LORAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2026 Fall Newsletter



Dear Friends of the Lorain Historical Society,

As I complete my first four months with the Lorain Historical Society, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and share a few thoughts about my experience so far.

These first few months have been both busy and rewarding. I've enjoyed getting to know our staff, volunteers, Board members, and many of the people who care so deeply about the Lorain Historical Society and the community we serve. I've also gained a greater appreciation for the important work this organization does in preserving and sharing Lorain's history.

I am grateful for the warm welcome I've received and for the strong foundation that has been built over the years. As I look ahead, I'm excited about the opportunities to build on that work, strengthen our community connections, and continue making the Lorain Historical Society a place where people can discover, learn, and feel connected to our shared history.

I look forward to meeting more of you in the months ahead and working together to shape the next chapter of the Lorain Historical Society.

Warm regards,

Stephanie Petcavage
Executive Director

LORAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
329 W. 10th St. • Lorain OH 44052
www.lorainhistory.org

Lorain Early Learning Initiative (LELI)

The **LELI** Program is one of the most heart-warming initiatives in all of the Lorain Historical Society. The **LELI** program is an academically grounded, developmentally appropriate early learning initiative designed to support kindergarten readiness through experiential learning, cross-curricular integration, and sustained family engagement. Each component of the program aligns with the Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards and emphasizes inquiry-based, hands-on instruction both in the classroom and in community-based learning environments.



Program Objectives:

- Promote school readiness through interdisciplinary, developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Provide equitable access to high quality, place-based learning experiences.
- Strengthen family involvement in early education through intentional engagement strategies.
- Support full-day preschool teachers with aligned resources that extend and enrich instructional time.

2026-2027 visits will include:

The Children's Museum of Cleveland

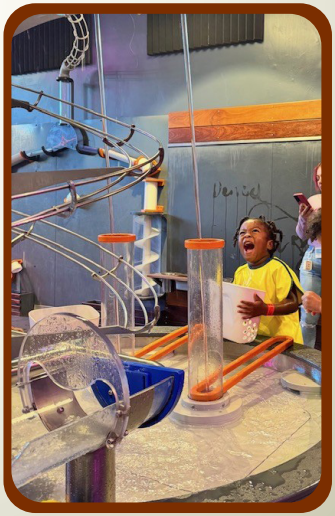
Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Lorain County Metroparks

Lorain Historical Society Children's History Center







Funding provided by:

Community Foundation of Lorain County
Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
PNC Bank
The Stocker Foundation

RISING TITANS PLAY GROUP



Educational play experiences are facilitated by the Lorain Historical Society's Education Team, a valued community partner. The Play Group supports families with preschool-aged children who are not enrolled in formal preschool programs by providing developmentally appropriate, play-based learning opportunities that promote early literacy, language development, social-emotional growth, and school readiness.

Through interactive, hands-on activities aligned with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards, the program strengthens the connection between home and school while empowering families to support their children's early learning and development.



Be my Neighbor Day!

The Lorain Historical Society is honored to be invited by PBS Ideastream Public Media to work alongside their team to organize and host ***Be My Neighbor Day*** on November 21. This fun-filled, family-friendly event will celebrate kindness, community, and the importance of supporting our neighbors.

We are delighted to bring our new community partner, *Lorain with Littles*, into the collaboration to help create a meaningful experience for local families. Inspired by the message that being a good neighbor means caring for and supporting one another, this *FREE event* is designed especially for preschool children and their families.

Families can explore community resources provided by local organizations, meet *Daniel Tiger*, sing and dance along with *Jesse Jukebox*, enjoy children's crafts, and participate in a meaningful community service activity. We are excited to bring these wonderful partners together to create joyful experiences that help our youngest neighbors and their families feel connected, supported, and welcomed.

Funding for this PBS Ideastream Public Media program is supported by The Stocker Foundation and the Nord Family Foundation, for which we are grateful.

45th Anniversary Celebration

May 21, 2026 • Sunset Terrace at Lakeview Park

A grand celebration was held as both a heartfelt look back and an inspiring step forward - honoring 45 years of preserving Lorain's rich stories while embracing the exciting possibilities ahead.

Friends, supporters, and community members gathered to share memories, reconnect, and celebrate the collective efforts that have strengthened Lorain's sense of place and pride. We also celebrated Barb Piscopo for her years of dedication to the Lorain Historical Society, as she prepares to retire.







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Spencer Roule - Cerity Partners Wealth Management



History Boat Tours

June, July, August
Port Lorain Marina



Our Annual ***History Boat Tours***, held in collaboration with the Lorain Port and Finance Authority, are one of the most popular summer events, and are always a sell-out! This tour travels down the mouth of the Black River and provides a distant view of the Lorain Lighthouse.

Guests have the opportunity to experience wildlife, learn about Lorain's early history, and get a spectacular view of some of the industries that started it all. Guests also learn about the revitalization efforts put forth through organizations today. A guide from the Lorain Historical Society provides the background information during this 2-hour excursion, while the boat captain is at the helm.

Latino Lorain History Project



Collecting Oral Histories Workshop

Oberlin College Professor Gina Perez, an original member of the Latino Lorain History Project Committee, conducted a workshop at the Carnegie Center on March 14. This training session focused on the practical aspects of gathering oral histories and provided the opportunity to practice conducting an oral history session with others in the class.

Quesitos con Café

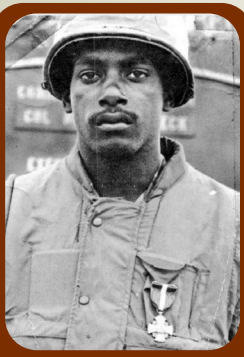
The Lorain Historical Society has supported the work of the Latino Lorain History Project Committee by hosting three ***Quesitos con Café*** gatherings over the past several years. These gatherings provided opportunities to engage community members, share stories, and gather information from the Latin community. We welcomed Latin musicians who contributed to the success of the program, *75 Years of Latin Music in Lorain Concert.* This concert was organized by Eileen Torres and was held at the Lorain Palace on October 24. The Lorain Historical Society was happy to provide a gathering space for the committee and serve as a fiscal agent for the organization.



Lorain Legends Golf Outing

Honoring Sam Felton, Jr.
July 19, 2026 • Fox Creek Golf & Racquet Club

We were deeply honored to recognize Sam Felton, Jr. as our 2026 ***Legend of Lorain***. A proud Lorainite and a decorated Marine Sargeant during the Vietnam War, Mr. Felton's legacy is one of dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to our veterans and our youth. His impact continues to resonate throughout Lorain, especially among our veterans, and those whose lives he touched.









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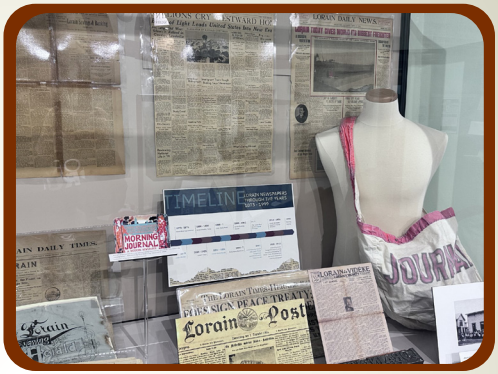
The weather was beautiful as the golfers hit the links! Thanks to everyone who participated in this fun event.

America 250 Exhibit

In honor of America 250, the Lorain Historical Society presented ***Moments That Made Us***. This exhibit examined the core ideals of the Declaration of Independence and how they have been tested and redefined over 250 years of American history.

Through pivotal national, regional, and local turning points, it explored how these principles were put into practice, not just proclaimed. The exhibit focused on Life, Liberty, the Pursuit of Happiness, and Consent of the Governed, connecting landmark events to Lorain's own story within the broader American experience.

Thanks to History Colorado and their partners across the American West for providing the background information needed to curate this exhibit.



Teaching Lorain, established in 2022, is a professional development program for K-12 educators interested in connecting their students to Lorain's history, public policy, economics, and youth engagement. Participants learn from area leaders and experts, engage in various activities focused on pedagogy, visit interesting sites around Lorain and develop classroom-ready curricula for immediate use.

We are happy to announce that the program will continue in 2027!



Historic Homecoming

October 9, 2026 • Carnegie Center

The Lorain Historical Society's first annual ***Historic Homecoming*** was a wonderful success, bringing together alumni, friends, and community members for an evening filled with school spirit, laughter, friendly competition, and plenty of great memories! Thanks to our incredible staff, volunteers, and everyone who helped to plan, organize, decorate, set up, and run the event. We look forward to next year's gathering!







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Lorain Black History Archives

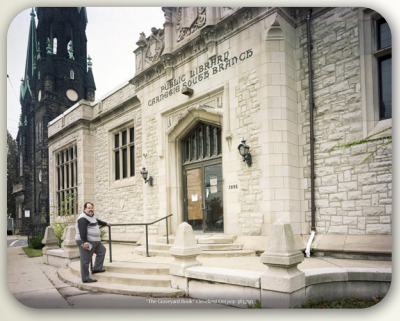
The ***Lorain Black History Archives*** is an effort to increase our collection of oral histories, photographs, documents and items from the Black community in Lorain. We are working with members of the community to conduct oral history interviews with elders, to conduct research on significant but little-known people, places and events from history, and to collect donations of artifacts that tell the story of Black Lorain.

Black Bat Softball Tournament

Since 2024, the Black Bat Softball Tournament has reunited three historic amateur teams: Oberlin's *Tuck's Stars*, Lorain's *Black Diamonds* and Elyria's *Smart Set*. Organized by Black history organizations from each of the three cities, the tournament serves to honor the history of Black amateur and semi-professional baseball teams from Lorain County, as well as to bring the communities of the cities together. The Lorain Historical Society was proud to assist in this tournament.



Recent Historical Programs



Charles Mintz Photography Exhibit
Featuring photos of Carnegie Libraries across the USA



I Hear America Singing
A sing-along program featuring patriotic songs in honor of America 250. Presented by Eden Valley Enterprises and Bette Lou Higgins.

Lake Erie Electric Railway Program
presented by Tom Patton

The Electric Railway started in 1893 with service from Lorain to Cleveland (approx. 30 miles) in under an hour. It lasted about 40 years.

Memories of a Marauder Man
The Story of Joe Girz, WWII Bomber Pilot
presented by Tom Girz

Flying out of Sardinia, Corsica, and Dijon, France, between August 1944 and May 1945, Joe and his crewmates flew bombing missions to hit specific targets in Italy, France, and Germany.



Champions of Support

These sponsors provide an exceptional level of support for the fiscal year, and for that we are eternally grateful.

2026 Annual Presenting Sponsor
Benjamin G. Norton

2026 Annual V.I.P. Sponsor
Buckeye Community Bank

Monthly Museum Sponsors

We are thankful for each of our Museum Sponsors! Because of their generosity, we are able to offer free admission to the Carnegie Center.

March - Chateau de Charletson, Alicia & Earnest Burke
April - Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, Chippi Masters Group
May - Januzzi Footwear Solutions, The Januzzi Family
June - Zelek Flower Shop, Inc., The Zelek Family
July - WOBL/WDLW Radio
August - Lorain HS Class of 1956B
September - Anonymous Donor
October - Anonymous Donor
November - Dan & Dawn Bihary
December - Jacki Jakacki RE/MAX, The 20/20 Group

Professional Organizations

We are proud members of the following organizations.

AASLH
American Association for State and Local History

NORTHEASTERN OHIO INTER-MUSEUM COUNCIL

OHIO MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Ohio LOCAL HISTORY ALLIANCE
INSPIRE. CONNECT. EDUCATE.

Main Street LORAIN

LORAIN COUNTY Together Since 1988 CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Heart of our Organization

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Vanessa Knipper - Secretary
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Bev Muzilla* - Advertising & Communications
Scott Smith* - Buildings & Grounds
Brittany Spraglin* - Database Manager
Suzanne Stuewe* - Outreach Educator
* = *part-time*



Summer Volunteer Potluck Luncheon

VOLUNTEERS

Marilyn Bombac
Brenda Driver
Leslie Emerick
Pam Faris
Bob Fischer
Joyce Hambly
Peg Hutchinson
Bobbie Maxwell
Ruth Roden
Pat Rohner
Sue Sauer
Andrea Schlageter
Mary Sedano
Marlene Smith
Barbie Sommers



Halloween Volunteer Meet -n- Greet

Save The Date

Here is a sneak peek at our calendar of events!

Crèche Exhibit
Bring your friends and family to view the Crèche exhibit during the holiday season.

Thanks to Dan & Dawn Bihary for displaying their Fontanini sculptures at the Carnegie Center.

Crèche Presenting Sponsor:
American Legion Post 30



November 8: Annual Holiday Open House • Lorain-inspired Gifts and Specials
Crèche Exhbit and International Holiday Exhibit • 10 am - 2 pm

November 10 - December 22: Crèche Exhibit & International Holiday Exhibit
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday • 10 am - 3 pm
Free Admission • Free Will Donations Accepted

November 21: Be My Neighbor Day
In collaboration with Lorain Littles & PBS Ideastream • 10 am - 1 pm
Free Event, but Registration Required

November 26 & 27: Closed for Thanksgiving

November 28: Small Business Saturday + Downtown Cookie Crawl
Gift Shop Specials • 10 am - 3 pm

December 9: Main Street Lorain Mix & Mingle at Carnegie Center
Main Street Members and Guests • 5 pm

December 22: Last Day Open to the Public for Tours and Gift Shop

December 24 & 25: Closed for Christmas

December 26 - 31: Offices ONLY Open • Tours and Gift Shop Closed

January 16 - April 4, 2027: Teaching Lorain Professional Development Program

February 18, 2027: *Beloved: Ohio Celebrates Toni Morrison*
In collaboration with the Lorain Public Library System & Literary Cleveland
Closing Celebration at Carnegie Center • 5:30 pm - 8 pm

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We appreciate your continued support!