

BEDFORD BEE

A BRIGHT NEW LOOK AT OUR HISTORY

Winter is ending and Spring is beginning. As the flowers bloom outdoors, we brighten and refresh our exhibits in the museum. Visit us and see our new and updated exhibits.

Hours of Operation

Tuesday 10am to 4pm

Wednesday 10am to 2pm

Thursday 10am to 4pm

Friday 10am to 2pm

2nd Saturday of each month 10am to 2pm

COMING EVENTS

There are a lot of events coming up now through June!

Newsletter Enclosures

Please be on the look-out for the following flyers:

- Three sheets of different Prize Raffle Tickets. See instructions under "Coming Events" - "Prize Raffle Drawings (March 16)
- "It's Time to Renew Your Membership". If you receive this flyer with this Newsletter mailing, our records indicate your membership is either due to expire prior to the Annual Meeting or is no longer current. If your records disagree, please contact Gail Dragga at 440-232-0796 or email to Membership@BedfordOhioHistory.org.

Speaker Series

A free event, held on the second Friday of the Month in the Community Room, lower level of the Old Church on the Square, 750 Broadway Avenue, Bedford.

- Friday, March 8, 2024 at 7:00 PM: "The Battle of Pickett's Mills", presented by Ed Andros. This presentation includes excerpts from the account rendered by the acclaimed 19th century American writer Ambrose Bierce, a participant/observer of the engagement in which two Bedford residents, Royal Dunham and John Wakefield, also took part as members of the 41st Ohio Volunteer Infantry.
- April 12, 2024 at 7:00 PM: "Down a Garden Path: The Story of the Bedford Garden Club", presented by Jeanne Sapir. Come and hear the history of this organization, it's impact on the City of Bedford and what is happening now. It's more than just seeds, weeds and blooms; and no green thumb is required.
- May 10, 2024 at 7:00 PM: "The Lucretia Garfield First Lady" performed by Deborah Weinkamer.
- June 7, 2024 - There will be no Speaker Series in June due to the beginning of the Strawberry Festival.

Know of a speaker? Have a historical topic you want to share? For more information call 440-232-0796 or email Museum@BedfordOhioHistory.org.

Reverse Raffle and Dinner (March 16)

The Reverse Raffle and Dinner is Saturday, March 16, 2024 at the Ellenwood Center, 124 Ellenwood Avenue in Bedford. Doors will open at 5:00 P.M. Dinner, catered by Sirna's will begin at 6:00 P.M. Come buy your Dinner and Reverse Raffle ticket during our open hours at the Museum Store. The prices for this event are: \$60 for one dinner and one Reverse Raffle ticket; \$100 for two dinners and one Reverse Raffle ticket, or \$120 for two dinners and two Reverse Raffle tickets.

Prize Raffle Drawings (March 16)

In addition, this year's Prize Raffle Drawings will be drawn at the Reverse Raffle and Dinner Event on March 16. Winners need not be present. The three prizes this year are: Large Screen Smart TV, the Leprechaun Wagon of Cheer and the Tree of Luck (including gift cards, and lottery tickets). Prize Drawing tickets are available during our open hours at the Museum Store and are priced at \$5 per ticket (or \$20 for six tickets).

(Please Note: Enclosed with the Membership mailing of this Newsletter is one sheet of six tickets for each of the three prizes. Please PRINT your name and phone number on each ticket that you wish to purchase. Tickets and your payment may be brought to the Museum Store during normal store hours; or purchased by phone (440-232-0796) using credit card information; or purchased at the door on March 16.)

Annual Meeting and Dinner (May 2)

To all Members of the Bedford Historical Society, please mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting and Dinner which will be held at the Oakwood Village Community Center. Please watch for your invitations.

(Please Note: Please make sure your Membership is up to date prior to the Annual Meeting.)

Ice Cream Social and Car Show - Sunday, June 2nd (1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.)

This is the Kick-Off for the 60th Anniversary of the Strawberry Festival being held later in the week. The Ice Cream Social is on the Commons. Admission is free. Ice Cream, hotdogs and more will be available for purchase. Music from the 60's to the present will be in the Gazebo, so bring your lawn chairs.

The Car Show will be in Historic Bedford along Broadway. If you have a car you'd like to enter, please contact Frank McGroarty at 216-272-4516.

Strawberry Festival (June 7, 8 and 9)

The Strawberry Festival will begin Friday, June 7th (6:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.) and continue on Saturday, June 8th (Noon – 10:00 P.M. and Sunday, June 9th (Noon – 7:00 P.M.). Come celebrate the Festival’s 60th Anniversary with us.

EXHIBIT UPDATES

Underground Railroad – Phase 2

Phase 2 of the Underground Railroad is now on display. Phase 2 is about the use of coded quilts to help enslaved people navigate their way to freedom. Since the use of these quilts is controversial, we call this section “Fact or Fiction or Somewhere In-between”. We leave it up to the viewer to decide what they believe is true.

We, at the Museum, are taking this opportunity to thank Becky Johnson, Alma Rhine and Jeff Rhine for their time and effort on making the quilts used in this display.



