

Ohio County Historical Society

By Jerry Long
c.2026



The Ohio County Historical Society was initially organized on 20 March 1931. The group actively met from 20 March 1931 thru 15 October 1940. The society was re-organized as the Ohio County Historical Association on 3 August 1964. The group again became defunct for a period. The group for a second time was re-organized at a meeting of 4 December 1971.



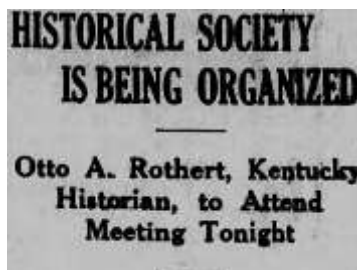
Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 31 March 1916, p.2:

Beads Oddly Strung
(By J. H. Thomas.)

.... Before the old men now living, whose memories run back close to the early settlement die off, we should be glad to see an Ohio county historical society organized to produce a history of the county to run serially through one of our county papers. The story of the early settlement of the towns, the history of the old churches and lodges, and the origin and history of the old and prominent families would make mighty interesting reading for the present and future generations.



Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, Friday, 20 March 1931, p.1:



A meeting will be held at the residence of Mrs. Mary T. Logan tonight at 7:30 o'clock for the purpose of organizing an Ohio County Historical Society. All persons interested in preserving Ohio county's historical records are cordially invited to attend this meeting.

Kentucky's historian, Otto C. Rothert, of Louisville, secretary of the Filson Club, and author of that delightful book, "The History of Muhlenberg County", will be a guest and give one of his fine, inspirational talks.

The movement was started at a meeting at Mrs. Logan's home, Thursday evening, March 13, which was attended by a number of interested persons, most of whom expressed a desire to become charter members of the society.

At this meeting Mrs. Logan was chosen temporary chairman, and appointed two committees. The nominating committee is composed of Mrs. Henry Carson, Mrs. Gilmore Keown and Cecil Martin and will present nominations for the various offices of the society at tonight's meeting. The committee on constitution and by-laws is composed of Lyman G. Barrett, Gilmore Keown and Henry Leach and is also expected to report tonight.



Messenger and Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 29 March 1931, p.11:



Hartford, Ky., March 28 – The Ohio County Historical society was recently organized at the home of Mrs. Mary T. Logan, author and historian of note. Charter members include:

Messrs. and Mesdames Lyman Barrett, Cecil Martin, Gilmour Keown, Guy Ranney, Henry Leach, Roy Barnhill, Mesdames Mary T. Logan, J. Edwin Rowe, Willard Lake, Minnie Wedding, Sam Keown, J. H. B. Carson, J. O. McKenny, Misses Margaret and Jessie Nall, Letty L. Marks, Susan K. and Tiny Yeiser, Pauline Moore, Nora Ewell Williams, and Virginia McKenney, Judge John B. Wilson, Morris Barnett, W. H. Barnes, J. Barbour Williams, George Dudley Williams and Paul Hampton.

Officers were elected following nomination by a committee appointed for that purpose including, president, Mrs. Mary Taylor Logan; vice president, Lyman Barrett; secretary, Mrs. Winnie Simmerman Barnhill; treasurer, Henry Leach.

The president appointed committee chairmen as follows: membership, Mrs. J. Edwin Rowe; program Mrs. J. H. B. Carson; exhibits, Mrs. Willard Lake; historical markers, Miss Susan K. Yeiser; and ways and means, Judge John H. Wilson.

Rothert Is Present

Otto H. Rothert, historian, author, and prominent member of Filson club, Louisville, was the principal speaker at the organizational meeting March 20. Mr. Rothert discussed his book, "History of Muhlenburgh County" and suggested ways and means by which the new society might perfect its programs, and carry out the ideals of the society.

At his suggestion, Mrs. Logan's book, "Ohio County in the Olden Days," was adopted as text book: for programs, for the next meeting, also a discussion of old forts and postoffices of the county was decided upon.

Judge John B. Wilson followed Mr. Rothert, speaking in a happy way of the many historical records in Ohio county. Mrs. Lake and Mrs. Rowe gave short talks, each expressing pleasure at the organization of the society. J. Barbour Williams stated that he now lives in a residence, a part of which was the first bank in Ohio county.

Relics Named

Mrs. Ranney stated that she had in her possession a proposal, written for a young man by Ignatious Pigman, the first preacher in Ohio county. Mrs. Barnhill, a regent of the Fort Hartford Chapter, Daughter of the American Revolution, congratulated the society in its organization and expressed the desire that it work with the D. A. R. in harmony, also stating that the D. A. R. had long been contemplating marking the site of old Fort Hartford and hoped that as soon as the exact spot was found, that the two societies might unite for this celebration.

Mrs. Carson. Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Wedding, Barrett, Mrs. Keown, Miss Yeiser and Miss Williams each gave a few well chosen remarks.

Henry Leach, former school superintendent of Ohio county, spoke in an interesting manner, naming many prominent people in the world of affairs who formerly came from Ohio county. Gilmour Keown, county attorney, suggested studying people who built up Ohio county in early history.

