LCHS Welcomes New Executive Director

Mazie M. Adams is the new Executive Director of the LCHS. She came aboard officially November 28, 2016, following a reception to welcome her on November 18. She brings to the organization twenty-two years of experience in the field, beginning with three years of work as the Curator of Education at Carlyle House Historic Park in Alexandria, Virginia. In addition, Mazie spent fourteen years as Executive Director of the Lakewood Historical Society in Lakewood, Ohio. Most recently she spent five years as the senior archival researcher for Rausche Historic Preservation, surveying seventy-eight buildings in the Village of Burton for historic significance.

Mazie received her Bachelor’s cum laude with honors in history from Kenyon College and later received her Master’s in Museum Education from The George Washington University. Her professional memberships include the Ohio Historical Society, American Association of State and Local History, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She is the Chair of the Landmark Commission of the City of Cleveland Heights; treasurer, past president, program chair and trustee of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society; past president, trustee and member of the Northeast Ohio Inter-Museum Council; member and former trustee of the Ohio Local History Alliance, and member and past trustee of the Ohio Museums Association.

In the twenty–two years of experience in the field, Mazie has overseen the care of an historic house museum and supervised curatorial and education staff as well as volunteers. She has worked on numerous collaborative projects with educational and community entities. She has utilized her own research in exhibit development, educational programs, and lecture series for adults, school tours and classroom activities.

Mazie has expressed her enthusiasm for the new position, “I have continued to learn about the fascinating history of the Western Reserve. I am passionate about sharing that history through engaging programming. Having worked in the museum field in Northeast Ohio for the past twenty years, I am well aware of the excellent reputation of the Lake County Historical Society.” She is looking forward to working with the staff and volunteers of the History Center to promote its mission.
Message from the New Director:

I wanted to thank all of you for making me feel so welcomed! I am excited to join such a wonderful team of staff and volunteers and to work together to celebrate Lake County’s fascinating history. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns or just to visit. I am looking forward to a wonderful year ahead and to seeing you at our upcoming events, including Déjà vu on January 28th and the Women’s History Luncheon on March 28th.

Mazie

Home for the Holidays
Thank You’s

The Wicked Weather gets none of our thanks, but so many people contributed time and effort to the event. So THANK YOU to you all:

Fabulous Food Emporium:


Café Collaborators:


Decadent Decorators:

Bob and Rosemary Bradt  Jeannie Benson  Julie Benson  Sharon Chamberlain  Dottie Dunlap  Evelyn Gibbs  Lois Harrington  Chuck and Linda Nagy  Sandy Nelson  Marion Redmond  Vince Wilson

Special Thanks to:

Tom Driscoll  Sandra Nelson  Carla Woodcock

Continued next column
Join us for a rollicking, fun-filled evening!

- Live Dixieland and Early Jazz music provided by the Steve Ostrow Speakeasy Ensemble featuring Steve Ostrow on trumpet and Bruce Walker on keyboards.
- Live performance of the famous Charleston by the Fred Astaire School of Dance, and join in with dance lessons throughout the night!
- Buffet Dinner provided by St. Noel’s Banquet Center
- Get your Mugshot taken at the Wanted Poster Photo Booth
- Gambling at the Las Vegas style Casino
- There will be auctions of a Royal Caribbean Cruise, Desserts, and Silent Auctions
- Spirit Barrel Raffle
- OPEN Bar
- And More!

January 28, 2017
Saturday 5:30 to 10:00 pm
St. Noel’s Banquet Center
32500 Chardon Road, Willoughby, Ohio

Register online at Lakehistorycenter.org or call 440-639-2945
There are few who may claim the distinction of being a deliverer of generations and of souls. The pinnacle example of the “family doctor,” Dr. Pharnia Chesbrough was one such person. She was remembered as full of gracious charm and ready humor. Constancy and longevity marked her service to Willoughby residents and beyond.

**Childhood Passion.** Born on December 16, 1870, in Madison, OH, Dr. Chesbrough was the third of five children to Methodist minister George W. and Jane Boyce Chesbrough.

Upon her father’s retirement, the family moved to Willoughby with the intent of being closer to her mother’s relations. Not yet in high school, a young Phrania was able to attend Fredonia Normal School. During her last year there she requested of her parents that she be able to train as a nurse.

Initially, both rejected their daughter’s chosen profession, stating she was “too frail.” After graduating in 1892 from school and teaching for one year they were approached anew and she was given reluctant permission for her studies. Dr. Chesbrough entered the nurses’ program at Ensworth Hospital in St. Joseph, Missouri.

At Ensworth, she obtained the rank of Superintendent of Nurses and was persuaded by three doctors to oversee a hospital in Creston, Iowa. Though initially she rejected the proposition, stating she was not knowledgeable enough for such a task, after six months she accepted.

A close adherent to the Hippocratic Oath, Dr. Chesbrough became convinced too many physicians forgot or ignored their own sworn duty, commercializing an honored profession instead of becoming a servant of mankind. She was further outraged by the actions of various doctors to keep patients in their beds longer than required. More doctors were needed, she decided, that could stick to their oath. Propelled by such thoughts, she entered medical school “to show them up.”

**The Start of A Long Career.** Returning to St. Joseph, Dr. Chesbrough entered Ensworth Medical College. Initially interested in surgery, her concentration shifted to general practice upon learning every other member of her class also pursued that path.

Graduating in 1899, unsure of her next step and heavily disinclined to carry the signature black bag of her new job, she began serving an internship with her brother-in-law, Dr. W. John Bell. Her focus further switched to obstetrics after delivering three children to women in his practice.

Her responsibilities only increased as he deigned to leave five of his patients to her ministrations as he traveled to New York for business. Dr. Chesbrough became their primary caregiver, even after her brother-in-law’s return. Still, she chose to stuff her many pockets with needed medical supplies over carrying a black bag.

It became clear upon Dr. Bell’s migration to Egypt for a health mission and her subsequent taking over of his practice, that pockets would not be enough. The bag finally appeared at her side, becoming a hallmark to many of her patients in the future.

Dr. Chesbrough began her independent business, staying in St. Joseph for an entire decade before returning to Willoughby.
Home To Stay. She returned in 1907, moving closer to her mother while continuing her practice. She moved to her longtime residence at 47 Euclid Avenue, a large, white, U-shaped house settled on grand and expansive lawn. Dr. Chesbrough’s practice occupied one wing while her private residence was housed in the other. Her waiting room would eventually fill with photos of the many babies she delivered and small cane-backed chairs for the children who visited.

The good doctor would stay and work in Willoughby for forty years, delivering thousands of infants to their new parents, some of whom she had delivered decades before. Dr. Chesbrough was known to insist the husband enter the delivery room with his wife, theorizing the experience would draw the parents together and cement their relationship. Also, it would impress upon the man the seriousness and importance of motherhood. On only a few occasions did she leave, partaking in post-graduate studies in New York, London, Berlin, and Vienna.

Fifty Devoted Years. On Tuesday November 29, 1949, Dr. Chesbrough was honored by the Ohio State Medical Association before a crowd of over 100 fellow doctors and other staff from Lake County Memorial Hospital. Heading the list of honorees, which included three of her male peers, she received both a gold medal and certificate. All had begun their practice in the “buggy era,” with records of struggle to attain medical degrees despite poor finances and prejudice. They showed faithfulness to duty, and ingenuity to overcome severe limitations.

At 78, she was the eldest of a total of two women doctors in Lake County, and would still make house calls. In 1950, she received an Alumni Award of Merit from Fredonia State Teacher’s College.

She was said to come from two powers: deep knowledge of medical science and a strident faith in God. When all of her medical resources were expended, she turned to prayer. Many patients claimed to be aware they were saved by Grace, not merely doctoring. Without this deep inner strength, she may not have had the physical prowess to continue a 50-year career.

Patients would honor her by naming their daughters Phrania and described her as, “an old fashion doctor who never told people they were sick unless they were sick and really needed a doctor.”

It was announced shortly after her 80th birthday that the Dean of West Lake County Physicians, and friend to thousands of patients, Dr. Pharina Chesbrough would retire after convalescing in St. Luke’s Hospital in Cleveland and as soon as her offices could be closed.

Though not dangerously ill, her doctors recommended her retirement. A lengthy vacation spanning several weeks was planned, after which she would return to Willoughby. After her retirement, she was so missed that Erieside Church, of which Dr. Chesbrough was a member, declared July 8, 1951 to be “Dr. Chesbrough Day” and commemorated the event with a special pamphlet. In the pamphlet, her supporters stated a lot could be said of her but “our doctor desires no human praise” and would rather have God’s.

Of her career, Dr. Chesbrough was quoted as saying in 1949 that, “Medicine has made many advances in the last 50 years. I’m glad to have served first as a nurse, then a hospital superintendent, and finally a doctor. I’d do it over again if I were a young lady.”

Dr. Chesbrough’s home is still standing in Willoughby and is now a bank. The house is on the Willoughby Ghost Walk tour because numerous sightings of phantom children have been reported in the building.

Major contribution to this article is credited to Jillian Ingram.
Welcome New Members!

Benjamin and Shelley Mordush

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!

New Exhibits to Be Installed in South Wing

19th Century Medicine

What was medicine like in the 19th Century? How did Lake County pioneer physicians treat the sick? Where did they get their medicines? Who were noteworthy Lake County physicians of that century? When were germs discovered? How were the poor treated and how did the Lake County Home fit into the picture?

Life was far more tenuous in the 19th century than it is today. Illness was a constant specter lurking in “drafts” and “sick places.” The causes of illness were a complete mystery to people of the 1900’s. Some things we take for granted now were not discovered yet, and the existence of something too small to see with an unaided eye was considered ridiculous by the general public for decades after the discovery of germs. To people of that time illness was the result of the failure of the physical and visible tissues of the body or the influences of the environment such as “bad vapors” from a nearby creek or pond.

The new exhibits will replace the “Voting Lake County” exhibits currently in the wing and will answer the above questions and more.

Those of you interested in researching and contributing to the exhibits contact Lynn Vandevert at 440-639-2945 or e-mail her at collections@lakehistory.org.

WAS IT REALLY SNAKE OIL?

Patent medicines originated in England, where a patent was granted to Richard Stoughton's Elixir in 1712. Since there was no federal regulation in the United States concerning safety and effectiveness of drugs until the 1906 Food and Drugs Act and various medicine salesmen or manufacturers seldom had enough skills in analytical chemistry to analyze the contents of snake oil, it became the archetype of hoax.

The snake oil peddler became a stock character in Western movies: a traveling "doctor" with dubious credentials, selling fake medicines with boisterous marketing hype, often supported by pseudo-scientific evidence. To increase sales, an accomplice in the crowd (a shill) would often attest to the value of the product in an effort to provoke buying enthusiasm. The "doctor" would leave town before his customers realized they had been cheated.

Not only were the contents of the “medicines” dubious, but their claims of curing were amazingly outlandish by today’s truth-in-advertising standards. Take Dr Thomas’ Eclectric Oil. Never mind that “Eclectric” isn’t a word. On the back of the card is listed all of the ailments this special oil can cure:

- Toothache (in 5 minutes)
- Earache (in 2 minutes)
- Backache (in 2 hours)
- Lameness (in 2 days)
- Hoarseness (in 1 hour)
- Colds (in 24 hours)
- Sore Throat (in 12 hours)
- Deafness (in 2 days)
- Pain of Burn (in 5 minutes)
- Pain of Scald (in 5 minutes)

And “remember...one bottle will go farther than half a dozen of an ordinary medicine.”

Maybe it was so effective because it contained frog oil.
YOU ARE INVITED

BY THE LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TO OUR WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH LUNCHEON

“BEING A FIRST LADY”

The Joys and Sorrows

The same masterminds who brought you *Behind the Dial* and *Soldiers in Petticoats* are now presenting an intimate look at the life of presidential wives from Ohio. Hear first hand stories about the First Ladies themselves, their illustrious husbands, and their occupancy of the White House. An afternoon full of joy, heartbreak, manipulation and scandal, this event will be sure to entertain!

PINE RIDGE COUNTRY CLUB, 30605 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, OH

*March 28, 2017*

10AM—Doors Open / 11AM—Program Starts/ NOON—Lunch

*Lunch: Chicken Marsala*

- with roasted potatoes, vegetables, salad, rolls, drink, ice cream -

**PRICE PER GUEST: $35.00 (Includes Meal)**

To make a reservation by telephone, call (440) 639-2945

Want to sit with your friends? Let us know!

*RESERVATION DUE BY MARCH 23, 2017*

To receive a full refund in the event of a cancellation, please contact LCHS 30 days prior to the event. At 15 days, 50% of the ticket price can be refunded. Post the listed reservation date a refund cannot be offered.
Save the Date for Déjà vu January 28, 2017!