

# Medina County Historical Society



John Smart House

206 N. Elmwood Medina Ohio 44256  
www.medinacountyhistoricalsociety.com  
mchs@zoominternet.net  
Established 1922



McDowell-Phillips House

Dear Members:

2024 was a wonderful year for our organization. We had over 1,900 visitors through our two museums and tallied over 5,691 hours of volunteer time from collections management, administration, cleaning, finance and even weeding and mowing the lawns. We deeply appreciate the efforts of our volunteers.

Other fun facts include processing over 4,100 emails and logging over 15,000 visits to our website. Yes, it takes work to function in all these areas, but it is what makes an organization successful. We recently held our strategic planning meeting and have put a plan together for the next 24 months. But without you and your support, this would not be possible.

If you missed our annual meeting, we presented lifetime achievement awards to Tom Hilberg and Joann King for their decades of service. We also presented the annual Northrop Award to Tom Doyle, (owner of the Little Wiz Fire Museum) and Kathy Kraus for historic character portrayals and education. We added three new Trustees to the Board; H. Linn Mast, Sarah Tome, and Brian Tome. We thanked Chet Simmons and Michael Tuckek for their service.

2025 is shaping up with exciting programs and displays. The return of Trivia Night is Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, so get your reservations now! We will have a special display at the McDowell-Phillips House featuring wedding dresses from our collection starting in May. The John Smart House will have a toy display starting in March.

Watch your email for our special programs this year. Some of the programs require an RSVP due to limited seating. If you need more information, please email us at MCHS@zoominternet.net or leave a phone message at (330)722-1341

Brian Feron  
President

Follow us at: [www.MedinaCountyHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.MedinaCountyHistoricalSociety.com) or on [Facebook](#)

SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON THE HISTORY  
AND FOLKLORE OF  
CHIPPEWA LAKE AMUSEMENT PARK



The Medina County Historical Society is sponsoring a special blast-from-the-past event on the Chippewa Lake Amusement Park presented by Gayle Foster of the Chippewa Lake Historical Society. Gayle will talk about amusement park legends like Larry the Indian, the 50-foot high roller coaster and other rides, famous band performances in the ballroom, and the horror film 'Closed for the Season', shot on location in 2008. Gayle will also talk about future plans for the amusement park property, and the Historical Society's new home.

Participants are encouraged to bring personal photos or park memorabilia and share their own fond memories of "Chipp."

The event will be held at 1:00pm Saturday February 15, 2025 in the A.I. Root Community Room 623 West Liberty in Medina. The event is free and open to the public. A reception with light refreshments will follow the presentation.

Any questions please email [mchs@zoominternet.net](mailto:mchs@zoominternet.net) or call (330) 722-1341.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON LOST CLEVELAND  
HISTORY BY AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN DENNIS  
SUTCLIFFE

**GROWING UP CLEVELAND:**

**BARNABY, CAPTAIN PENNY & GHOULARDI**



The Medina County Historical Society is sponsoring a special event on Lost Cleveland Memories by master storyteller and local historian Dennis Sutcliffe. Dennis' presentation will be particularly popular with Baby Boomers raised in Cleveland who grew up with the outrageous Ghouardi, lovable Barnaby, and Captain Penny. Participants will enjoy reliving their early days of old television and life in the greater Cleveland area. Participants are encouraged to share personal memories, photos or memorabilia about their local neighborhoods and events.

The event will be held at 1:00pm on Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> in the Western Reserve Masonic Community Center, 4931 Nettleton Rd., Medina. The event is free and open to the public. A reception with light refreshments will follow the presentation.

