Paulding County History Museum Newsletter

"Preserving the Past for Future Generations" since 1977

March 2026

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Photo by Judy Wells

Welcome Back!

We officially opened for the 2026 season on Feb. 17. But while we were closed to the public for the winter, there was still a bustle of activity in our museum. The kitchen remodel was well underway, and a group of or dedicated volunteers were busy putting away Christmas trees, dusting, cleaning, sweeping and working on other projects throughout the museum. Three of our volunteers were sorting and cataloging clothes, artifacts, and other items from the Jesse B. Jackson collection. (See more on that later in this newsletter.)

All in all, it's been a busy winter, and we're excited to get back into the swing of things with our annual activities. We have a fun-filled season planned and will be releasing our schedule shortly. Hope to see you at some – or ALL – of our planned activities!

Annual membership meeting postponed

Because the remodeling of the kitchen is still ongoing, a poll of officers and board members was taken by Vice President Kim Sutton to postpone our annual membership meeting and program, scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026, until a later date.

Those polled agreed that the meeting should be postponed until the kitchen remodel was completed. The new date of the meeting will be determined later, and the date will be communicated to the public by local newspapers and social media. The meeting is open to the public.



Photo by Judy Wells

THINK SPRING!

From the President's Desk

Things have been really busy at the museum this winter. The volunteers have been putting in extra hours and working on remodeling the kitchen in preparation for the Ohio Local History Alliance (OLHA) Region 1 meeting on March 28.

The OLHA (formerly the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums) is a network of local historical societies, history museums, archives, libraries, genealogical societies and historic preservation groups in Ohio involved in collecting, preserving and interpreting Ohio's history.

Representatives from all ten counties in Region 1 are expected to attend the private meeting. We will be providing a light breakfast for the attendees, plus lunch from Puckerbrush Pizza. Other historical societies and museums that are attending will also share their info and pamphlets.

Paulding mayor Greg White will welcome our guests, followed by presentations from Mel White, PCHM president, and a spokesperson from OLHA. Topics for the meeting will include "Zombie History" presented by Kim Sutton, Jane Nice, and Melinda Krick. "Becoming a Historic Downtown" will be given by Dave Burtch, followed by lunch and a business meeting. During the meeting, Carol Razo will be presented with a first-place award for her research and work on her book about Crane Township. A tour of the museum and both barns will follow.

In addition to the kitchen remodel, the floor of the dining room/kitchen was resurfaced by Poly-Pro of Fort Wayne.

A huge thank-you goes out to the instructors and students of Vantage for their help with our projects!

Electricity program instructor Brent Hoersten, seniors Aiden Boecker, Nikalas Bandenberg, Zaden Chavez, Grady Holdgreve, Damien Iliff, Griffin Kosch, Jason Luersman, Landon Orozco, Sawyer Prowant, Aden Quintero, James Schroeder, Brady Thomsen, Warren Zander, and juniors Isabela Basinger, Deacon Bishop, Benjamin Gurney, Zarik Hall, Miley Jacobs, Colton Knippen, Jadon Lamb, Ethan Marlin, Even Myers, Eli Sherrick, Dean Trentman, Phoenix Tucker, Carson Turnwald, Bladen Vibbbert, Kale Vining, Brody Warnecke, Keegan Welker, Cole Wilson, Elijah Wofford, and Maddox Workman. Members of the Carpentry program who helped are instructor Jerry Robenson and seniors Kira Bowling, Phil Burker, Kylerr Burnett, Alexander Grock, Braeden Hire, Dominik Johnson, Braxton Kouts, Owen Long, Manuel Lopez Martinez, Hunter Mell, Logan Miller, Lucas Morehead, Delana Paniagua, Layton Parent, Maddisyn Pescosolido, Alaxander Stevenson, and Townsend Wilkinson.

And a very special thanks goes out to Guy Dasher, Gene Olwin, Kip Gochenour and the other volunteers for the many hours they have devoted to this project.

Mel White, President



Photo by Paulding Chamber of Commerce

Students from Vantage Vocational School's Electrical program helped with the wiring.

The kitchen is looking good!



Photo by Judy Wells

Gene Olwin, Denny Sanderson, and Mike Bevis took down the old kitchen cupboards to begin the remodeling project.

It's been a huge undertaking, but it's finally nearing completion!

As soon as we closed for the winter, our volunteers began remodeling the kitchen. The cabinets were unloaded and removed, the appliances were taken out, and the paneling on the west wall was ripped down. The fixtures in the small bathroom beside the kitchen were removed too, so that facility could be re-done as well.

Then the work began in earnest. Much of the new wiring was done by the students from Vantage Vocational School's electrical department. New plumbing was installed by volunteers, and the old white kitchen cupboard was revamped, painted, and turned into a functional coffee bar.

Vantage students also upgraded the wiring throughout the kitchen and dining room so more outlets could be added to the kitchen.

Cold and snowy weather hampered the project for a short time, but work progressed rapidly once the weather was better. Other students from Vantage's carpentry department swooped in and hung our new cupboards and helped with additional woodworking projects. The floor was done by Poly-Pro, our new appliances were delivered and installed, and the bathroom was completed.

We are proud of our new kitchen and hope our guests enjoy the beautiful new surroundings!

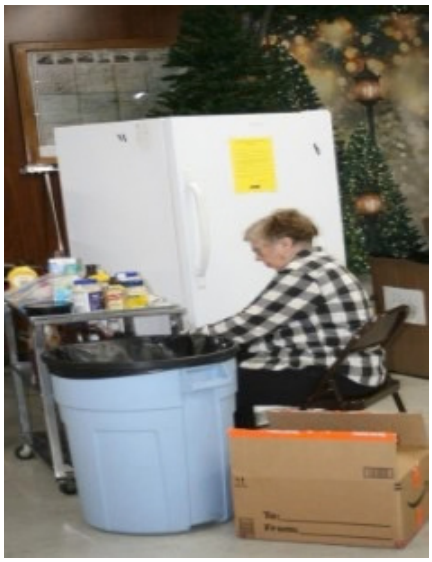


Photo by Judy Wells

Bonnie Pier had the pleasure of cleaning out one of our old refrigerators before it was moved to Barn 1.



Photo by Judy Wells

Guy Dasher climbed the ladder for some work on the new wall around the bathroom.

Date set for Spring Tea

The museum's annual Spring Tea is planned for April 25. Tea and light refreshments will be served. Each table will be uniquely decorated, most of them with heirloom and collectible tableware. Vintage clothing from two collections will be displayed for the Tea. Dresses from the 1880s, donated by Ila Rush, will be featured throughout the museum. Clothing and other artifacts from the Jesse B. Jackson collection will also be on display.

The sewing room has been turned into a nursery for the event and will feature dolls, furniture and children's clothing from the 1800s through the 1950s.



Photo by Judy Wells

Bring your sister, mom, grandma, daughter, granddaughter, aunt, friends or neighbors and join us. Wear your favorite hat or spring-themed accessories and enjoy a charming afternoon. We are also looking for a few more hostesses to decorate tables. The number of tickets we're able to sell is determined by how many tables are decorated. Anyone interested in decorating a table for eight may phone the museum or email us at jphs45879@yahoo.com.

Tea tickets must be purchased in advance. Ages 12 and older are welcome to attend. Because previous events have sold out quickly, those interested in attending are encouraged to purchase their tickets early. The tea is an important fundraiser for the museum, which is a nonprofit 501c3 organization.

Presale tickets are $20 each and will be on sale at the museum Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or by calling 419-399-8218.



Logo shirts available

Short and long-sleeved t-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies with the museum's new logo are now available in the Country Store! If we don't have your size in stock, we will gladly order it for you. Shirts are locally sourced and take only a short time to be delivered. Get yours today!



JESSE B. JACKSON

By Kim Sutton



Jesse B. Jackson was born in Paulding, Ohio in 1871. In 1908, he was appointed as the American Consul in Aleppo, Syria. He is credited with saving the lives of thousands of Armenian people in the Armenian Genocide that took place during and after WWI.

The Paulding County History Museum receives phone calls and inquiries about Paulding County history and the people who lived here quite often. One such phone call was received recently from California that was quite unique. The call was from Mr. Seth Ourfalian of Westminster, California. Mr. Ourfalian is retired from the computer science industry and became interested in history, traveling around the world studying various subjects. He is 100% Armenian but has been living in the United States since the 1980s.

If you are of Armenian descent, you know about Jesse Jackson. No, not the political activist who recently passed away, but the legendary Jesse B. Jackson from Paulding, Ohio who was appointed as consul to Aleppo, Syria in 1908. Jesse B. Jackson is credited with saving thousands of Armenian people from the genocide that was taking place during and after WWI.

Mr. Ourfalian found us through his investigation into the life of Jesse B. Jackson. He was able to locate Jesse's great grandson, Jerett Jackson, in Dallas, Texas. Jerett told Mr. Ourfalian that his family had disposed of all the artifacts from Jesse's estate and given everything to an organization that was going to start an Armenian Genocide Museum in Washington, D.C. Apparently, a lawsuit was filed against the group as there is some disagreement as to whether a genocide was actually taking place. The Turkish government has held the position that no genocide was planned nor happened and that is still their position today.

