

# 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

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### **Current board structure:**

Sheryl Baker, President

Sandy Chubner, Vice President

Ann Wolf, Secretary

Ann Halder, Treasurer

Nick Shank, Member-at-large

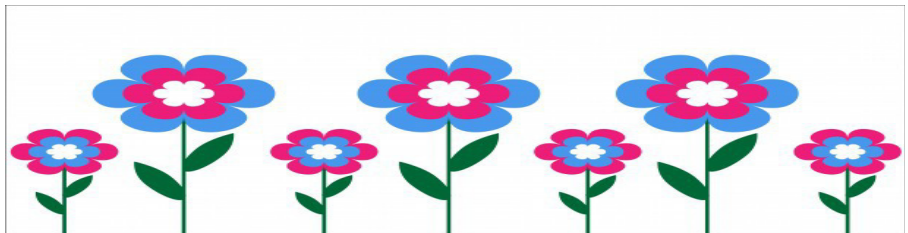
Andrew Brody, Carol Jenkins,

Jane Langan, Jim Langan,

Cindy Liming, Debbie Swigart,

and Ben Thompson, general  
members.

On May 13, 2024, Sheryl Baker will present more photographic memories of Xenia. On June 10, Robin Heise will talk about the America 250 celebration plans for 2026. Meetings start at 7 PM.



Don't forget - you can donate to GCHS via your Kroger shopper's card! Use code **FP 827** when you sign up, or choose Greene County Ohio Historical Society.

You do not have to do anything once you sign up at [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com), besides choose Community Rewards.

## As Usual, A Research Mystery Proves Irresistible

*Xenia Daily Gazette*, 26 Aug 1884: "An Ugly Charge. Ward St. John Detained at Police Headquarters. He is Charged With Forging a Name to a Note, But Claims to Be Able to Prove His Innocence. At an early hour this afternoon, Ward St. John, late proprietor of an East Main street livery stable, was arrested on a warrant sworn out in the Mayor's court, ..."

There is a lot more detail, and St. John was indeed able to prove his innocence. What really attracted me was the mention of the livery stable on East Main Street. I looked in the 1881 directory, and found one belonging to him on South Detroit; he succeeded J. W. Matthews in that business. In 1887 there was no St. John livery. On Newspaper Archive, accessible through the library's web page, I searched in the *Gazette* and found the following.

*Xenia Daily Gazette*, 9 October 1883: "W. W. St. John has purchased the Andrew Herritt property on East Main street and has moved into same. Mr St. John contemplates erecting a large livery stable on the rear of the lot." Then... *Xenia Daily Gazette*, 28 March 1884: "W. W. St. John has not leased his livery stable as stated the other day [to Antram & Neal, in article dated 25 Mar 1884]. On the other hand he is hard at work running the livery business himself and stands ready to accommodate the trade with a full line of good horses and fine equipments." *Xenia Daily Gazette*, 23 September 1884: "Geo. W. Conner has commenced excavating a cellar on his Main street property where the St. John livery stable stood. He is going to erect a brick store room, two stories high, and fifty-five feet deep on that site."

Ah-ha. In 1881 Andrew Herritt, tobacconist, resided at 50 E Main, business at 52 E Main. In 1887 George W. Conner was a real estate and railroad ticket agent, residing at 52 E Main. Herritt was still a tobacconist, but had moved to the SW corner of Washington & Monroe Streets. Late that year all the street numbers changed due to a city ordinance: 50-52 East Main became 130-134. By the 1892 directory, George Barnes owned a furniture store at that address, and George Burrous ran a livery stable in the rear. It appears to have been just east of the former Allison, Eavey & Carson wholesale grocery, which also housed Smith Advertising, Central Auto Parts, and Greene County offices including the archives; the latter building was torn down in 2012 due to structural issues.



This was possibly the building that George Conner erected in 1884.

After severe damage in April 1974, it had to be demolished.



## April 3, 1974, Remembered

On Monday night, April 8, 2024 the Greene County Historical Society met for their regular meeting. However, tonight was different. People gathered to tell of their experiences during the April 3, 1974, tornado that struck Xenia. Their experiences tell our story . . . our history.

- The teacher who came home from school, looked out the window and there was the tornado. Running through the house to open a window only to get a phone call. She answered "I know" and hung up. The mother herding her children to the basement while her mother-in-law from California stayed to see the storm, because she had never seen a tornado before.
- The firefighter who experienced the frustration of not being able to communicate with other city and county safety forces because each had its own separate radio band. The National Guardsman patrolling a neighborhood of flattened homes and foundation slabs only to answer an intact phone with "They aren't home right now."
- The smashed lunch box in the door jamb from the husband just home from work. The husband on his way home from Dayton stopped at US 35 and Valley Road. Told he could not enter. He came back through Arrowhead, seeing the damage and people wandering around lost.