**Seating is limited. If you would like to RSVP, or have any questions,**

**email [mchs@zoominternet.net](mailto:mchs@zoominternet.net) or call 330-722-1341**

## THE SAGA OF TOM KING

Submitted by Joann King

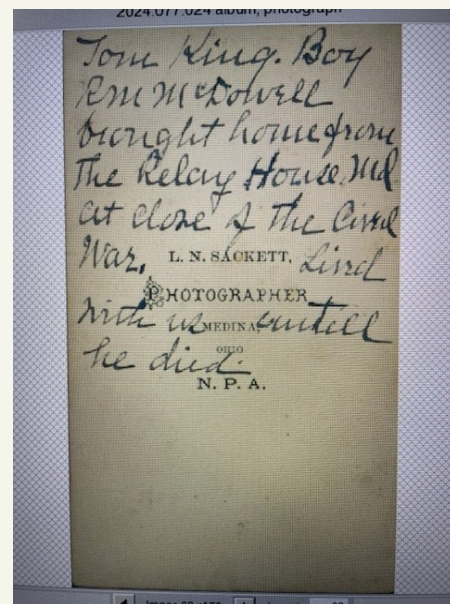
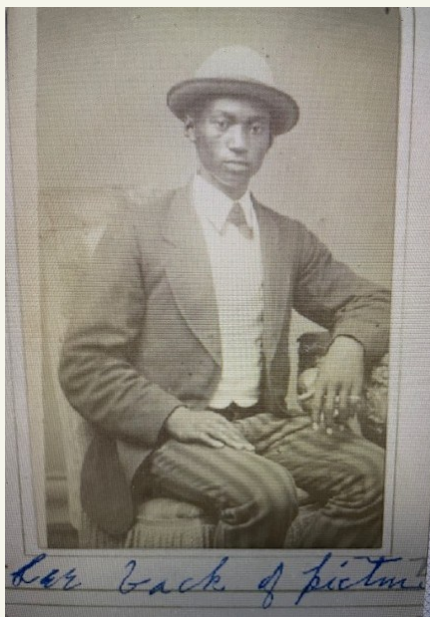
Little is known about Tom King, a black man, who most likely spent his early years enslaved. That is until he managed to get himself to Relay, Maryland, a critical railroad junction during the Civil War. It is said that Robert McDowell, a soldier from Medina, had taken in King when he crossed behind Union lines and eventually brought him to Maryland.

Robert enlisted in the cavalry at the outbreak of the war, but eventually became an aide to General E.B. Tyler. That is why he was in Maryland, and because of his position he was able to have his wife, Elizabeth, with him. Robert took young Tom King under his wing, and kept him there until Tom died in 1875.

It was not unusual for a Civil War soldier to bring a refugee home with him at the close of the war. Some called them "contraband," but in this case it may have been a simple act of kindness and friendship. There is not a lot of information on Tom King's life in Medina. We do know that H.G. Blake, McDowell's father-in-law, made sure King got an education, and we have proof he did. When the Medina County Historical Society acquired the McDowell-Phillips house, it also got its contents. In a box of books found in the attic was a Bible, and written in the Bible was "Property of Tom King." He could read.

We also know he was respected in the community. In 1870, when town center went up in flames, there was a list of those who were injured. Tom King, "Blake's Man," was "burned and bruised" trying to be of help. The reference to "Blake's Man" may have been misleading. Both the Blakes and McDowells were the reason King came to Medina, and they were the ones who gave him a home and an education.

In a recent gift from Mary, "Muffy", McDowell, the daughter of Ted McDowell, there was a family photo album. Included in the photos of three generations of Blakes and McDowells, there were three photographs of Tom King. In each photo his appearance and stature obviously improved. On the back of one of the photos there is a hand-written note, "Tom King He lived with us until he died."



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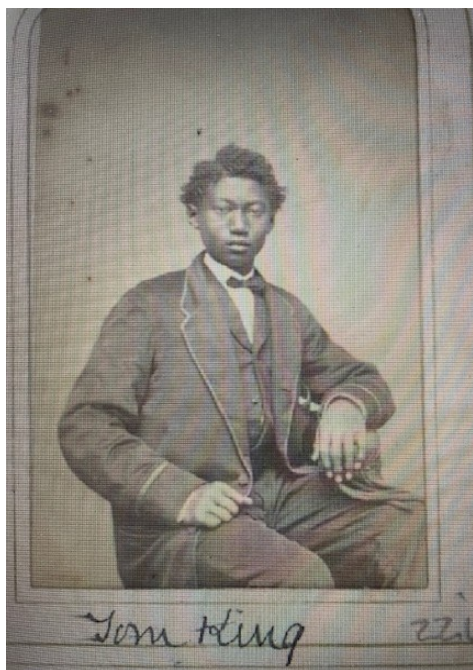
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Unfortunately, Tom King's story does not end well. He died in 1875 of tuberculosis, one year before his mentor, H.G. Blake. He was not buried in the Old Town Cemetery. Instead he was taken to the Infirmary's (now Medina County Home) burial ground even though there was no evidence he ever lived there. But, initially he did not rest in peace.

In the 19th century, local doctors were known to advance their medical education in an unusual way. Autopsies were not a regular part of the Victorian funeral process, but that was the best way for remote doctors to learn more about disease and the human body. The grieving families were not always open to that so the doctors found another way: they dug up newly buried specimens in the dark of night.

In June, 1875, Dr. Samuel Hudson of Medina and his associate went to the Infirmary burial ground to exhume Tom King in the interest of medical science. As they approached his grave, someone in hiding started shooting. Dr. Hudson's face was hit with buckshot. The loyal associate took off in Hudson's buggy and left the doctor stumbling around in the dark until he came to Mr. Prouty's house. Prouty tended to his wounds and took him back to Medina. From that night on, Dr. Hudson practiced medicine with one eye. And Tom King's grave was not disturbed.

The Blake McDowell family had a history of anti-slavery. H.G. Blake's home on East Washington was on the Underground Railroad. Runaway slaves were harbored there and then carried to Oberlin, their last stop before Canada. The Blake's daughter, Elizabeth, married R.M. McDowell and carried her concern for the plight of African-Americans to Maryland and back to Medina. The fact that Tom King is a part of the treasured family photo album, not once, but three times, shows that the family had a high regard for King. He was part of the family.



## C L E M E N T   C O N C R E T E   C O M P A N Y   & T H E   C L E M E N T   F A M I L Y

A recent addition to our postcard and advertising collections is one for the Clement Concrete Company. Bob Hyde's website "Beyond the Store Fronts" reports that they operated from 1911 to 1940, however, the Medina County Newspapers the *Gazette* and *Sentinel* contain reports of the company receiving government contracts dating as early as 1905. The company operated from 1911 to 1940 on the southeast corner of Broadway and Smith Road. They occupied the former Water Works building in that location. The company employed about 15 employees and built concrete buildings, roads, and bridges, besides turning out 60,000 blocks yearly. It was founded by William Alfred Clement and operated by him and his two sons, Roland and Eugene.

The company provided concrete for many of the bridges the county commissioners built over the years. Early in their existence, they built bridges in Liverpool, York, Montville, and Harrisville Townships. No doubt, they also worked in many of the other townships. One of their representatives, Walter Kennedy, reportedly left Medina in July 1905 for a tour of Northeast Ohio on behalf of the company.

Clement Concrete reportedly provided curbing for South Court and West Washington Streets, as reported in the newspapers in 1904. Concrete was said to be stronger and more durable than stone. Later, it was reported in the *Sentinel* that they were unable to secure crushed stone for the concrete, and the project was finished with natural stone.

Clement Concrete leased their property to John F. Moxley of the Medina Supply Company in 1940.

### William Alfred and Mary Clement



A most beautiful and attractive ornament for lawn,  
park or cemetery.

**THEY SELL AT SIGHT.**

Price of molds, f. o. b., Medina, Ohio, - \$35.00  
Above price subject to 5 per cent cash discount.

MEDINA CONCRETE COMPANY, Medina, O.

### U P C O M I N G E X H I B I T S

The Medina County Historical Society will officially open a new exhibit at the Open House on April 6 at the John Smart House Museum.

Museum Hours: 1:00 PM—4:00 PM

We are hauling out our toy collection for an exhibit of "Yesterday's Toys."

The exhibit will be on display until August 3.

Additional days may be added during the summer and will be posted in the newsletter and on Facebook & Instagram.