The museum was never built, and Mr. Jerett Jackson does not know what happened to all the artifacts they had donated. He did know, however, that there were a lot of other items that had been given to Jesse's family descendants living in Columbus, Ohio. Jerett gave the contact info to Mr. Ourfalian, who gave them a call.

Yes! They had two tubs of letters, pictures, Armenian clothes and other items, but they had given it to three ladies from the Paulding County History Museum. They felt it should all go back to where Jesse came from, so they contacted our museum. Melinda Krick, Jane Nice and I made a trip to Columbus to bring it all back. Mr. Marcus Shera, research assistant and nephew of Seth Ourfalian, stopped in Paulding on his way from California to Philadelphia to start a new job to document all the letters, papers, photographs, etc. held by our museum. I met with Marcus for two days at the museum so he could complete his work.

We are now currently in the process of archiving the historic documents and other artifacts we brought back with us and will have some of them on display at the museum during the Spring Tea.

As it turns out, I am related to Jesse B. Jackson. His mother was Lucy Brown. My great-great-grandfather was George Brown, Lucy's brother! Our common great-great-great-grandfather was Elijah J. Brown, one of the first doctors in Paulding County.

Paulding County

No finer land on God's green earth
Than ours can e'er be found;
Her level acres each are worth
Full ten of common ground.

When tickled with the plow and hoe
Her harvests laughing rise,
And as the seasons come and go,
Each brings a new surprise.

No rock-capped hills, with stoney frown,
Cast shadows o'er the land;
No sterile plain or desert brown
Extends its wastes of sand.

But all her wide expanse of soil,
Her fields and forests wide
Give full return for honest toil
And join to swell our pride.

No gruesome plague assails our health,
Or frosts our growing corn;
But to our coffers added wealth
By every breeze is borne.

Our chariot is progression's car;
Our banners are unfurled;
We say to all, both near and far –
Paulding County against the world.

Published in The Garden Spot of Ohio
Pamphlet, Author is unknown





Photo by Judy Wells

Are YOU a member?

Being a member of the John Paulding Historical Society, AKA the Paulding County History Museum, means that you care about our county's history, and you want to help preserve it for future generations.

Take a look at your mailing label on this newsletter. In the lower left-hand corner is a year. That is the year your membership will expire.

Memberships run from January 1st to December 31st each year. To save on postage costs, we do not send out statements for your dues. We just trust that each year you will renew your membership. Sometimes it is easy to forget. So, please pay your dues if you haven't already.

Our doors remain open and free to the public because of our membership dues, fundraising events, and donations.

Annual membership dues are $20 for an individual; $35 for a family; $10 student (non-voting, under 18); $150 for lifetime membership; $150 for a supporting Business/Professional membership and $75 for supporting non-profit membership (501c3).

Festival of Trees
a "Shining" Success!

The 2025 Festival of Trees, held November 14-22, was a huge success! Nearly 3,000 visitors came through our doors during the nine-day event.

Elizabeth Miller, (pictured below) chairman of the festival committee again this year said, "The event was another huge success, thanks to everyone who helped in any way and to our many visitors."

Our biggest fundraiser of the year showcased nearly 100 decorated Christmas trees, possibly the most since the event started in 1984. This year's theme was "Sparkle and Shine." Many of the trees were adorned with glitter, sliver ornaments, icicles, and other shiny doodads that followed the theme. Music and entertainment were provided by area bands and groups, and several meals were provided by local organizations. And of course, the fat man in the red suit himself, Santa Claus, made an appearance.

A huge thank-you goes out to everyone who helped make this year's festival the successful event that it was! Next year's theme is "A Few of My Favorite Things." Start planning your tree right away!



Photo by Judy Wells

PCHM OFFICERS

President	Mel White
Vice-President	Kim Sutton
Secretary	Judy Wells
Treasurer	Julie Anna Densmore
Asst. Treasurer	Patti Boundy

DIRECTORS

Auglaize	Angie Pollock
Benton	Dennis Sanderson
Blue Creek	Patti Boundy
Brown	Sue LaFountain
Carryall	Dan Wilder
Crane	Mike Bevis
Emerald	Jane Stouffer
Harrison	Gene Olwin
Jackson	Guy Dasher
Latty	Roger Flint
Paulding	Elizabeth Miller
Washington	John Pier

Help Support PCHM

✧ PCHM depends entirely on membership dues and donations

✧ Your membership is important – are your dues up to date?

✧ Donate historic items for future generations to enjoy

✧Volunteer on Tuesdays from 10-4 – we always need help!

✧ Get the word out – your museum is a treasure!

Paulding County History Museum

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