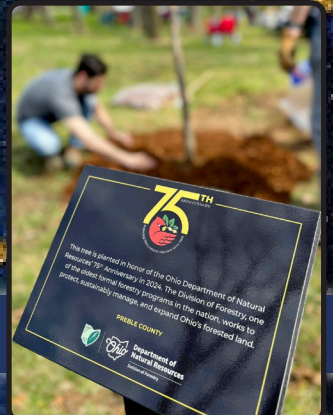
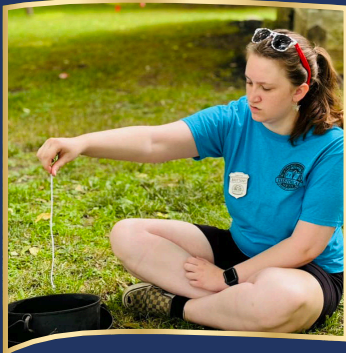


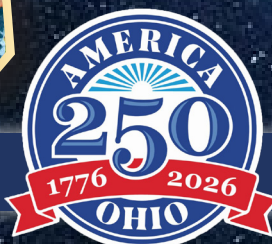
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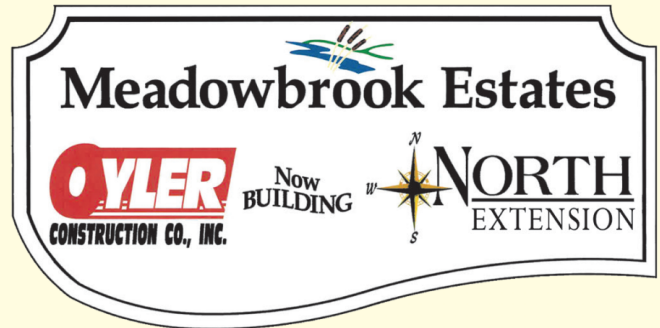


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PCHS President

What a GREAT year at the Preble County Historical Society and Nature Reserve! We are fortunate to have so many individuals, volunteers, service organizations, and businesses that have supported PCHS to be a part of “new generations preserving the past.” I could not write this

message without sharing my sincere appreciation of our Directors, Lisa White, and Brittany Corwin, as they go above and beyond! I also have to share that we have the VERY best Board members who share their financial support, time, and expertise daily! I want each of you to know that PCHS is stronger than ever. We look forward to each of you joining our team as either a member,

a volunteer, an event participant, or a supporter of **OUR MISSION which is to be the resource to preserve and promote the knowledge and history of Preble County for all generations.** Let’s make 2025 even BETTER!
- Harold Niehaus, Board President



2023-2024 PCHS Board of Trustees

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Executive Director



Time sure does fly by...I am beyond blessed to be sitting in the executive chair, watching all of the magic take place. My name is Lisa White, the Preble County Historical Society's Executive Director of Business, Marketing, and Education. My husband Todd and I moved to Preble County 10 years ago and have settled into

this beautiful agricultural community with ease. We have two adult children. Our Daughter Tatum and her fiance Jacob will be getting married at PCHS in June of 2025 and are both teachers. Our son Jake is currently a Senior at Miami University studying Media and Communications with a minor in History. In January of 2024, he studied abroad in Berlin, Germany where he met his

lovely girlfriend Juulia, who currently lives in Finland. Todd and I enjoy taking golf cart rides and visiting the different festivals, small businesses, and events around Preble County. I could not do my job without the exceptional board of trustees, my fellow director Brittany, or our countless volunteers who support us daily. I am looking forward to the "Year of Sharing" in 2025! Let's Go!





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History Director



Hello! My name is Brittany Corwin, and I'm the Director of History & Collections at the Preble County Historical Society! I started volunteering in 2020, became an intern in 2021, and was then promoted to director in January 2022! I am a fourth-year double major in history as well as art and architecture history at Miami University Oxford. Go Redhawks! My current projects include digitizing our collection here at PCHS, researching my genealogy, and pursuing an internship at West Chester Township, Ohio where I am documenting a cemetery's inhabitants as well as resurfacing sunken tombstones, cleaning, and resetting them on new bases! Check out the attached

photo to see me at work! And, if you're interested, I am offering this work at PCHS as well! I have loved history since I was young, and I have been coming to the historical society since I was six months old! Working at PCHS has allowed me to come full circle in my life as well as pursue my passion for history, retelling the stories of those who cannot, and acknowledging where we came from and where we're going. I couldn't be more grateful for this opportunity! Everything we do would not be possible without our visitors, board members, donors, staff, and volunteers. Thank you PCHS supporters for taking a chance on me! As board president Harold Niehaus says, we are "new generations preserving the past!"



Blue Star Banquet

In celebration of the Preble County Historical Society's 40th anniversary in 2011, PCHS and the Register-Herald partnered to create the Hall of Honor. The PCHS board of trustees designated that the Hall of Honor be named the Sara Swartsel Hall of Honor in recognition of the heritage and philanthropy of the Swartsel Family as demonstrated by Sara's enduring gift to the Preble County Community. The Register-Herald joined as a co-sponsor in recognition of the natural partnership of the two organizations in recording the history of Preble County. In 2024, the Hall of Honor inducts its thirteenth membership class. Criteria for inductees are as follows: Inductees must be deceased and have lived in Preble County at



one point in their lives. Furthermore, nominees have been outstanding in agriculture, arts, professional service, education, or sports or have a reputation to honor the county. Something **NEW THIS YEAR**, we

will honor our new inductees as well as past inductees at our brand new **BLUE STAR BANQUET** which will be held on Sunday, September 15th starting at 2:00 pm. Tickets are available on our

website. We will have appetizers, drinks, a special keynote speaker, and our annual awards with a short board meeting to follow. If you would like to nominate someone for the 2025 Hall of Honor, please visit

our website www.preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com, and download the application or email info@preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com. You can also call 937-787-4256.

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2024 Hall of Honor Inductees

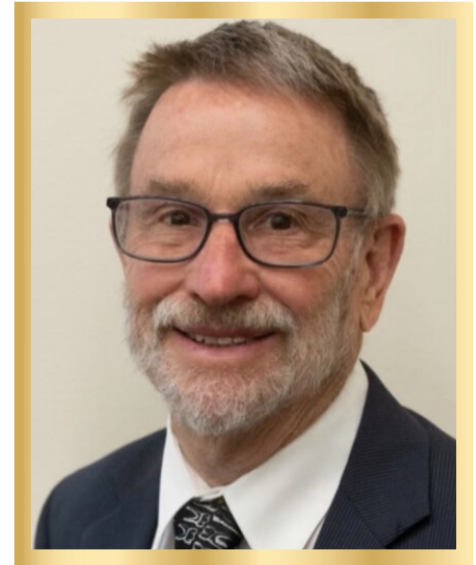
Dr. Charles Floyd Hildebolt II, D.D.S., PhD (1944-2024)

Charles Floyd Hildebolt II, D.D.S., PhD was described as a humble, honest, hardworking, positive, generous, cheerful, and humorous individual. Charles, also known as “Scooter,” was born on January 22, 1944, in Dayton, Ohio to Charles Floyd Hildebolt (1885-1962) and Muriel Hattie Sinnott Hildebolt (1906-1996). He grew up in Eaton, Ohio where he became a 1962 graduate of Eaton High School. There, he was involved with the football and wrestling teams, student council, Hi-Y Club, and Science Club.

Upon his graduation, Scooter headed off to Ohio State University where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology in 1966. Staying with his collegiate alma mater, Scooter attended Ohio State’s College of Dentistry where he earned his D.D.S. or Doctorate of Dental Surgery in 1970. It was after

that he joined the U.S. Army’s Dental Corps where he served as Head of the Oral Surgery Department at William Beaumont Hospital in El Paso, Texas. In his personal life, after this time, Scooter was able to climb to the top of Mt. Denali (former Mt. McKinley), win a first-place award in a sailing race on Lake Erie, and even help map Mammoth Cave in Kentucky which is the world’s longest cave system with over 400 miles of tunnels. In 1982, Scooter resumed his education at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri where he pursued a Masters of Arts in Anthropology in 1985 and subsequently a Doctorate of Philosophy in Physical Anthropology in the following year. He holds the department record for the fastest completion of both degrees. Upon earning his four degrees, Scooter set off into the workforce.

Scooter’s son would eventually find his 34-page-long resume which didn’t even encompass the last decade of his career, so there is only a fraction of his accomplishments to be covered in this short narrative. That being said, Scooter was employed at Washington University’s Medical School in St. Louis, Missouri where he spent 30 years as a professor of radiology and anthropology. He also held a professorship at the Saint Louis University Center of Advanced Dental Education as a professor in the graduate periodontics program. Simultaneously, at the Southern Illinois University School



of Dental Medicine, Scooter served as a statistical consultant. In the past eight years) he edited publications and scientific journals, exceeding over 170 credits to his name. He also held many awards and memberships to various organizations about his passions.

In 2016, Scooter was diagnosed with lymphoma and ultimately, in March of this year, lost his life to the cancer. However, he did not let it stop his career or his dedication to his health. He still played soccer and took 30-mile bike rides once a week. Scooter will be remembered for his many contributions to science, his impeccable character, and his dedication to his family.

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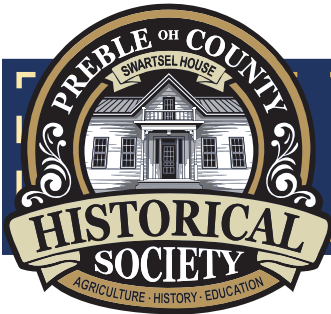
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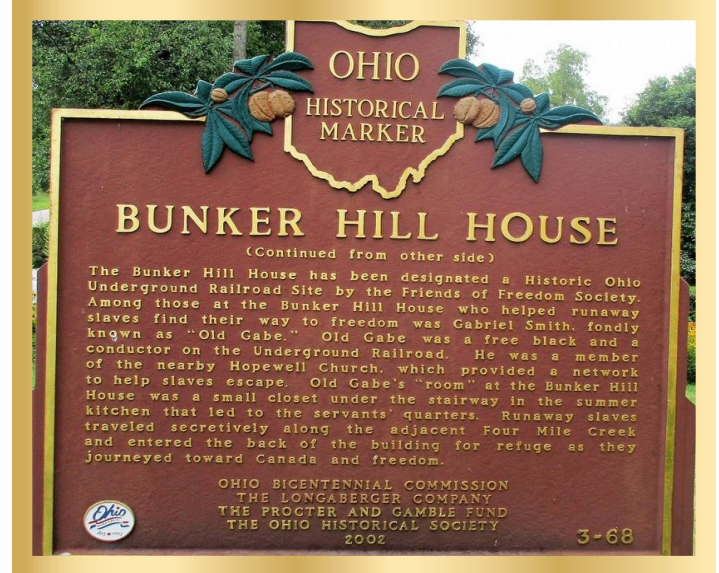


2024 Hall of Honor Inductees

Gabriel "Old Gabe" Smith (1803--Unknown)

If there was ever a man to be considered a jack of all trades, it would be Gabriel "Old Gabe" Smith. Gabe was born into slavery in Maryland in 1803. One of his masters was Patience Hindsley, and Gabe was born Hazard H. Hindsley. Patience willed ownership of Gabe to her daughter, Patience Hindsley Bailey. The Baileys moved from Delaware to Franklin County, Indiana in 1811 and Hazard was emancipated by the Baileys on August 31, 1814, when he was 11 years old. He chose the name "Gabriel Smith" sometime between then and his marriage in 1823. Old Gabe's first marriage was to Pheby Hall on January 11, 1823, and they and their daughter Malinda were members of the Hopewell Church in Israel Township. Although Gabe was able to purchase several plots of land in the late 1830s, it was during this time that he

began traveling around various Ohio and Indiana counties performing music, singing for audiences, and conducting music schools. Later, on March 11, 1849, Gabe remarried Dorcas Wilson, although it is unknown what became of his first wife. They lived in Fairhaven, Israel Township, where Gabe was a music teacher. Around this time, Gabe was a resident at the Bunker Hill Tavern in Fairhaven. The tavern also functioned as a home for Hiram and Eleanor Evans who took Gabe in. Gabe is said to have lived in a small closet under the stairs during his stay and entertained guests with his beautiful fiddling. However, the tavern was not always a lively home. A branch of the Underground Railroad ran right through the town with Gabe serving as its most prolific conductor. In a cellar hidden beneath the floorboards, there is a small space not even tall enough to stand up in. It could maybe house twenty bodies at once if they were packed closely. From this cellar, one can hear chatter and footsteps from above while crouching in the dark, and it is difficult to fathom how escaped slaves, who, in Ohio, were still able to be captured



and returned to their masters, must have felt as they waited below. Before 1850, Gabe assisted over 50 fugitive slaves across the Ohio River, and likely many more after when the Underground Railroad was at its peak. On March 19, 1861, Gabe married his third and final wife, Martha Givens, daughter of Hagar Givens who was another resident of the Bunker Hill Tavern. Up until the 1860s, and maybe even into the 1880s, there were newspaper articles written about Gabe's travels and performances. It is unknown

when he died, and there is only a suspected area of his burial location in the county. Wherever Old Gabe may rest is unaffected by the extraordinary legacy he leaves behind. Between being an emancipated slave in a white man's world to becoming renowned for his music and singing and protecting the lives of many others like him, the legacy of Old Gabe is a story that should be told for generations to come. Gabe continues to represent courage through strife during one of the most divisive times in American history.