Coming in May to the McDowell-Phillips House Museum -

"Not Just a Pretty Dress"

an exhibit of wedding clothing and traditions from 1810-1970's presented by the Medina County Historical Society.

The event will take place at the historic

McDowell-Phillips House,

205 S. Prospect Street, Medina, Ohio

from May 18 to August 17.

Museum Hours: 1:00 PM- 4:00 PM

Watch for more information on our MCHS website , Facebook, Instagram or call (330)725-1341.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEW MEMBERS

Welcome

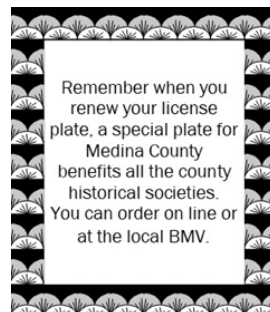
Robert & Susan Hale  
David McCarthy & Family  
Dennis & Stephanie Pack  
Shelley Tender  
Jennifer Abel  
Jillian Jevack  
Barb Mulcahy



Phil Brumbaugh  
Mary Ann Andrews  
Lloyd Vaughn  
Roger Ingraham  
Jan Leatherman  
Loretta Moucha

REMINDER: Please send in your membership renewal if you haven't done so yet!

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY





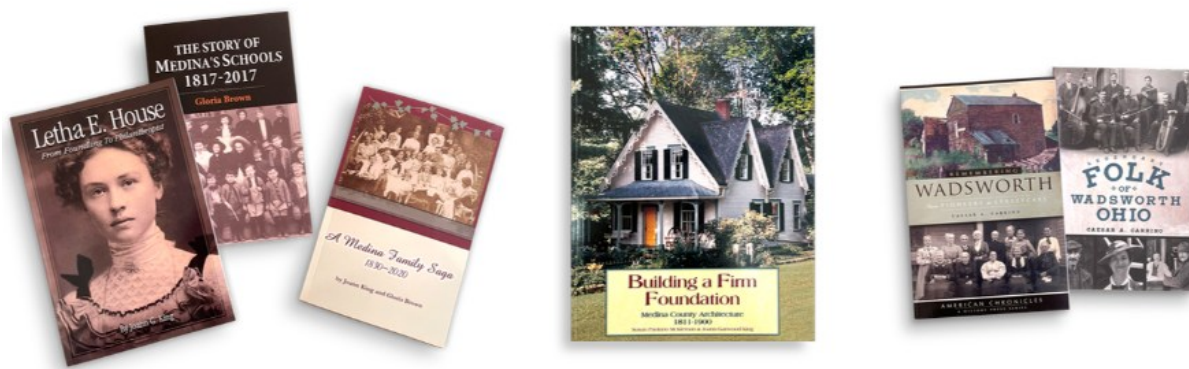
SAVE THE DATE!



Bridal Shower Luncheon  
Saturday May 10th  
at the Medina County Veterans Memorial Hall.  
This is an MCHS fundraiser to kick off our  
up and coming wedding dress collection  
at the McDowell-Phillips House Museum.  
Lunch, games, guest speaker, and more!

BOOKS AND GIFTS

Did you know we have books and gifts available at each museum? You can view items on our [website](#)



Visit our website at [www.medinacountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.medinacountyhistoricalsociety.com)

Email [mchs@zoominternet.net](mailto:mchs@zoominternet.net) or

call (330) 722-1341 and leave a message

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.MEDINACOUNTYHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM](http://WWW.MEDINACOUNTYHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM)

**Membership Categories:  
Membership Year is Jan 1st – Dec 31<sup>st</sup>**

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 (per person)

2025 Officers	Board Members	Emeritus Members
Brian Feron-President	Maxina Freitas, Pieri Levandofsky	Joann King
Charles Ramer -Vice President	Judy Davanzo, H. Linn Mast, Brian Tome,	Richard Clark
Mike Davanzo-Secretary	Sarah Tome, Beth Biggins-Ramer,	Tom Hilberg
Dave Arbogast-Treasurer	Andrea Spickler, Carole Feron, Bill Parker	

Medina County Historical Society  
1922-2025

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Medina, Ohio 44256

MEDINA COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY