

Medina County Historical Society



John Smart House

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 www.medinacountyhistoricalsociety.com
 mchs@zoominternet.net
 Established 1922



McDowell-Phillips House

As we wind down our 100th year anniversary, there has by no means been a slowdown in activity at the museums. The programs throughout the year were interesting and well attended. Covid issues are subsiding a bit, and our visitors and tour bus groups are starting to increase.

Museum activity is very busy. The collections committee has been working on our documentation project and accessing items at the McDowell-Phillips House. We received a substantial number of items from the Ross Trump & Ed Brown estate. We kept some items and others were sold at the Weymouth Day annual summer sale, and some will be available at our Spring 2023 yard sale. We held a Cora Munson tea that was a big success and which sold out quickly and necessitated adding a second day. Judy & Mike Davanzo and their team did an outstanding job, and no elegant detail was missing. Another tea is planned for Sunday, November 20, chaired by Beth Girman. Details are in this newsletter.

Projects at the McDowell-Phillips House Museum have kept moving. Joann King worked for two years on the application for the National Register of Historic Places, and it cleared through the state review and is now awaiting final approval from Washington D.C. We will also receive an Ohio History Award for preservation at a ceremony in Columbus on Oct 29. Joann King and Gloria Brown will soon finish authoring a book on the McDowell family that is based on the documents from the house and several years of research.

The north side of the house has beautiful new landscaping created by Grace Bothers Nursery. A walkway is in place built with salvaged sandstone from the front sidewalk. You can now stroll around the entire house to view the unique architecture. At this writing, the concrete driveway project and parking area is underway. We will soon have better flow in and out of the museum. The team from 880 Construction is doing the work and donating the concrete pad for the future site of the war bond building.

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2022 Officers	Board Members	Emeritus Members
Brian Feron-President	Mary Jo Palmer, Pieri Levandofsky	Joann King, Tom Hilberg
Carole Feron-Vice President	Lila Lehrer, Judy Davanzo	Richard Clark
Mike Davanzo-Secretary	Roger Smalley, Mary Jane Brewer	
Chet Simmons-Treasurer	Andrea Spickler, Beth Biggins-Ramer	

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

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We have several open house days coming up during the holiday period and will then rest for a few weeks. The winter months will allow time to work on cleaning the McDowell-Phillips House Museum attic, strategic planning, and developing new events. The recent Speakeasy event was a huge success, and many have already asked "What is next"?

The Museum Holiday schedule is:

John Smart House: - Sunday, Nov 6, and Sunday, Dec 4 from 1-4 PM.

McDowell-Phillips House – Sunday Nov 27, 1-4 PM

Saturday Dec 3, 4-7 PM (Twilight tour)

Wednesday Dec 28 1-4 PM



Follow us at:

www.MedinaCountyHistoricalSociety.com

or on [Facebook](#)

Stay Tuned for Upcoming Programs

Watch for 2023 programs on Sat Feb 4, Sat Mar 11, and Sat Apr. 8 at
1:00 pm at Medina Library.

Watch for the program topics in email and newspapers.

S T E N C I L I N G

One of the final goals of the McDowell-Phillip's House restoration was to recreate the beauty of the foyer – the large room that visitors enter from the front porch.

Under the crumbling plaster and multiple coats of paint in the room were the ghosts of red stenciled patterns featuring a sea shell and ribbons which copied the pattern of the stained-glass window at the front of the house. The painted patterns appeared all around the room on the walls just below the ceiling, and in a larger version on both sides of the fireplace.

Because the McDowell and Phillips families saved records for more than 100 years of work done to the house, the society learned who painted the stencils shortly after the house was built. On March 28, 1892, Mr. O.M. Bietz wrote a letter to R.M. McDowell, the original owner of the McDowell-Phillips House, offering his name as an “Artist in Fresco Painting.” McDowell obviously hired him as the frescos remained.

Recently, Janet Baran, a local artist and historical society member, volunteered to reproduce the frescos in the foyer. She first met with Matt Weiderhold of Main Street Medina and Society President Brian Feron on January 7, 2022. In February, she showed them sample boards with the pigment she recommended.

In late March she had a knee replacement. During her convalescence, she experimented with spackling compound, joint compound, and various oil, ink, and acrylic pigments to recreate the original color and texture. She said, “I wanted it to look like plaster work.”

She then traced the original designs and cut stencils with an exacto knife.

On August 29th she began to work on the walls. Feron had painted the repaired walls with cream colored paint to which Baran applied a glaze “to add depth.”

She taped the stencil to the walls on the exact measurements of the originals. She then began painting on the compound she had created with a large stiff brush. Each clamshell design necessitated her climbing on a scaffolding three times, all with a new knee. She cheerfully commented, “It was really good therapy.”

She worked for six hours a day “or whatever my leg would tolerate,” and finished on September 13. She estimates she spent 70 hours on the project. “I’m glad I got to do what I did.”

The final result is amazing. Guests who visit the house during the holiday season and beyond will have the opportunity to see and appreciate her painstaking labor.



BEHIND THE SCENES WORK

What goes on behind the scenes at the MCHS? LOTS. The Collections Committee is only one of many groups that deal with the inner workings. Mary Jo Palmer, Judith Parish, Joann King, Scott Benson, Kathy Petras, Pieri Levandofsky, Tom Hilberg and Brian Feron comprise the team that accessions, catalogs, organizes, etc. the museum collections.

At a recent meeting, the group devised a plan to inventory the contents of every room in both museums. It is a big task, but one of the most important parts of managing a collection is to know what you have and where it is.

That is not our only project. The following is an incomplete list:

- scan the entire photograph collection and attach the items to the appropriate catalog entry in Past Perfect
- compile a reliable source of information on Civil War soldiers from Medina County, including biographical information
- complete the organization and documentation of the H.G. Blake Collection at the McDowell House
- create a usable data base of information from the Scheetz Collection, which involves 8 file cabinets of title abstracts, etc. that will provide a vast amount of information on Medina County properties
- access and catalog attic items at the McDowell House as well as process all new acquisitions
- review contents of boxes and other collections in the John Smart House attic to determine what we should retain and consolidate and organize those items

I could go on, but that gives you some idea of what happens in those rooms full of computers, files, etc. This is a great dedicated group doing great work.

—Joann King

S P E A K E A S Y E V E N T

The Medina County Historical Society held a fundraising “Speakeasy - a saloon or nightclub selling alcoholic beverages illegally, especially during Prohibition (1920-1933)” on October 1 at the McDowell-Phillips House Museum. Alcoholic spirits were served legally although probably not with the approval of the matriarch of the McDowell family – Elizabeth Blake McDowell-daughter of H.G. Blake, a strong supporter of the Temperance Movement in Medina in the late 1800’s.

Shortly before the event, guests who had made reservations received a letter telling them how to gain access to the house. “When you arrive at the special entrance behind the house, you will be asked for the password on the enclosed ticket. Please remember that secret word so you will be graciously admitted to the ‘Phoenix Club.’”

Guests dressed in 1920’s flapper dresses circulated through the first floor of the McDowell-Phillips House feasting on appetizers supplied by Partake Kitchen. Young servers walked through the crowd offering trays of delectable snacks. Guests also had access to a large buffet in the main parlor.

Dave and Karen Schoenlein stood at a tall table in the game room enjoying their appetizers. Karen wore a pink dress that she purchased 40 years ago to wear to a bridal shower. She wore the dress for the fourth time to attend the speakeasy and completed her costume with a long, knotted string of pearls and a hot pink cloche. Her hubby wore a red bow tie and a garter on his white shirt sleeve as well as a vintage black cap.

Mike and Michaela Tucheck took photos of each of the guests and had the nearly impossible task of selecting the best costumes in the costume contest. Karen Schoenlein with her vintage pink dress won the women’s division – Russ Farnsworth with a three-piece suit, striped shirt, skinny tie and grey bowler hat won for the men.

Most of the guests dressed for the occasion with short, swingy dresses, long necklaces, and head bands trimmed with jewels or feathers. Some carried long cigarette holders, some wore gloves, everyone wore a smile as they enjoyed the evening.

Rumor has it that following a toast acknowledging 100 years of preserving the county’s history by president Brian Feron, a “revenue agent” raided the party adding excitement to the evening.



Russ & Courtney Farnsworth



Candy Cigarette girl, Kara Wolff



Dave and Karen
Schoenlein

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome

Audra & Todd Morello

Don & Liz Williams

Nancy Pound

Don & Karen Green

Lawrence Hrabnicky &
Amy Simpson



Hudson Louie

Janice Bastian

Norma & Bob Moyer &
Bonnie Forrest

Kara Wolff



Margaret "Peggie" Brown

John Benson

George Rodgers

Membership renewals

Will come via email in November.

Your support is appreciated and
helps us reduce mailing costs.

Member Exclusive Benefits

Receipt of Quarterly MCHS newsletter

Discounts to some special events

Discounted admissions to museums

Special programs for members only

HOLIDAY TEA

Elizabeth "Byo" McDowell

*Along With The
Medina County Historical Society*

*Invites you to share a
Holiday Tea*

When: Sunday November 20th at 12:30 pm

*Where: The McDowell Phillips House Museum
205 S Prospect St. Medina, OH*

Cost: \$35 per person. There will also be basket raffles.

**Reservations accepted starting November 1, 2022,
By Beth Girman (724-816-2447).*

**Seating is limited, so please reserve your seat quickly.*

*When calling in please leave a detailed message.
Your reservation will be confirmed once payment is received.*

Please make checks out to MCHS (Memo – Holiday Tea).

*If you are attending with friends, please gather all names when you phone
in your reservation so that you may be seated together.*

**Mail checks to:
Beth Girman
1001 Hickory Grove Avenue
Medina, OH 44256*



HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

We have some wonderful Holiday ideas available at both museums for the history buff.

Email mchs@zoominternet.net or call 330-722-1341 and leave a message

Medina County Coming of Age 1810 – 1900 \$45

By Joann G. King. Over 500 pages of history of the people and activities in the formative years of Medina County.

Letha E. House From Foundling to Philanthropist \$20 hard cover \$15 soft cover

By Joann G. King. A fascinating story about one of the area's most generous philanthropists; she used her sudden wealth for the benefit of so many.

Building a Firm Foundation \$30

By Joann G King & Susan McKiernan. This book tells the story of Medina County's history through her architectural heritage. It contains historical anecdotes, personal sketches, architectural descriptions and over 250 photographs and drawings.

Local Community Books \$20 each

Brunswick, Chippewa Lake, Chippewa Lake Park, Medina, The History of Medina Schools, Medina County, Historic Tales of Medina County, Folklore of Wadsworth & Wadsworth.

Haunted Medina County Ohio \$22 each

Recipes and Remembrances, A Taste of History \$10 each

The Medina County Historical Society Cookbook

McDowell-Phillips House ornament \$15 each

Give the Gift of Membership for your history buff!

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.MEDINACOUNTYHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM

Membership Categories:
Membership Year is Jan 1st – Dec 31st

Student/Senior	\$10.00	Organization	\$30.00
Individual	\$20.00	Patron	\$50.00
Senior Family	\$20.00	Corporate	\$100.00
Family	\$25.00	Life	\$300.00 (one time payment)

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1922-2022
100 years of History

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MEDINA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY