

OUR 2021 TOURS

You know the old saying – the best laid plans of mice and men. Like every other organization, we ground to a halt because of COVID-19. We attended our monthly Board meetings via Zoom, we cancelled our spring and summer tours, and we are now evaluating our 2021 events. On top of that, our favorite boat, the *Goodtime I* is out of the picture as individuals and groups raise money to fund some major repairs. That means – no Fall boat tour. Planning anything just keeps getting more difficult! We will keep you posted on both our website and Facebook pages.

TOURS - On the other hand, we WILL be holding an Underground Railroad tour this year. No date set yet, but it will be in late August or September. There will be two tours, with a limit of 25 people each. We will offer it to our Members first. All the more reason to encourage your friends to become members. Check for updates on our [online tour](#) page.

But in the meantime, the Sandusky Library is now scheduling walking tours (We like to think we were the inspiration for them but they have been doing some of them for years). Fear not – you can still take some of [our](#) tours on our website. Just click [HERE](#). In Sandusky we have a downtown tour, photos of historic Sandusky houses and tours of Washington Park and the Underground Railroad sites. Kelleys Island has tours for the cemetery, the museum and the Civil War and the Island, as well as two walking tours. Vermilion has a walking tour and a tour of houses owned by Captains, and Milan has not one but two tours on their site.

QUERIES WE ANSWERED – Since last Fall, we have fielded almost 300 questions through our website and on Facebook. Many of these involve possible donations of artifacts, people searching for their family histories, or just that odd memory from their childhood that begs to be explored. We try hard to redirect these to the correct organization and often do a bit of research ourselves. The Sandusky Library and the Follett House Museum have a remarkable collection of artifacts, stories, and information that has helped answer many of these questions. Our list of museums and historical societies has proven invaluable in getting people to the right group to answer their questions. We have also partnered with several Facebook books, like the History of Sandusky, the Heritage Society of Erie County, and Erie County Ohio History & Genealogy. Trust us, if we post a question – we WILL get the answer. We are now closing in on 1,000 followers on our Facebook page. And look, we now use our logo to identify us. Pretty cool right?



Erie County Historical Society
5★ · Nonprofit Organization · 830 likes · 890 follows

HAPPY 203RD BIRTHDAY TO SANDUSKY!

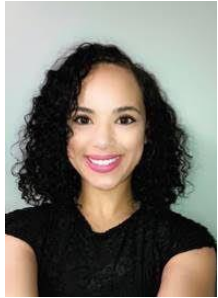
On June 5, 1818, Sandusky's city plat was officially recorded at the Huron County courthouse (Erie County was originally part of Huron County before splitting off in 1838). Learn more about Sandusky's Kilbourne Plat on our website under [Historic Markers](#).



JANUARY 1888 – Common Pleas Court: In the case of State by Carrie Kuneman vs. Oscar Miller, for bastardy, the defendant pleaded guilty and was fined \$200 for maintenance of the child, besides the costs of the case. He refused to pay and was sent to jail. Probate: State vs. George Floyd, the colored boy charged with larceny, found guilty and sentenced to the Reform Farm.

MEET YOUR BOARD NEW BOARD MEMBERS

JADE CASTILE - Jade was born in Sandusky and raised in Norwalk, Ohio. After graduating Norwalk High school, she continued her education at The Ohio State University where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science/Pre-law. Jade holds a passion for people and advocating for her community.



She helped clients manage investment portfolios and customer service related needs, for Morgan Stanley. Jade also has worked as a mortgage loan officer at American Bank and as legal assistant specializing in loan default, at MDK, LLC. In addition, Jade has worked as an intern with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, managing their web portal. She has also worked briefly with the Ohio legislature, in Columbus, as a "crisis legislative aid".

Jade spent the last year as the Business Manager of the United Way of Erie County and currently works as a substitute teacher in Sandusky City School district and is pursuing a long term career in Education.

Since being back in Sandusky she has participated in Leadership Erie County and was on the 2020 Charter Review Committee. Jade currently sits on Sandusky's Planning and Zoning Commission and is very passionate about community involvement.

JIM JACKSON - Jim was born, raised and educated in Sandusky. He was a 1965 graduate of Sandusky High School. He attended Terra Technical College where he received his journeyman's card from New Departure/Delphi.



He was an avid audiophile which nurtured his interest in music. This love led him to owning his own recording studio, JMJ Studios. Jim produced and recorded several local talented artists. He also was the founder of the music group, The J-Markz, which performed throughout Sandusky and the surrounding area, performing for many charity events donating their time and talents to such organizations as Serving our Seniors and Erie County Senior Citizens. He is also the music director of his church men's choir. Jim

had a variety of interests that often led to many business adventures from owning his own music store, installation of music systems and photography.