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2024 Hall of Honor Inductees



Harry Raymond McPherson (1891-1979)

Harry Raymond McPherson was born on October 17, 1891 to Joseph (1858-1927) and Mary Truax McPherson (1861-1936) in New Paris, Ohio. Harry attended Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana from 1909 to 1911 or '12. He earned a teaching certificate during his time there, and he was thought to be the youngest teacher in the county when he received it.

Around this same time, on June 5, 1912, Harry married Elsie Commons and together they had one child.

Between his marriage and 1921, Harry taught at Jefferson Township Schools in Preble County and became Assistant Superintendent of Schools as well. He also became the publisher of the Eldorado Bee and mechanically set up the New Paris Mirror newspapers.

In 1921, Harry became the first president of the first Preble County Historical Society and, in subsequent years, acquired the acreage for Fort St. Clair and completed needed improvements to the property. He worked on this alongside Mrs. S.E. Reynolds, W.H. Ortt, L.P. Schieser, and Mary Gould Brooke holding offices. The group's objective was "to acquire, mark and preserve the site of Fort St. Clair," although we are still uncertain to this day of the fort's exact boundaries. In 1992, the fort was deeded over to the city who now has complete jurisdiction over it. After 1927, Harry joined the staff at the Ohio State Archaeological and History Society

and was then in charge of Ohio State Parks and Memorials. It was during this latter job that he was assigned to conduct archaeological digs and investigations at Fort Jefferson in nearby Darke County. The fort was utilized by General Anthony Wayne and his troops as a supply base as they fought the Native Americans. Wayne's Trail, or Wayne's Trace, also reaches into Preble County, furthering Harry McPherson's quest to preserve local history.

However, for unknown reasons, Harry left Ohio in 1957 for Arkansas. He continued along his career path, though, as he formed the Northwest Arkansas Archaeological Society and was its president for seven years. He also promoted state legislations for his newfound society and earned several titles and awards, one being editor-in-chief of the Central States Archaeological Society and others being Master Archaeologist Award from the Guild of American Pre-Historians and his being named an official "Arkansas Traveller" by Governor Winthrop Rockefeller. Harry's obituary implies that his legacy lives on through his restorations of prehistoric pottery which are housed in both public and private collections throughout the country. We know here, in Preble County, that we have Harry McPherson to thank for turning Fort St. Clair from a private farmland to a public place used for birthday and graduation parties, school dance photos, sports practices, playgrounds, and for a site to remember our past.

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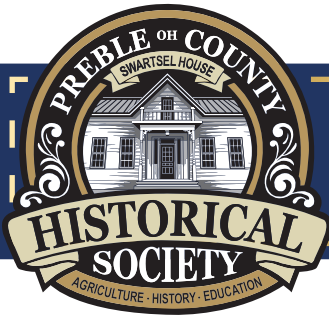
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Past Hall of Honor Inductees

2023 Inductees

Hiram Evans (1808-1876) & Eleanor Humphrey Evans (1805-1850)

The Evanses were builders, owners, and operators of the Bunker Hill Tavern in Fairhaven - were crucial members of the Underground Railroad and its operations. The couple provided a haven for runaway slaves and their fearless conductor, a former slave himself, Gabriel Smith.

Henry Horn (1755-1839)

Henry Horn, the founder of Lewisburg, recorded his establishment on Sept. 7, 1818. Along with founding an entire village and being a Revolutionary War veteran, Horn established several sawmills, a stillhouse, and a tannery in the area. In 1975, Henry's 1813 log house was purchased for \$1, entirely disassembled, and then moved to and reassembled here at the Preble County Historical Society.

James I. Nisbet (1777-1830)

James I. Nisbet was the founder of New Lexington in 1805. He created the first flour mill, township schoolhouse, tannery, and store in the township and built the first brick home in the county in 1811. Additionally, he was appointed associate judge for the Preble County Court of Common Pleas, county recorder, and postmaster of the township. Later he served in the War of 1812 as a captain.

2022 Inductees

Audrey Gilbert 1927-2020

Audrey's dedication to history was clear to those around her. Her passion lives on through her many publications - including her co-editing of the 1992 Preble County History Book - as well as the many donations she made to PCHS.

William "Bill" Ross 1930 - 2020

Bill worked as a research chemist for the EPA, U.S. Air Force, and even NASA; and served as a medic in the U.S. Army; has over 40 publications and 3 patents to his name. He was an avid churchgoer and school board member for Eaton Community Schools.

Myron Edgar "Scottie" Scott 1907 - 1998

Scottie began working for the Dayton Daily News as a cartoonist while in high school and then became an accomplished photographer for the paper as well. Later, upon seeing boys racing "soap box" like contraptions with baby buggy wheels, he thought up the names for the "All-American Soap Box Derby and even named the famous "Corvette" automobile!

2021 Inductees

William Morton Hildebolt 1943-2020

"Bill" led the Hildebolt family's various contributions to the Preble County Historical Society, including one of PCHS's landmark exhibits - the 1922 Washington Motor Car. Bill also approved other important gifts like the Silas Dooley Carriage and a full collection of antique crystals.

Horace "Junior" Kramer 1923-2018

JR supported the Historical Society in many ways including conducting fundraiser auctions as well as donating items from the auctions to the historical society. JR loved flying and playing golf. He was a member of the Eaton Country Club for 65 years. JR hosted the 4-H Sale of Champions for over 50 years, volunteering his time and expertise.

Gregory "Greg" Alan Arnett 1956-2020

Greg provided leadership to the Preble County Historical Society for over 10 years. He served as board president for 5 years. Greg also volunteered his time with the Preble County Park District and the Applefest in New Paris. He worked at Cargill for 38 years. Greg truly loved Preble County.

2020 Inductees

Laura A. Hawes 1854 - 1923

Owned and Operated the Hawes General Store in Fairhaven. She sang, played piano, was an artist and collected antiques. She was a historian who commissioned one of the first detailed histories of Fairhaven and kept a diary of the events. The bunker hill house stands today as a tribute to the Hawes family who owned it for 99 years.

Diana Akers 1947 - 2017

From Twin Township, in Preble County, Diana was a music teacher professional organist. She was very active in the American Guild of Organists and worked hard to support her love of music through the community.

Paul Edwin Ray 1938 - 2012

He served as the County Commissioner for sixteen years, upgraded its infrastructure by building the children's home (now the Preble County Health Department) and fine arts building on Hillcrest Drive and the new jail and job and family services offices on Park Avenue. Paul was a part of many civil organizations and an incredible leader in the county. Paul was also an active Rotarian.

2019 Inductees

Paul E. Fitzwater and Ruth Phelps Fitzwater 1914 - 2007 1916 - 2004

Musicians and teachers, Paul and Ruth excelled at performance - both vocal and instrumental (clarinet and tenor saxophone/cornet and piano respectively), at teaching thousands of students over thirty-five years, and at leading bands and choirs in schools, churches, and community groups - especially Rotary. Together they founded The Keynotes Dance Band, and together they left a lifelong musical legacy in the hearts and lives of their students, friends, and family.

Kenneth J. Garber 1923 - 2016

Born in Preble County and raised by his two aunts, Garber was grateful to those who supported him as an orphan. He graduated from Lewisburg High School and served in the Army in World War II. His accountant's life was enriched by his love of music - a 50 year organist at his Cincinnati church - and by his love for nature and his childhood home, now the Allen and Adaline Garber Nature Center, which he donated in 2004 to become the first Preble County District Park

William R. Goodheart, Jr. 1902 - 1960

From 1943 to 1958, Goodheart owned and operated farms in Preble County and produced prize-winning Aberdeen-Angus cattle and Hampshire hogs. He led the Rotary, the Country Club, the Masonic Lodge, and the Presbyterian Church. He helped found Music Corporation of America (MCA), played a major role in radio's golden age by identifying and producing musical talent, and led NBC's early television programming. He played piano and electric organ for pleasure.

2018 Inductees

Sherwood Anderson 1876 - 1941

Born in Camden, Anderson led an itinerant life of a house painter and served in the US Army in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Eventually he arrived in Chicago and began writing. His famous work Winesburg, Ohio novel was an interrelated collection of short stories and novel that served as a stylistic touchpoint for his and later generations of American writers. He wrote a total of nine novels, four short story collections, and two books of poetry during his short career.



Alfa Lloyd Hayes 1880 - 1962

Founder of Delta Zeta International Women's Fraternity, businesswoman, and homemaker, Hayes was born in Camden, moved to Oxford OH with her family, and became one of the first women students at Miami University. Her character and intellect enabled her to join with five friends to create an organization to support women's friendships and opportunities to lead and contribute to society in their own right. Today, over 244,000 women in 160 collegiate chapters benefit from her legacy.

Phyllis Ashman Campbell "Mama Jazz" 1922 - 2011

Born and raised in Eaton, Campbell made her home in Oxford OH and her career in administrative positions at Miami University. In 1979 she began the "Mama Jazz Show" on WMUB (aka "With Mama Until Bedtime") and introduced her beloved jazz to thousands of listeners over 30 + years on the radio. Hundreds of student radio board operators learned their craft under her tutelage. She received many awards including a commendation by the George H. Buck Jazz Foundation in New Orleans.

Mary Gould Brooke and Edith Gould 1858 - 1946 1855 - 1946

Granddaughters of Cornelius Van Ausdal, these sisters left their own legacy in the form of the "Brooke-Gould Memorial Fund" and its many substantial contributions to Eaton. Mary provided leadership to the Preble County District Library, and was instrumental in establishing the first Preble County Historical Society, the Current Events Club and the Fort St. Clair Park. Edith's life focused on music, teaching piano lessons, and serving a close co-worker and compatriot with Mary.

Susan Haines Kendall 1952 - 2005

Preble County District Library director for 24 years, Kendall demonstrated her passion for gathering and sharing information by establishing the Internet era at PCDL and creating the library's genealogy center that remains a resource for genealogical documents accessed by individuals all over the world. She modernized and expanded the library's seven branches, including establishing the Eldorado branch, and provided leadership to state and local library and community organizations.





Past Hall of Honor Inductees

George Wadlington and Glendine Huggins Wadlington 1928 – 1996 1928 – 1992

George's career as Agricultural Agent was embellished by his service to Eaton as Councilmember and to the First Presbyterian Church, Eaton Little League, Lions Club International, and The Ohio State University. Glendine's career in early childhood education and special needs education supported children and families with developmental disabilities. Together they served the Preble County Pork Festival, the Preble County Historical Society, and the Preble County Farm Bureau.

2017 Inductees James Edward Quinn 1920 – 1997

A fifth generation Preble Countian and World War II veteran, Quinn helped found the PCHS, served as a member of the Board of Trustees, donated many artifacts, and created nature trails and wildlife education programs. His many contributions to West Alexandria included Republican Central Committee member, village council member and Marshall, private business ownership, and church and community association memberships including helping create the Lions Club Apple Butter tradition.

Col. Charles M. Hendricks, M.D. 1877 – 1953

Visionary Preble County native, Dr. Hendricks began his illustrious career at Miami University. His ambition took him to medical school and his compassion led him to treating respiratory illnesses. His Army career resulted in innovations for improved evacuation and treatment strategies, MASH units, and blood types on military "Dog Tags." His love for football and his community service in El Paso, Texas, led to assisting in creating and naming "The Sun Bowl."

Clarence Irvin Kesler 1882 – 1975

Born and raised in Preble County, Kesler received the Navy Cross for his service as crewmember on Seaplane NC-1 that crossed the Atlantic Ocean in May 1919. For this history-making first he also received the highest non-citizen honor of the Order of the Tower and Sword medallion from the King of Portugal. His distinguished Navy service led to a pilot's career with Pan American Airways in Central and South America.



2016 Inductees Irene Hardy 1841 – 1922

Born in New Westville, Hardy taught in one-room schools in Preble County. She graduated from Antioch College during the Civil War and served as Principal of the Eaton Grade School in 1869. She traveled to California in 1871 and became a teacher at Oakland High School and then an English professor at Stanford University. Her autobiography and books of poetry portray her literary talents and her extraordinary life as an independent woman in the 19th century.

Billy J. "Bill" Sewert 1923 – 2003

Lifelong resident of Lewisburg, Sewert spent his life in service to his country in the US Army where he received the Purple Heart Medal and to his community where he worked in journalism and especially enjoyed his weekly village column for The Register-Herald. He helped convert the old movie theater into the fire station, served on the village council and in many other organizations, and started the emergency squad.

Larry A. Hart 1941 – 1991

Throughout his career as Wildlife Game Protector in Preble County, Hart set a timeless standard for all officers. He gave numerous educational programs to community groups, volunteered as scout leader and baseball coach, supported his church, and loved to square dance! He received many awards and assisted in establishing wetlands and prairie grasses in the county. A college scholarship established in his honor continues to provide annual awards.

2015 Inductees William Bruce 1762 – 1830

On February 20, 1806, William Bruce filed the plat plan for Eaton OH. He provided land for the courthouse and other public buildings, churches and schools. He established a sawmill, a gristmill, and other businesses, served as the first treasurer of the county, and received the universal and unqualified respect of county residents.

Cornelius Van Ausdal 1783 – 1870

The pioneer merchant of Eaton and Lewisburg, Van Ausdal created wholesale and retail commerce of all kinds. He served on the local railroad board, insured completion of the Christian Church building, was a Deputy U. S. Marshall (taking the first census in the county), served as a state legislator, and owned the Western Telegraph weekly newspaper.

Sarah Elizabeth Daughtery Reynolds 1845 – 1923

Reynolds was prominent in patriotic affairs and helped originate the custom of casting flowers on streams on Memorial Day. She loved history and archeology and her advocacy led to the designation of Fort St. Clair Park in Eaton. She presented Preble County women's buckeye bole cabinet at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

Chester (Chet) and Mary Palmer Wagner 1908 – 1970 1913 – 1985

The Wagners opened the Whispering Oaks Restaurant in 1947 and that led to the founding of Henny Penny to manufacture high quality cooking equipment. Active in Rotary, church, Shrine, and politics, Chet also established a forestry scholarship and award. When widowed, Mary guided the business and insured a successful transition upon its sale in 1976.

Timothy H. Miller 1938 – 1993

Tim was a man for the county. He was involved in everything from news reporting to politics to the Pork Festival to photography to the 911 system and more. He led the Chamber of Commerce, served as a Special Deputy Sheriff, worked on the restoration of the Roberts Double-Barrel Bridge, and helped found the Friends of the Library and the Eaton Camera Club.

Rosetta "Rosie" McNeese 1928 – 2010

Rosie was a founder of the Preble County Art Association and a driving force in fundraising for the Fine Arts Center dedicated in 1990. She was a well-known and prolific artist specializing in watercolor, pastels, and oils. Her legacy includes over 25 pen and ink drawings of structures in the county and her efforts to preserve historic downtown Eaton.

2014 Inductees Silas Dooley, Sr. 1786 – 1877

Silas Dooley, Sr. was the first recorded settler in Gasper Township. He cleared his land and helped clear the land where the Village of Camden is now located. Dooley was a tireless worker and man of great economy and self-denial. His marriage to Johanna Westerfield was the first one licensed in Preble County. Their 1830's timber and frame home remains today as a centerpiece of the original homestead which has been in continuous operation by seven generations of descendants for over 200 years.



Dorothy Kiracofe 1926 – 2005

Dorothy Aukerman Kiracofe fine-tuned her culinary skills at Mrs. Wagner's Kitchen and took them to the Preble County Pork Festival where she served on the board for over 25 years and won many Grand Championships for her baking. She was a Grange Deputy for over 50 years, 4-H leader for over 25 years, and volunteer with the Eaton High School Band, the public library, and special needs children and programs serving them.

Alfred Horatio Upham, Ph. D. 1877 – 1945

Alfred H. Upham was born and raised in Eaton where he excelled in school and then enrolled in Miami University. He graduated from Miami with many honors and completed graduate studies at Harvard and Columbia Universities. He held faculty and leadership positions at universities in Utah, Massachusetts, and Idaho before becoming Miami's president in 1928, serving until 1945, the longest in the university's history. He composed Miami's Alma Mater and was honored by the naming of Upham Hall.

Martha A. Rizert Dye 1930 – 1999

Martha A. Ritzert was orphaned in 1938 and then cared for by relatives. She was a trained educator and became an accomplished classical pianist. Music was a great joy and solace to be shared, and the Eaton Area Arts Council was founded to benefit countless children and residents. Besides her work with the Children's Home's renovation and services, she worked as a juvenile counselor and probation officer for adolescent girls. As a principal founder of the Preble County Historical Society, her vision led to the creation of the outdoor amphitheater at PCHS.

Jo Ann Lange and William E. Lange 1927 – 2010 1925 – 2012

Service to others, to her church, and to her community was a central part of Jo Ann Lange's life. She served the Delta Theta Tau Sorority, a philanthropic sorority; operated the Pork Festival Short Order Haus with her husband for 35 years; worked as a poll worker and judge for the Board of Elections; was active in Preble County 4-H, as a band parent and FHA Mother at Twin Valley South, as a Preble County Farm Bureau member and leader for over 30 years; as secretary of her church, and as board member and volunteer at the Preble County Historical Society.

William E. Lange, Jr., enjoyed farming and helping others. He and his father operated a seed cleaning business under the name William E. Lange and Son Certified Seed and Sales. Bill's farm was only one of a handful in Preble County to be recognized by the Ohio Department of Agriculture as a "Century Farm," operated by the same family for more than 100 years. Bill served his church as treasurer, his

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Past Hall of Honor Inductees

township as clerk, his community as board member of the Preble County Soil and Water Conservation and chair of the Farm Bureau, his school as officer of the alumni association, and his political party as central committee member and volunteer.

2013 Inductees Cyrena Van Gordon 1893 – 1964

Her life began in Camden where she sang in cantatas at the First Presbyterian Church and graduated from high school. Her voice and stage presence took her throughout the United States and abroad, and she rose to be prima donna of the Chicago Opera Company and the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York City over a 27-year career. She returned to her Ohio home to dedicate the Preble County Court House in 1918 and on many other celebratory occasions.

Ione Sell Hiestand 1933 – 2012

Self-titled “professional volunteer,” Hiestand dedicated herself to serving the community including founding and leading the Friends of the Eaton Library, authoring and editing numerous publications of the Preble County Historical Society including the 700-page 1992 history entitled Preble County, Ohio, initiating and promoting the arts including music performances and graphics arts at the Preble County Art Association, and writing about and enhancing the architecture of downtown Eaton.

Lucile Petry Leone 1902-1999

Born near “Frog Heaven School” in Monroe Township, Leone’s nursing educator career led her to the US Public Health Service during World War II where she created the Cadet Nurse Corps Program and rose to the rank of Assistant Surgeon General and Chief Nurse Officer, a rank equivalent to Admiral. Her philosophy was that nurses nurse the whole patient. She received distinguished service awards and honorary degrees from organizations across the country for her service to nurse education.

Marian M. Mitchell & James W. Mitchell 1920 – 2010 1916 – 2012

Together the Mitchells helped found the Preble County Historical Society and the Preble County Pork Festival and served the Eaton Presbyterian Church. Marian led the District Library Board, the Girl Scouts, and planted thousands of daffodils and blue bells at Fort St. Clair Park. Jim nurtured an acorn from the Whispering Oak into a seedling and was instrumental in saving and moving both the Lewisburg Log House to PCHS and the Roberts Covered Bridge to Eaton.

2012 Inductees Nathaniel Benjamin 1795 – 1885

Carpenter, joiner, builder, businessman, Benjamin constructed many buildings in Preble County, planted an orchard, established a nursery, and kept a tavern/public house in New Lexington. He supervised highway construction when West Alexandria was a wilderness, served in public office for over 20 years, and was a dedicated Mason. His generous contributions established an orphanage and a public school library.

Harvey Hiestand 1872 – 1944

Architect, artist, and musician, Hiestand graduated from Eaton High School, traveled the world, and returned to practice architecture in Eaton. He established Miami University’s first architecture courses and designed substantial public and business buildings throughout the Midwest as well as many homes in Eaton. Hiestand Hall at Miami University is named in his honor and houses many of his artworks.

Thomas McQuiston 1839-1909

McQuiston received patents for a corn cultivator and a sorghum evaporator. A lifelong farmer in Israel Township, McQuiston operated a sorghum mill from 1862-1903, farmed as had the three preceding generations and three succeeding generations of his family, and served in the 156th Regiment of the O.V.I. in the Civil War. He was a long-time trustee of Hopewell Presbyterian Church.

Clarence Oldfather Harold Sell 1913 – 2000 1911 – 2003

“Sparky” Oldfather and Harold Sell bought the local newspaper in 1947 and built it into the state’s second largest weekly. They were honored as “Publishers Emeritus” upon their sale of the paper in 1973. Both had careers dedicated to publishing including Oldfather’s early work at Eaton’s “Bulletin” and Sell’s work at the “New Paris Mirror” and his founding of the “Eldorado Weekly.”

Richard Tuggle 1920 – 1976

Community leader in business, church, and volunteer organizations, Tuggle was a charter member and board president of the PCHS. He served as manager of the Eaton Farm Bureau and established the St. Clair Custodial Supply Company (now Remagen, Inc.), a family-owned business. He served as a township trustee, a church elder, and president of the Eaton Rotary Club.

2011 Inductees Helen J. Felton and M. Heber Felton 1918 – 2011 1912 – 2001

Helen and M. Heber Felton, each individually through many different organizations, and together through their mutual love and support, lived in the county for a total of 180 years. Heber as CEO and President of Eaton Home Loan and Home Aid Company and Helen as an educator, both enjoyed history and were proud of their heritage.

Andrew L. Harris 1835 – 1915

Civil War hero as Colonel with the 75th OVI, public servant at local, state, and national levels, serving Ohio as Judge, State Representative, State Senator, Lt. Governor, Governor, and chairman of the United States Indian Commission under President McKinley, Harris was a “Farmer-Statesman.” A graduate of Miami University, he loved in Preble County for 77 years.

Seth S. Schlotterbeck 1898 – 1985

As County Highway Department Superintendent 1937-1966, Schlotterbeck was instrumental in preserving our covered bridges, historic steel truss bridges, and the Lewisburg Log House. His detailed photography and recording of historical details have provided records that otherwise would have been lost. A World War I veteran, Schlotterbeck spent his entire life of 87 years in and documenting Preble County.

Sara Swartsel 1914 – 2003

The Hall of Honor is named in honor of Sara Swartsel, county native, educator, artist, and environmentalist, who donated her family farm to the Preble County Historical Society with four objectives: beautify the grounds through plantings and horticultural activities; encourage and provide space and facilities for activities of cultural and educational nature, environmental studies, musicals, lectures, and the arts; conduct farming operations and demonstrate agricultural activities of the past and present; and generally encourage the widest possible use of these objectives and purposes to cooperate with schools and groups in bringing children to the center and to promote and encourage its use.



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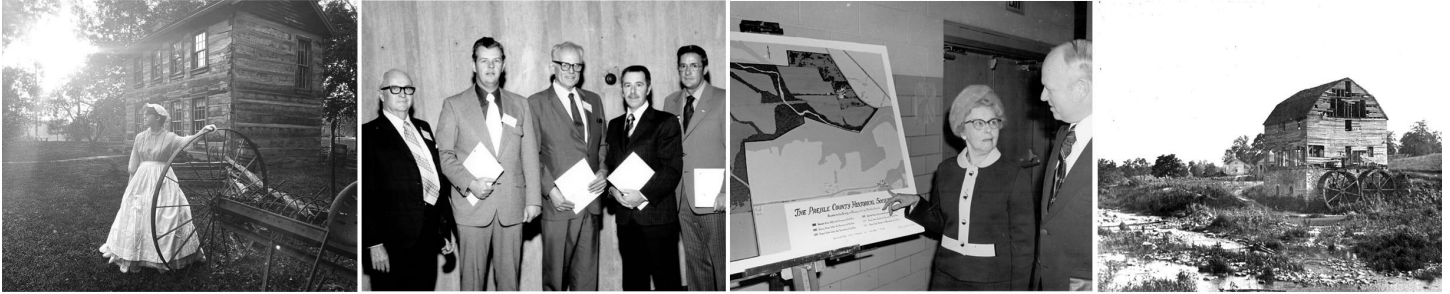



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Preble County Historical Society and Nature Reserve Membership Form



PCHS Membership Application Our Mission Statement

“To be the resource to preserve and promote the knowledge and history of Preble County for all generations.”

Personal Information

First Name _____ Last _____

Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Contact Preference(s) _____ Email _____ Mail _____ Phone _____

Area of Support

Education Preservation & Collections Conservation & Trails

Events & Entertainment History Programs Area of Greatest Need

Giving Information

All Donations are greatly appreciated and make an immediate and lasting impact on our ability to expand programs, care for our collections, launch new exhibits and hold events. Please review below the different options to support our mission.

The society is a 501c3 nonprofit and operates on your generosity. Your fully tax-deductible additional donations, gift memberships, bequests or memorial donations will help us greatly!

Student Membership \$10 Individual Membership \$25 Family Membership \$50

President Membership \$100-\$199 Collector Membership \$200-\$499 Connoisseur Membership \$500-\$999

Make checks payable to **Preble County Historical Society**

Donation \$ _____

Mail: PCHS 7693 Swartzel Road Eaton Ohio 45320

Give online using a credit card: www.preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

937-787-4256 / info@preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com Tues: 4-7pm Thurs: 10-2pm



PCHS Awards History Scholarship

In 2021, the Preble County Historical Society Education Committee, and the Board of Trustees voted to start a History Scholarship program for local high school seniors from the county to apply for. These students must be continuing their education in the history field. We reserve a \$500 Scholarship for the chosen candidate. In 2024, that scholarship program was renamed “The Barbara Cox History Scholarship”. Barbara “Barb” Cox, is well-known in the community for being a kind, generous, and passionate person when it comes to both teaching and

- 2021- Jake White, Eaton High School
- 2022- Abbi Tuttle, Eaton High School
- 2023- Jaxon Roth, Eaton High School
- 2024- Brianna Wagoner, Tri-County North High School

learning. Barb, now a retired teacher, taught kindergarten and first grade for 30 years at Eaton Community Schools. She served as a substitute teacher for an additional 16 years and was on the National Trail School Board for 13 years. Barb is an active member of the Commodore Preble County DAR, the Preble County Youth Foundation, Preble County Council on Aging, Campbellstown

Church, Preble County Art Association, has two booths at the New Paris Antique Mall, and, of course, is a member and loyal volunteer at the Preble County Historical Society. This year, the scholarship award went to Tri-County North Senior Brianna Wagoner. Brianna finished her Associate’s Degree in History and plans on attending the University of Dayton in the fall to study Pre-Law. If you



would like to donate to the Barbara Cox Scholarship Fund, please send it to PCHS, 7693 Swartzel Road Eaton Ohio 45320. Congratulations Brianna!

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Picture of the first Rodeo Shop “1959”

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Pchs: Our Historic Collection

One of the biggest projects we have undertaken at PCHS has been our digitization project. Our museum collection is expansive, as it consists of an estimated 30,000 items! This ranges from objects as small as stamps and coins to as big as our prairie wagon and other vehicles! Here are some project stats from 2024 thus far:

- 17 new exhibits encompassing military, music, technology, schools, and churches
- 100 new signs created and placed
- 1,920 objects digitized
- 935 textiles digitized
- 1,077 documents digitized
- 256 books digitized
- Total items digitized: 3,253 items digitized into our database
- Volunteer hours for

collections: 880

- If you have something you'd like to donate, please consider the following:
- We only accept items about Preble County events or persons
- We may accept duplicates, but we avoid triplicates
- All items must be in a condition fit for display but are not guaranteed to be on display as exhibits rotate

We appreciate the community support as well as the many volunteers who work hard to bring PCHS into the digital era!

Phone: (937)787-4256

Email: brittany@preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com

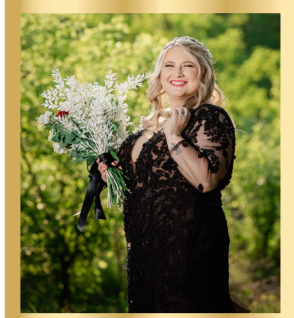




Weddings At PCHS

Nestled in the agricultural community of Preble County, Ohio, The Preble County Historical Society and Nature Reserve is a breathtaking 255-acre farmstead steeped in history and enveloped in timeless beauty. The property has been thoughtfully renovated to retain its historic charm while incorporating modern amenities for an idyllic escape. Discover a stunning 1860 farmhouse, an 1813 log house, and a tranquil ceremony site nestled in a wooded

setting, a recently built new pavilion, and acres of prairie grasses all setting the quiet and relaxed atmosphere. For those seeking a truly immersive experience, PCHS offers wagon rides for the guests and exhibits for the guests to learn more about local history. Whether you are planning a wedding or seeking a picturesque venue, PCHS provides a dreamy and elegant setting with its diverse outdoor options, ready to host your unforgettable event. For more information or to book your tour, email info@preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com.



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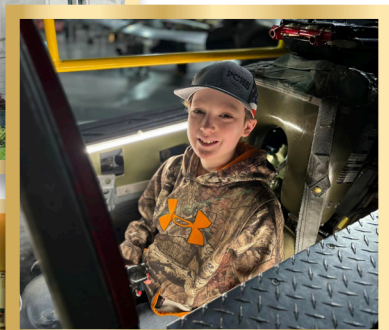
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Museum Tours Of 2024



In 2024, we wanted to celebrate other major museums in our surrounding area. We chose to first visit the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery. We even stumbled upon a mastodon skeleton collection from New Paris, Ohio while there. Next, we decided to visit the National Air Force Museum on Presidents Day! What a treat this was to learn more about the Presidential history and see firsthand these magnificent displays. After that, we visited the Packard Museum. This is one of the best historic car museums in our area. We even saw a DeLorean. We were lucky

enough to meet the President and Director of the Museum and will hopefully partner with them in the future. This summer, we visited the local Preble County Courthouse and toured with Judge Steve Bruns. This is always a wonderful treat to learn more about the building and the history of law. And last, we went to the famous Carillon Park in Dayton. We can only strive to be like them and to hold our local history as precious as they do. What an incredible organization to look up to and learn from. It was a great year, and we hope to plan more of these visits in the future.



AM70377053



Covered Bridges

Preble County is fortunate to have eight covered bridges still standing and is home to the oldest covered bridge in Ohio and the second oldest double-lane bridge in the U.S. Throughout the 19th Century, from 1829 until 1896, 29 covered bridges were built in Preble County, and used for turnpikes, the railroad, private enterprise, and some to replace original bridges destroyed by a devastating storm in May 1886. To find more



information about these bridges, visit the Preble County Historical Society during visitor hours on Tuesday from

4-7 pm and Thursday from 10-2 pm or call 937-787-4256 and we can mail you a full map.



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Discover Preble County

In 2023, The Preble County Historical Society launched a new event called Discover Preble. The idea was to choose 25 locations around the county with various businesses, historic landmarks, parks, restaurants, and other hot spots. Game players arrive

at registration to pick up their game board and then hit the road with family and friends to search for those locations using the clues given. Thanks to the Preble County Business Development Partnership, we were able to award cash prizes for completing the game. This is a perfect event

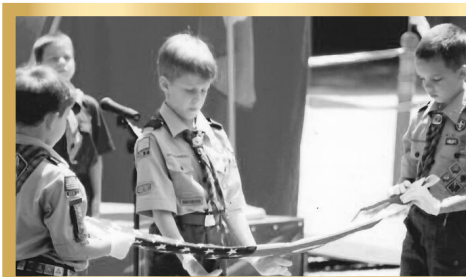
to help stimulate the local economy and allow people to discover what Preble County has to offer. You can play this family fun game on May 3rd, 2025 starting at 9:00 am at PCHS. For more information, contact info@preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com



Restoration Services

In 2023, PCHS launched a new program for the Year of Restoration. We now offer services to help the community better preserve, protect, and archive their memories. This is an investment, but when spending money on something priceless like these memories- it's impossible to say no. We will closely work with you on your project and no project is too big or too small.

- Slide Scanning Services
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- Photo Restoration
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NEW



For more information, please call 937-787-4256 or email lisa@preblecountyhistoricalsociety.com



2024- "Year of Conservation"





PCHS: This Is Who We Are

The Preble County Historical Society (PCHS) is a non-profit corporation organized in 1971 with a mission to promote knowledge of the Preble County history and to collect, preserve, display, and maintain materials and objects of all types, that have historical significance to Preble County. PCHS provides a unique environment for the organization to pursue its mission. The society provides the opportunity for individuals of all ages, abilities and incomes to experience, imagine, and learn the historic flavor of the rich cultural heritage of Preble County. The campus is a 255-acre farmstead established in 1974 when Sara Swartsel conveyed her property to the society.

The property includes the 1860 farmhouse, 1813 log house, 1850 smokehouse, Exhibit Hall, Bank Barn, Brand New Pavilion, Outdoor Amphitheater, Outdoor Education Classroom, and over 7 miles of hiking trails. PCHS operates daily because of its valued members, board of trustees, staff, businesses, vendors, and volunteers. PCHS is proud to connect with other organizations in the community. Partnerships with the Eaton Rotary Club, Preble County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Preble County Development Partnership, Preble ARTS, Preble County Park District, Preble County Council on Aging, Preble County Chamber of Commerce, Preble County Sheriff's Office, West Alexandria Fire Department, Our county commissioners, state representative, congressman, and governors office allow us to feel supported to further our mission.





Milestones: in the life of the

PREBLE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS, THE PREBLE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS EXPERIENCED MANY MILESTONES IN ITS DEVELOPMENT. MOST NOTABLE OF THESE ARE THE FOLLOWING:

1971

Preble County Historical Society incorporates.

1974

Sara Swartzel donates the farm where the Preble County Historical Center is located.

1975

The 1813 Lewisburg Log House is acquired and moved to the Center site.

1976

Hiking trails and bird blind are established by the Miami University Institute of Environmental Sciences.

1983

New exhibition building is constructed at the Center.

1984

Herb Garden is established and dedicated.

1985

1855 Smoke House is donated and moved to the Center.

1986

New maintenance and storage building is erected.

1989

Society obtains full ownership of property.

1990

Full-time executive director is hired.

1991

New garage used for storage and public restroom facilities is constructed.

1992

Heritage Apple Orchard is dedicated. Preble County History Book is published.

1994

American Association for State and Local History grant is awarded to train the executive director and registrar on professional museum collection practices.

1995

Professional Museum Assessment Plan is implemented.

1996

25th Anniversary of PCHS

1998

Whispering Oak Historical Museum opens as satellite of PCHS (closed in 2002).

2000

Garber Farm Project begins. State of Ohio funds Master Plan development.

2001

Comprehensive Master Plan is completed. Professional Museum Conservation Assessment is implemented.

2002

The Master Plan Implementation Plan is developed. Preble County's Ohio Bicentennial Bell Casting is held at the Center on July 6&7.

2003

Clean Ohio Conservation Grant is awarded, providing funds for the purchase of 19.7 acres of adjoining property.

2004

Site Interpretive Plan is developed. Saylor-Swartzel House is renovated with handicap restroom and ramp installed.

2005

National Endowment for the Humanities grant of \$5000 is awarded for collections conservation improvements. Bank Barn undergoes major foundation and drainage upgrades.

2006

State of Ohio awards society Capitol budget funds of \$100,000 for development.

2007

Society hosts the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit titled: Covered Bridges: Spanning the American Landscape.

2008

Clean Ohio Conservation Grant for wetland and conservation enhancements is awarded. State of Ohio awards society Capitol budget funds of \$250,000 for development of the amphitheater project. Sinclair Community College Service Learning project begins.

2009

Wetland is restored, interpretive signage installed.

2010

Amphitheater fundraising begins. Wetland Reserve Program application process begins. Preble County One-Room Schoolhouse book is published. 1813 Lewisburg Log House roof replacement by volunteers. Miami University Institute of Environmental Sciences Public Service Project completed: Historic Wetland Education. First Preble County Barn Tour and Dinner conducted in collaboration with the Preble County Art Association.

2011

40th Anniversary of PCHS is celebrated with the creation of the Sara Swartzel Preble County Hall of Honor in collaboration with The Register-Herald. PCHS partners in recording the history of Preble County. Bridges, Bikes, and Blues Inaugural Event is held at the Center and travels through all the county's covered bridges to downtown Eaton for music and festivities. First All-Hallows Eve Event is held at the Center.

2012

Construction begins on The Amphitheater. Grand Opening of The Amphitheater! Second Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony

2013

First Full Season of The Amphitheater. Third Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony. 104-Acre Conservation Reserve Program Approval

2014

Fourth Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony. The Amphitheater Project is fully funded! New Executive Director is hired!

2015

Aukerman Creek Restoration Project: Stream Restoration and Native Species Planting. Fifth Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony

2016

Sixth Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony. Hired our first full-time summer intern to help with marketing at PCHS.

2017

New picnic pads and sidewalks were put in around the meadow area of PCHS. We also received new picnic tables for the pads and trashcans. Another picnic pad was installed in the amphitheater area where our pop/beer tent is placed during our events. New gravel was added to the Amphitheater parking lot. New events in 2017: Titanic Tea, WWI Exhibit and reenactment, Mound Hill Cemetery Historic Tours, Ghost Tours at Saylor-Swartzel house and Symphony on the Farm with Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Start of the Historic Plaque Program. Seventh Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony.

2018

New gate installed for entrance of the Amphitheater. Received a grant from Ohio Facilities Construction Commission to update our Exhibit Hall. The morton building will be insulated, dry walled and climate control to preserve our artifacts. Thanks to Lowman's Heating and Air for donating a new HVAC system. Saylor-Swartzel house repainted. Grand Re-Opening of our Exhibit Hall. New Events: Haunted Hayride, Pumpkin Glow at PCHS and Back to the USO: Living History Event

2019

New Preble County Historical Society Signs installed by St. Rt. 122. New Events: The Sweeter Side: Wine Tasting and Chocolate. We collaborated with Old Mason Winery, Speakers Series at PCHS (March, June, September and December). Ninth Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony

2020

2 New Directors Hired. Director of Business and Marketing. Director of History and Education. First Historic Plaque Donated. Amphitheater reopens with fresh new acts. Smoke House Repainted. Tenth Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony. Endowment Fund Set Up.

2021

50th Anniversary of PCHS. New Executive Director Named. New Dance Floor for Events. 2 New Trails Added. New Outdoor Education and Event Center. Wetland Restoration Project. Collections Digitization Begins. Record Attendance for Fireworks. History Study Group Formed. Trail Club Formed

2022

"Year of Education" Theme. 12th Year of Hall of Honor. Washington Car 100th Birthday. New Podcast Created. \$240,000 Grant Earned. International Model T Tour Stop. Storybook Trail Installed. Bank Barn Inventory Completed. 3 Historic Plaques Awarded. Fireworks - Record Attendance. Historical Society Network Created

2023

"Year of Restoration". 1903 Ford Model A 120th Birthday. 1 Historic Plaque Awarded. 2 Film Documentaries Completed. Exhibit Hall Inventory Completed. Swartzel House Inventory Completed. Tombstone Restoration Program started. Photo and Video Restoration Services. Preble County Famous Program launch. New Discover Preble Event. Education Program growth with over 700 students

2024

"Year of Conservation". 4 Historic Plaques Awarded. 2 Film Documentaries Completed. New Event Pavilion Built. Ohio Department of Forestry Plaque Awarded. Preble Soil and Water 75th Anniversary Picnic. Aukerman Creek Restoration Project. The 13th Hall of Honor Class Inducted. Blue Star Banquet Launched. New Membership Programs Launched. America 250 Ohio Grant Awarded, and New Pollinator Garden Planted

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