hide runaway slaves. She lost her son in the Civil War and entertained Frederick Douglas in her home. (LCHS archives)