At this point there is no Phase 3, but we have space to expand when and if we discover more aspects of Bedford’s involvement in the Underground Railroad.

Calling All Our Veterans!

The Museum has created a Veterans Wall on the first floor to commemorate our local Veterans. If you, or a loved one, reside (or resided) in the Bedford area and would like to be included, please provide a picture of yourself (or loved one) (preferably in uniform) and list your name, military branch and years of service. Pictures will be scanned and the originals

returned to you. Then pictures will be mounted and placed on the Veterans Wall. Thank you for your participation, and of course, your service.



IN REVIEW

Holiday Express Animated Train Set

Congratulations to Cathy Donato who won the special raffle for the Holiday Express Animated Train Set that was on display at the Museum in December.

Dr. Seuss' 120th Birthday Party (March 2)

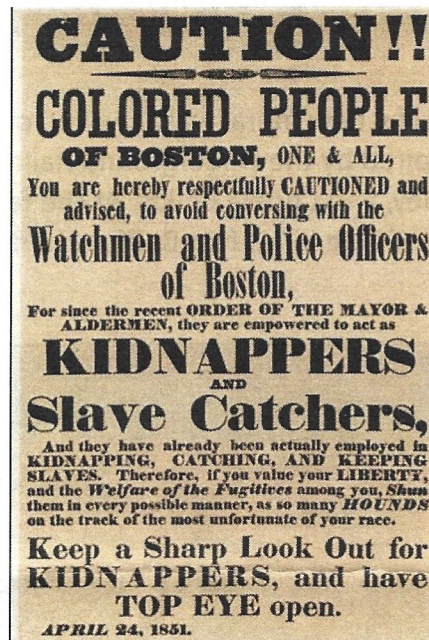
Dr. Seuss' 120th Birthday was quite the celebration. Fun and games, food and fellowship were the order of the day. Many thanks to Sandy Spinks for spearheading this event; Will Froliklong, from the Bedford Branch Library for providing Dr. Seuss books and reaching those high places to put up decorations; to Jacie Tengesdal from the Library for reading; and to all the volunteers who graciously gave their time and energy to decorate, read, help with crafts, games, food preparation and clean up.

BLACK HISTORY: CHALLENGES OF ESCAPING SLAVERY AND ACHIEVING FREEDOM
INCLUDING BEDFORD'S OWN JULIUS CAESAR TIBBS

An article by Margaret Hofstetter

What would any of us do to be free? What would we be willing to endure to escape the bitter existence of being another person's "property"? So many incredible stories exist of what black men and women were willing to do, amazing stories of bravery and endurance.

In 1848, aided by a free black man and a white shopkeeper, Henry Brown fled the Richmond, Virginia area, and stowed away in a 3' by 2' box marked "Dry Goods". He spent 27 hours there, with some 90 minutes spent on his head with his eyes swelling when the box was overturned. Henry finally made it to Philadelphia, but eventually left for Great Britain with the enactment of The Fugitive Slave Act in 1850. This actually tasked the federal government with the capture and return of slaves to their owners in the South, regardless of what state they were found in, North or South.



To escape the sexual advances of her brutal master, Harriet Jacobs decided to hide in an attic crawlspace which measured 7' by 9' by 3'. She hid there for seven years, with the rats which infested the space, getting out only at night for brief periods of exercise. In 1842, she was finally able to get passage on board a ship, arranged for by a friend. She worked in New York and later in Boston. She wrote of her experiences in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

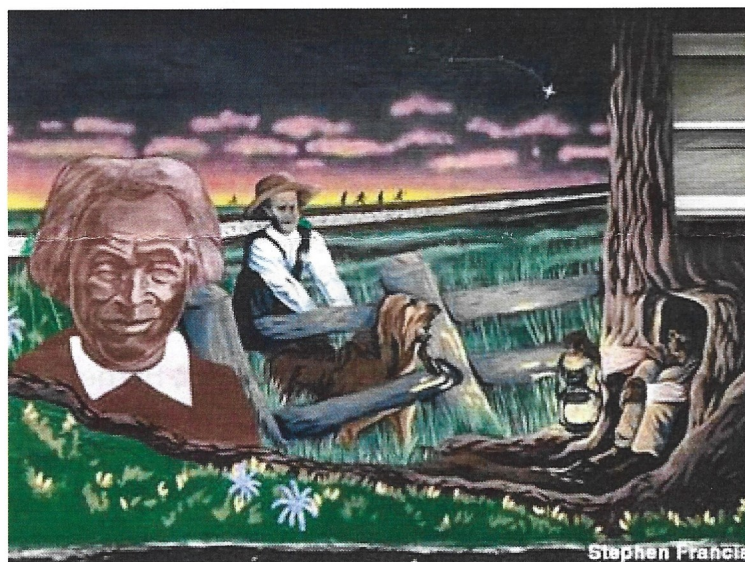
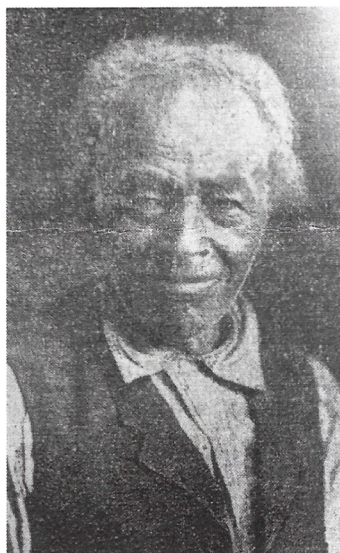
Assisting some of these brave individuals in achieving their goal of freedom were trustworthy persons along what became known as the Underground Railroad. A loose association of homes and farms throughout the northern states, this secret network would offer lodging, food and information on next stops along the route. We are proud that our own Bedford, Ohio played a role in this anti-slavery movement. Bedford can also boast of a

local hero, Julius Caesar Tibbs, an escaped slave who made his way to our area from Virginia.