These were some of the stories.

In May, Sheryl Baker will present the Edna Baker pictures of Xenia after the tornado. In June, Robin Heise from the Greene County Archives will outline the county's plans for the America 250 anniversary (1776-2026).

Ben Thompson - Program Committee

## President's Message

The **Great Council State Park** in the Oldtown area of Xenia Township, Greene County, is scheduled to open in the June 2024 timeframe as Ohio's newest state park. In February 2021, the state of Ohio agreed to purchase a 0.7-acre (0.28 ha) site along U.S. Route 68, south of Brush Row Road, in Oldtown, north of Xenia, housing the Tecumseh Motel, for \$260,000. The state planned to redevelop the property as a state park in honor of Tecumseh (c. 1768–October 5, 1813), the Shawnee leader who was killed in the War of 1812 and became an iconic folk hero in American, Indigenous, and Canadian history. The park would educate the public about Tecumseh and the Shawnee people, and its focal point would be a 2,000-to-3,000-square-foot (190 to 280 m<sup>2</sup>) interpretative center.

The park's location was chosen due to the Shawnee history in the area: Oldtown is on the former site of the large Shawnee settlement commonly referred to as Old Chillicothe, which had a population of 1000 between 1777 and 1780, and Old Chillicothe's council house is believed to have been located on a high ridge behind the motel; the park's location is also due to the earlier mistaken belief that Tecumseh had been born in Old Chillicothe. The park was developed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) in coordination with the Ohio History Connection, the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Shawnee Tribe and the Absentee Shawnee, and will be run by ODNR.

Displays will honor the history of the Shawnee people and allow present-day Shawnee to share their stories. Also highlighted will be historic settlers like Daniel Boone, who was held captive in Old Chillicothe for several months in 1778. Catherine Wilson, our Executive Director, was an integral part of piecing together the history for the site. She provided facts for the display boards, attended numerous meetings with ODNR and OHC, and transcribed period sources. In addition, she was interviewed and videotaped by the ODNR to preserve the development of the park.

The GCHS is gearing up for our Rummage Sale which will be held 17 and 18 May 2024. Clean out your cupboards, garage and basements. Donations can be delivered to the GCHS each Tuesday leading up to the sale. We are unable to accept clothing, baby items or electronics. Contact the office for a complete list of acceptable items or for a more convenient drop off time.

Regards, Sheryl Baker

## Musings from the Executive Director

Great news! The Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument on US 42 is open for business again, after a lengthy renovation. The house is beautiful inside and out, and has been restored to its 1910 exterior appearance, as it looked during General Young's tenancy; the interior has exhibits in an accessible space. See their website at [www.nps.gov/chyo/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/chyo/index.htm) for public programming and lots more. Great Council State Park is not far from opening – I have been hearing June 2024 as the month. We'll see! Something else you may enjoy exploring is the newly designed Caesar's Ford Theatre Inc website, at [cftohio.org](http://cftohio.org); this American Indian-led organization has been doing some tremendous things regarding local history. Welcome new members Trent Carr of Springfield, and the staff of Xenia Shoe & Leather Repair.

*Until next time, Catherine Wilson*

## Rummage sale time

Save the dates of May 17 and 18, 2024: GCHS will hold a tag/rummage sale to benefit our museum and its programs. It will be held in the Carriage House, the brick building behind the log house on West Church St. in Xenia. On Friday the 17<sup>th</sup>, the sale will be open from 9 AM to 4 PM; on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup>, hours are 9 AM to 1 PM. *No early sales.* If you want to donate items for us to sell, please bring them on the following Tuesdays during office hours - **7 May and 14 May**. Volunteers will be here to receive your donations. A tax donation letter for 2025 can be issued; however, we cannot appraise the monetary value for you. We have a list of things we can and cannot accept, and we will be glad to send it along if you call and let us know.

## *GCHS Calendar*

*May-June 2024*

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

Tuesday, 7 May: Executive committee meeting, 4:30 PM

Monday, 13 May: Slides of Xenia Past, 7 PM

Fri-Sat, 17-18 May: GCHS Rummage Sale [Fri 9-4 and Sat 9-1]

Sunday, 19 May: Division 3 NMRA, 1-5 PM

Tuesday, 4 June: executive committee meeting, 4:30 PM

Monday, 10 Jun: America 250 plans, 7 PM

Sunday, 16 Jun: 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 is currently on hiatus.

Carriage House Quilters meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6 PM.

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