He is currently a member of the Sandusky Planning Commission and past president and former treasurer of the Sandusky National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He is currently serving on the NAACP's Executive Board. His interest in local history was stimulated by the NAACP's 100th Anniversary and his research for local African American history in Sandusky. Upon researching at the Sandusky library, Ms. Molly Carver informed him there was very little African American local history available. This led him to investigate and record life-long African American Sanduskians. Preserving their oral knowledge of their experiences and memory while growing up and living in Sandusky. This eventually led to the compilations of these recordings and interviews into the NAACP's event honoring those 'First African American Trail Blazers' in Sandusky at the State Theater.

RANDY KOCH RETIRES FROM THE BOARD - It was with great reluctance that we accepted the resignation of Randy Koch. Randy started attending meetings in 2009 as a representative to the Ohio Historical Society and was working with the sesquicentennial Civil War Committee. It was through his efforts, knowledge and writing ability, that a remarkable series of [articles about the Civil War](#) appeared in the Sandusky Register. As a result of his enthusiasm and knowledge, Randy was elected to the Board in November 2010. A year later, we elected him our President. Randy has written several books about the Civil War. Thank goodness, he volunteered to continue to lead tours and be an active member in this organization. We cannot thank him enough for his involvement on this Board and his contribution as an author.



THE RUSH R. SLOANE HOUSE CELEBRATION - In November 2020 we received an invitation to attend the Grand Opening of the renovated Sloane House. This 1850 house was purchased by Rush R. Sloane in 1853 and was transformed into an Italianate Mansion post Civil War. The Reconstruction process revealed seven separate additions to the original house, bringing it to its present size of 10,000 square feet. It is listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and the Underground Railroad directories.



The restoration is the result of Ruth Frost Parker's dedication to the City of Sandusky by rescuing it from demolition in 2012. The majority of the exterior rebuild was accomplished under her auspices. This home is now for sale.

The complete interior renovation was undertaken by Christopher Weidle in September 2015. Its use both as the Sandusky Business College and the Aheir Rest Home removed nearly all of the original interior amenities. Only two rooms retained their period woodwork and floors, and only five original doors remained. Care was taken to conceal the new HVAC, electric, insulation and plumbing. The 1880 era mansion is a breathtaking tribute to its history with period furnishings and fixtures. There are loads of photos and stories about this house on our Facebook page.

This led to a question about the lions that at one time graced the front steps. It took some detective work, but we found them at Lions Park. Ruth Parker had them removed from the front of the house after she started remodeling it. Ultimately these lions were given to the city and placed with the main entrance sign at Lions Park on the city's west side.



A DAY TO REMEMBER – 1945 AND THE END OF WORLD WAR II

(Our first BLOG post) In the mind of a child, many things are worth remembering. As a nine-year-old in 1945, one day will stand out in my memory for the rest of my life.



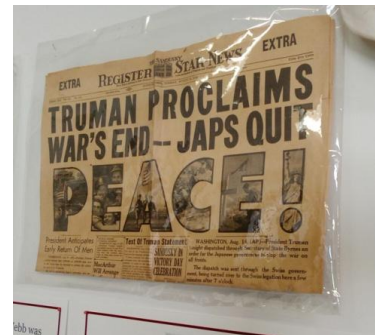
World War II had been raging for four years, and even I can remember some of the sacrifices citizens made to help our troops and the war effort; like saving dimes to buy war bonds, going without some food or clothing items.

But on May 8th, 1945, I was outside roller skating on McEwen Street, where our family lived. It was mid-morning when suddenly I heard the whistles blowing at near-by Farrell-Cheek Steel and Apex Manufacturing. Listening closer, I could hear church bells ringing also. They

continued, for what seemed to me a long time, and I was about to go into the house and ask my mother what was going on. Suddenly women in the neighborhood came running out onto their porches and were shouting to each other, "The War Has Ended!"

After an extended time, the bells and whistles stopped, except for Apex Manufacturing. That whistle had gotten stuck and continued for almost half an hour. A joyous noise for a joyous occasion!" Mary Singler – Archivist – Maritime Museum of Sandusky

The Sandusky Library has a great series of articles about the Apex Manufacturing Company – Just click [HERE](#). The [Kelleys Island History Museum](#) has this wonderful newspaper on display.



YOU probably have a great story to tell – why not tell it to us so we can share it????

SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS



THE 1870 PUBLISHING GROUP - If you go back in time a hundred years ago, the roller coasters were an afterthought. Cedar Point in the early days was all about getting away to the beach, catching a live show in the Ballroom, socializing on the Hotel Breakers porch, or having a fine picnic with your co-workers. **Rolling Through The Years** is a look back across time at the development and changes at the Worlds' Greatest Amusement Park. Author Ken Miller has spent the last seven

years exploring the history of the resort. Magazine articles, museum archives, and over 100,000 newspaper articles spanning 200 years were examined for this detailed history of Cedar Point. Over 75 historical maps of the peninsula and over 1200 images are included in the book. Want to learn more about this book? Click [HERE](#).

HARBOURTOWN FINE ARTS CENTER, 736 Main Street, P.O. Box 557, Vermilion, OH 44089 - www.harbourtownfineartscenter.org information@harbourtownfineartscenter.org

The Harbourtown Fine Arts Center is a 501c3 grassroots organization dedicated to bringing the fine arts to Vermilion and the surrounding communities. The HFAC purchased the Vermilion Town Hall - a magnificent 1883 building that housed many governmental offices in the late 1880s. On the second floor is an amazing Opera House with original seats, curtain, stage, windows and an impressive fresco of George Washington painted directly into the plaster.

The HFAC Opera House is one of the last remaining "hemp" theaters in the US. Be sure to check their **EVENTS** tab for some exciting tours.



HISTORY IN THE NEWS

Be sure to check out the [NEWS](#) page on our website. Since our last newsletter in October we posted multiple articles including (but not limited to): How we almost lost Cedar Point as an amusement park - The Kingsbury Block in Sandusky - The Stone's Block in Sandusky - Saving the State Theatre - The Beatty Church in Sandusky - Columbus Ave shopping - Historic Rush Sloane House Renovation - Rush Sloane a true abolitionist - Vermilion's Wakefield Mansion to be demolished - Landon Gant-sport superstar - The Sloane House Hotel (The Sloane House Hotel in downtown Sandusky is part of our Walking Tour - Find out more about [this magnificent building](#)) - Erie County's first all-female jury (An [historic marker](#) commemorates this event) - Saving Sandusky's storied structures - Why is preserving our historic structures so important? What is the Old House Guild? What is the Landmark Commission? And what can YOU do? - Sandusky's Trailblazing African-Americans - Leaders of Liberation - Kewpee & Markleys restaurant - Fixing the Feick Building - History of City Hall Sandusky - History of the Mad River Block in Sandusky.

June 5, 1902 - Invasion by the army of Canadian Soldiers, otherwise June Bugs - It is now certain that Cedar Point has been opened and that summer is here. The June Bugs have arrived. The advance guard of the army of Canadian soldiers arrived Tuesday evening, and the delightful music of the cracking on the pavements and as the juicy bodies were crushed beneath the shoes of pedestrians and the wheels of vehicles, proclaimed their coming. In a few days, they will be on hand in full force.

The new street lamps will have one good effect at least. The bugs cannot get inside the globes, and there will be no more funeral pyres, smoldering, and giving off the odor of burning fish. That is something that was not figured out when council arranged for extending the contract and having the new system installed. *These are now commonly called Mayflies.*

LEADERS OF LIBERATION

President Joe Biden signed legislation, approved by the House and Senate in bipartisan votes, to make Juneteenth a federal holiday. In our Fall 2020 issue we shared details about some of Sandusky's more prominent URR participants. We'll share more in our Fall 2021 newsletter.

The Sandusky Register summarized it nicely - Black people in Sandusky actively participated in fighting slavery both before and during the Civil War. They helped run the Underground Railroad, the secret network that helped escaped slaves make their way to Canada. They fought and sometimes died in the Union Army against the Confederacy. And Frederick Douglass, the famed Black abolitionist and leader, spoke in Sandusky during the Civil War. These accounts are drawn from the [Sandusky history blog](#) maintained by Sandusky Library and our website, among other sources.

Second Baptist Church and the Underground Railroad - Second Baptist Church, 315 Decatur St., is still an active church in Sandusky today. Before the Civil War, it was a station in the Underground Railroad, giving shelter and aid to escaped slaves on their way north.

African-American Christians founded the church in 1849 as Zion Baptist Church. Just before the Civil War, the church was reorganized at its present site on Decatur Street as First Regular Anti-Slavery Baptist Church. Many African-Americans in Sandusky figure into the church's history. The Sandusky History blog mentions Sophronia Jefferson, born as a slave in Kentucky in 1842 and who died in 1927.

In a 1924 newspaper interview, Jefferson said it was difficult for slaves in the South to get news during the Civil War; slaves were banned from mentioning Abraham Lincoln's name. Jefferson said news of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 was the greatest moment of her life. Her second-best day: News of Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender in 1865, which clinched the Union's victory.

Sandusky was well known as a destination on the Underground Railroad. Sandusky is mentioned in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe that was the best-selling novel of the 19th century.

Black soldiers in the Civil War - About 15 Black men from Sandusky boarded a train in 1863 to travel to Readville, Massachusetts, so they could enlist in the Massachusetts 55th Volunteer Infantry. Harrison Washington survived the war, returning to Ohio for 30 years before moving to Kentucky, but William H. Johnson died from wounds he received on July 2, 1864, while fighting in James Island, South Carolina.

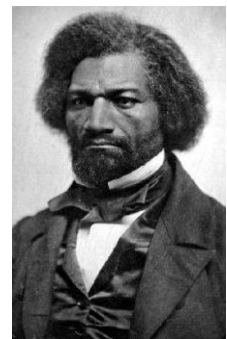
According to a resolution passed several years ago by the Ohio House, 511 African-American soldiers from Ohio served in the 54th and 55th Regiments of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. They saw plenty of action, fighting in battles in South Carolina and Florida, including the Second Battle of Fort Wagner, depicted in the 1989 movie "Glory."

Five other Black soldiers from Sandusky who served with the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry also returned home. Morris Darnell and Elijah J. Brown are buried in Oakland Cemetery. Frank Gardner, Joshua Cole and Thomas Robinson are buried at the Ohio Veterans Home.

Miles Walker, born in Tennessee about 1830, enlisted in the Union Army in 1863. He served as a cook for Company E of the Third Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. He settled in Sandusky after the war, married a local woman, and is buried in Oakland Cemetery (photo left).

Frederick Douglass speaks in Sandusky - Frederick Douglass, the famous American abolitionist and orator, on March 16, 1864, while the Civil War was still raging, appeared at Norman Hall on Water Street in Sandusky. His topic was "Mission of the War." The Sandusky Daily Commercial Register reported, "Suffice it to say that it was a masterly effort - both as to matter and manner was worthy of the speaker's reputation as one of the first orators in our country."

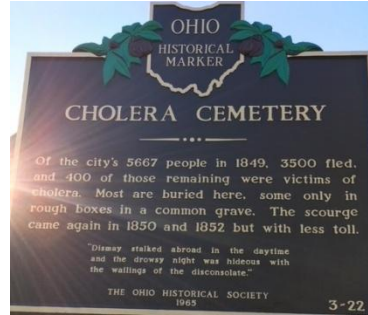
Incidentally, Douglass' son, Lewis Douglass, served alongside Black soldiers from Ohio in the 54th Regiment. Lewis Douglass was wounded in the Second Battle of Fort Wagner but survived.



RECOGNIZING THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

Now that things are getting back to normal, somewhat, we can look back and really appreciate how difficult it was for our health care workers. They put their lives on hold to treat the sick, they put their own health at risk, and they went far and beyond human endurance. We cannot thank them enough.

Of course, the history of service to the health of the community goes way back. The Sandusky Library BLOG has quite a few stories about [historic hospitals in the area](#).



These historic markers recognize both those who died during the largest cholera outbreak in Sandusky and those who heroically worked to save them.

As you walk from the parking lot to the front doors of Firelands Hospital, you will see



quite a bit of history. Along with a plaque recounting the history of the Firelands, there is a hitching post.

The Plaque reads: Hitching Post cir 1870. Originally located on Hayes Avenue, in front of this hospital. Gift of the City of Sandusky 1927.

Erie County has been in the forefront of creating an historic recognition of our health care workers. In December of 1923, the city of Sandusky had two hospitals, [Good Samaritan Hospital](#) and [Providence Hospital](#).



LOOKING BACK TO 1905 – On Wednesday, April 5th, Providence Hospital will celebrate first anniversary. It is customary in other cities to observe the annual anniversary by a donation day in which all the friends of the hospital are invited to participate.

With a hospital depending almost entirely on the generosity of the public, the Sisters kindly ask your co-operation with them in carrying on the work they have begun of providing for the sick and suffering, and sincerely trust you will aid in making their first donation day a very successful one. Can charity be extended to a nobler purpose than the one for which they solicit? Only those who have had some experience in hospital work can understand the expenses necessarily connected with it. Any help rendered the Sisters in their work will be highly appreciated, and donations no matter how small, will be gratefully received. The doors of the hospital will open on that day to all who may wish to call.

September 1880 – Accident in Perkins – Mrs. Mary Weis, a widow, who lives in Perkins, fell down the cellar stairs in the residence of Geo. Fisher in that township on Saturday evening last and was very severely bruised and also pretty badly injured internally. Mrs. Weis had started to go to bed without a light; and as her sight is defective, she missed her way and fell as stated.