We don't know much about what Tibbs endured on his way to Ohio. Chances are he didn't stow away in a dry goods box or hide in a crawl space for years, but he most certainly did not have an easy time of it. He came to the Bedford area in the early 1850's, so it is likely he dodged slave catchers the entire trip. Legend has it that he stopped in the woods on the farm of Joseph A. Burns, situated south of the village of Bedford. There he lived in a large, hollowed-out tree, and was eventually discovered by Farmer Burns, who gave Tibbs better lodging and hired him to work on the farm. Tibbs and his wife, Clara, raised their five children in the Bedford area where they lived for over 50 years. Two of their five children had been born into slavery prior to coming to Bedford.

Tibbs died in 1903 at the age of 91. His obituary notes that he was "Favorably known by every man, woman, and child in the village, and to many Clevelanders". He was known to be a kind, friendly man, an orator, debater, philosopher of sorts, and a humorist. He is buried in our own Bedford Cemetery.

In September of 2020, a wonderful new mural was unveiled on Willis Street in Bedford, across from the post office, inspired by the Underground Railroad story, and painted by artists Stina Aleah, Davon Bradley, and Christa Childs. At the far right of this large mural is a depiction of Julius Caesar Tibbs, sitting in his first Bedford home in a hollow tree on the Burns farm.



Bibliography:

"5 Daring Escapes from Slavery," History Channel, www.history.com.

"When the Slave Catcher Came to Town," National Endowment for the Humanities, www.neh.gov.

"Fugitive Slave Act," American Battlefield Trust, www.battlefields.org.

Squire, Dick, *Bedford Village Views, Selections from Around the Town with the Village Observer*, 1982-1992, Bedford Historical Society, 1992.

Horansky, Andrew, "New Mural in Bedford Reveals Little Known Story of the Underground Railroad," WKYC, September 12, 2020, www.wkyc.com.

RENOVATION'S AND REPAIRS

Thanks to your generous support to the Repair and Renovation Fund, the following repairs and renovations are underway for the Church on the Square:

- The entire south dormer has been completely restored, as part of the stabilization project.
- Masonry work will be completed when the weather cooperates.
- Repairing the windows on the Dunham House (lots of rotted wood on window frames) is our next big project.

We will continue to repair and stabilize our historic buildings as your donations are received.

MUSEUM STORE by Lauri Schroeder

Museum Store Hours:

Tuesday thru Friday and 2nd Saturday of each month 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.

It's Spring! Spring in the Museum Store brings new fresh merchandise. After a gray winter, we need lightness and it's at the Bedford Historical Museum Store ready to be a gift or part of your own home décor. There are many things on offer: candles, throw pillows, beautiful locally sourced jewelry, Mother's Day gifts and cards, books, local artisan knitted and crocheted items, Walker China and local artwork by local artists. Also, locally made pottery. Something for everyone. Come browse.

VOLUNTEERS

To all who have given of their time, talents, energy and/or finances, we heartily thank you. The Historical Society could not offer as many programs and events, nor survive without the efforts of each one of you. We are truly grateful.

Currently, we are looking for volunteers to work during our open hours. We have a great need for part-time docents, event planners, office workers, and receptionists, as well as volunteers to assist with our special events and Newsletters. We have something to suit a variety of interests and skills. You may elect to work alone or as a part of a team. For more information please call 440-232-0796 or email Museum@BedfordOhioHistory.org.

CHARITABLE GIVING

A heartfelt THANK YOU to all who have supported the Historical Society through your donations, membership renewals and volunteerism. Your donations to the Endowment Fund, General Fund and Repair and Renovation Fund will help with the up-keep of our buildings and keep the museum open and running smoothly.

COMMEMORATIVE AND MEMORIAL BRICKS

Soon we will be placing another order for commemorative and memorial bricks for the Bedford Commons walkway. Engraved bricks may be purchased for \$60 each. If you are interested in placing an order, please contact Gail Dragga at the Bedford Historical Society (440-232-0796) or via email: Membership@BedfordOhioHistory.org for additional information.

OBITUARIES

Joyce Maruna passed away December 6, 2023. She was a member, Archivist, volunteer and member of our Museum family.

Carole Ann Pittis passed away on February 13, 2024. She was a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Historical Society.

John "Jack" St. John passed away on February 28, 2024. He was a member and supporter of the Historical Society.

Bedford Historical Society
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(A Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization)