

# G.C.H.S.



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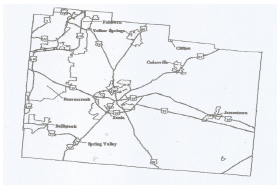
Web: [sites.google.com/site/greenehistoricalsociety](https://sites.google.com/site/greenehistoricalsociety)

Greene County Ohio  
Historical Society  
74 West Church Street  
Xenia OH 45385

Hours: 12 noon to 4 PM  
Tuesday-Friday  
12 to 3:30 PM Saturday  
Closed Sunday & Monday

## *Contents, Mar-Apr 2024*

Excerpts from the Past  
Executive Director report  
President's Letter (new)  
Tornado commemoration



## **Current board members:**

Sheryl Baker, Andrew Brody,  
Sandy Chubner, Ann Halder,  
Carol Jenkins, Jane Langan,  
Jim Langan, Cindy Liming,  
Nick Shank, Debbie Swigart,  
Ben Thompson, and Ann Wolf.

March 11, 2024, is the traditional Show and Tell meeting. Any artifact will do, whether document or doo-dad! April 8 will probably bring a tornado-themed meeting. Meetings start at 7 PM.



Were you living in Xenia 50 years ago?  
Left: Galloway log house, 1973; right:  
same building in 1974.

Please check your mailing label for the date through which your membership is paid. If it says "Oct 2023" or before, please send in your renewal. Thanks to all who have already renewed.

## **President's Letter**

I am excited to be writing to you as the new Board President. I previously served as the GCHS Treasurer and have volunteered numerous hours doing yardwork, painting, cleaning, and the ghost walk tours. I was raised in Xenia and have resided in town for most of my life. I gained extensive leadership experience during my 34 years as a civil servant with the United States Air Force.

I would like to take an opportunity to review the Historical Society's mission:

"To collect, organize, publish and preserve any historical data or facts relating to Greene County, Ohio, including historic homes, buildings and sites; to preserve sketches and biographies of men and women and histories of pioneer families; to encourage an interest in the study of county history among the youth of said county; to hold title to any real estate, site or tract of land acquired either by purchase, deed, gift or device; to develop, improve and serve as custodian of all relics, heirlooms, books, papers, letters, records, maps, drawings or articles or device of any kind having historical interest or value; and to cooperate with the Ohio Historical Society in the promotion locally of its efforts and enterprises."

Based on our mission, the Vice President and I are proposing the vision and goals for 2024, which we will present to the board in the March meeting. Vision: Create enthusiasm in Greene County history and volunteering. Goals are: 1) Repair Infrastructure of the Carriage House (windows and doors) and interior of Townhouse (painting/window and wallpaper repair); 2) Upgrade curb appeal to attract the public and new members; 3) Conduct at least four fundraisers no later than December 31, 2024.

There will be numerous volunteer opportunities throughout the year. An outside clean-up day will be announced once the weather breaks, moving of furniture in the Townhouse as repairs are made in the rooms, gardening and other activities. I invite you to join us.

We have several new board members who are looking forward to growing our membership as we move towards engaging our community in Greene County history!

Regards, Sheryl Baker

## **Tornado commemoration, 1974-2024**

On Wednesday, April 3, 1974, an F5 tornado struck Greene County. Xenia was especially affected. On Wednesday, April 3, 2024, in conjunction with Greene County Public Library, Greene County Ohio Historical Society, city and county offices, and the National Weather Service, there will be commemorative events marking that day 50 years ago.

At the time the tornado struck downtown, 4:40 PM, the plan is to have a wreath-laying at the memorial plaque, located at the corner of East Market and North Detroit, in front of the current Justice Department (former city hall). Following this, there will be an event held at Xenia Adult Recreation and Services Center, starting about 5:30 PM. Displays, speakers, and refreshments are some of the attractions. Of course, GCHS will have a display, along with the City of Xenia and the Greene County Archives and Records Center. One special guest slated to attend is the national director of the National Weather Service. GCPL staff have been conducting first-person oral history interviews with survivors, some dating from the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and some brand-new.

Everyone is invited to attend this commemoration, and it is free. Register on the library's website if you plan on coming to the evening event, so they can lay in enough supplies of refreshments. Go to <https://greenelibrary.info> and follow the link once it's posted.

## **Volunteer opportunity!**

The Railroad Display Committee would like to have the caboose at the Bike Hub on South Detroit open April-September, on the first Monday of each month from 5 to 7 PM (weather permitting). We had someone to help last year; however, that person is unable to do it this year. Even if you know little about trains, you will be given all the info you need; if you enjoy working with children, this is a great opportunity. Physically, you need to be able to climb up a short ladder into the caboose. Please contact the office ASAP if you can assist. Phone and e-mail are on the front page of the newsletter.

## Executive Director's Report

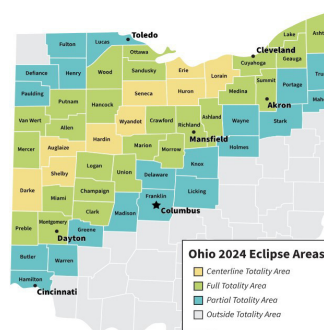
I will be glad when April is over. This woman is weary of anything and everything tornado-related. Interviews both print and video, speaking engagements, requests for information, choosing pictures for the YouTube videos: yikes! It's been emotional and exhausting. Give me a good mystery about who owned a building, just for a break. That said, see elsewhere for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration particulars.

No news yet of the reopening date for Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Landmark in Wilberforce, or of the grand opening for Great Council State Park in Oldtown. I did get to tour the construction site of the latter back on 9 Feb; one of the holdups then was the elevator. A public structure like that cannot open to visitors without a completed, inspected elevator – no open shaft allowed. Makes lots of sense, right? Once the construction is finished and the landscape restored, this will be a beautiful site. I can hardly wait to see both of them open for business.

Welcome new member Vicky Wolf of Dublin OH.

*Until next time, Catherine Wilson*

Don't forget there is a Total Eclipse on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Much of Ohio is in the path of totality. A once in a lifetime event!



## Excerpts from the Past

*Xenia Torchlight*, 20 May 1847: Notice is hereby given that a petition has been filed... praying the extension and establishment of Second street in Xenia. Extension to commence at termination of the east end of said street at the division line between outlot 11 and 12, to run east of the line of division between outlots 11, 14, 19, 22, 25 and 28 on the north side, and outlots 12, 13, 20, 21, 26 and 27 on the south side. [Note: This extension of East Second St is east of Fair St to just south of the water tower in the East End.]

*Xenia Torchlight*, 16 March 1864: A boy about 13 years of age, named Jacob A. Spittsmeser, whose parents reside in Xenia, went out with a gun, hunting, on Tuesday last. On Wednesday morning he was found dead in a cornfield North West of the city. An examination showed that his gun had become accidentally discharged, the contents lodging in his neck and breast. He left his gun, and tried to reach some place for relief, but in vain. After going a short distance he sunk down and expired. [Note: Jacob Spittsmesser is buried in Woodland Cemetery, Xenia.]

*Xenia Sentinel*, 24 May 1864: **Refugee Children.** Rev. C. C. Tracy, agent of the New York Children's Aid Society, who has devoted his time for the past eleven years to caring for the orphans and outcast children of New York city, and has furnished homes in the west and north-west for over 8,000 of those unfortunate persons, appeared in our midst Saturday night week ago with twenty-three refugee children.

There being no knowledge of his coming, it was announced in the churches on sabbath morning that there would be an address by Mr. Tracy in the German Ref. church in the afternoon when the children would be present. Mr. Tracy gave a very interesting though pitiful account of this class of people, to a crowded house. A collection was taken up for the children amounting to \$52. The Ladies agreed to meet the children in the morning at 9 o'clock and put them through a process of soap and water and a clean new suit, to all of which they had evidently been strangers for a long time. ... another meeting was called at 2 o'clock to select homes and we presume most if not all of them were provided with good homes, and will be made comfortable and happy and eventually become good members of society. [Note: \$52 in 1864 is worth almost \$1000 in current money. This practice was similar to the Orphan Trains made famous later in history.]

# *GCHS Calendar*

## *March-April 2024*

Office hours all month: Tuesday-Friday noon to 4 PM; Saturday noon to 3:30 PM

Tuesday, 5 March: Executive committee meeting, 4:30 PM  
Monday, 11 Mar: Show-n-Tell meeting, 7 PM  
Sunday, 17 Mar: Division 3 NMRA, 1-5 PM  
Tuesday, 2 Apr: Full board meeting, 4:30 PM  
Wed, 3 Apr: 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1974 tornado; see article for events.  
Monday, 8 Apr: GCHS meeting, 7 PM  
Sunday, 21 Apr: Division 3 NMRA, 1-5 PM

Newsletter articles are due by the 20th of each month for publication in the next issue.

Railroad Display Committee meets on Thursday evenings at about 6 PM.  
Carriage House Quilters meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 PM.

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