Barrett Has Treasures

Mr. Barrett reported locating valuable relics at his ancestral home at Barrett's Ferry, namely: letter written during the war between the states, flax hackles, candle moulds, a waffle iron, and saddle pockets of a member of the home guards taken at siege of Brandenburg.

Before adjournment the members of the society gave a rising vote of thanks to Mr. Rothert for his kindness in assisting in the organization of the society.



Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, Friday, 7 August 1964, p.1:



At the Monday night meeting of the recently reorganized Historical Association, resolutions and by-laws were adopted and officers for the first year were named.

The resolutions and by-laws drafted by John Blackburn and approved by members present, set the dues for individual members at \$3.00 per year; contributing memberships at \$5.00; institutional membership at \$10; sustaining membership at \$25, and life membership at \$75.

The meetings will be held the second Monday night each month from September through May and the annual meeting will be held each May.

The organization will be known as the Ohio County Historical Association and charter memberships will be open until January 1, 1965. It is hoped that much interest will be manifested in the association and a large membership will be formed soon.

It was brought out that Ohio County is rich in information and material relating its own past and the primary purpose will be the preservation of documents and historical matter of general interest.

The nominating committee, composed of Mrs. Alva Bean, Mrs. Thelma K. Streeter and Charles Ranney, named the following nominees who were all elected by acclamation: John Blackburn, president; Landon Wills, first vice president; Mrs. N. S. Barrass, second vice president; Miss Mary Emma Rone, secretary; Mrs. Martha Bartlett, treasurer, and the board of directors, Mrs. Roy Barnhill, Miss Edith Bennett, and Charles Rone.

The officers will be installed in a ceremony at the September session.

Mrs. Forrest P. Bell has served as chairman since the organization and Mrs. I. S. Ashby, secretary.



Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, Thursday, 9 December 1971, p.1:

Historical Society Is Reorganized Officers Named

At a re-organizational meeting of the Ohio County Historical Society held December 4 at Myers' Restaurant in Hartford, officers and directors were elected for the year beginning January, 1972.

Mrs Grace M. Bell, retiring president, opened the business session and reviewed by-laws.

Elected were Mrs Dorothy Gentry, Hartford, president; Wendell Allen, Rosine, first vice president; Carlos B. Embry, Sr., Beaver Dam, second vice president; Laura White, Hartford, secretary, and Mrs Martha Bartlett, Hartford, treasurer.

Directors elected for three-year terms were Mrs D. C. Perguson, Horse Branch, Miss June Park, Beaver Dam, and Mrs Grace M. Bell, Hartford.

A program committee, composed of Danny Schapmire, Wendell Allen and Mrs Agnes Ashby, was appointed by Mrs Gentry and a membership campaign was instigated with the group being divided into two teams competing for new members.

Memberships of history students of Fordsville High School and Ohio County High were discussed with \$10 dues for each school group, regardless of number. Mrs Bell emphasized the importance of encouraging young people to become interested in county history.

John Blackburn, Fordsville, was appointed counselor to Fordsville High School for group membership and Danny Schapmire is to contact students at Ohio County High.

The society voted to meet each second Saturday of the month at 2 p. m. at Myers' Restaurant in Hartford.

An objective of the Society is to collect and preserve authentic information, facts and relics connected with the history of the county. It was pointed out that Ohio County is rich in historical

data and various projects could be prime objectives of the Society, not only as tourist promotions but also to preserve much of the valuable historical data concerning the county.



**Echoes, newsletter of the Ohio County Historical Society,
Hartford, KY, Vol. 16, number 2, Fall & Winter 1988, pp.1-2:**

WE HAD A DREAM ...

Back in December, 1971 a group of 15 citizens met at a local restaurant and dreamed a dream.

Oh, they were wide awake that evening! They were wide awake to the possibilities of reorganizing a historical society. One that would grow and have some sort of project that would keep it growing. Interested. Involved. Participating.

And so, the Ohio County Historical Society was organized and immediately decided to start the compilation of an Ohio County Cemetery Record for perhaps, a book to be published.

Since that date seventeen years ago, four volumes of Cemetery record books have been published, the fifth is being compiled, and one of the finest museums anywhere for a rural Kentucky county has been established.

Two other books are now in a fourth printing, OHIO COUNTY IN THE OLDEN DAYS by Harrison D. Taylor, and FOGLE'S PAPERS, A HISTORY OF OHIO COUNTY, KENTUCKY by McDowell A. Fogle.

There are now four buildings on the spacious grounds, each one a museum within itself, and three Historic Highway Markers.

Each year has marked some sort of special event or exhibit of significance, and the Museum just closed an impressive Bicentennial of the constitution -- Freedom display. The exhibit, with twelve mannikins displayed uniforms representing different wars, including women's uniforms, and three tables were covered with memorabilia representing the war efforts, and items relating to the Vietnam War, and World Wars I and Two.

The Society was honored to have Lt. Col. Ron Green, Secretary of the committee of the National Bicentennial, The pentagon, visit the exhibit at the Museum in Hartford -- one of three cities visited in Kentucky during the Bicentennial Week.

There were also, among many visitors from out of state, 585 students from Wayland Alexander School, Hartford, who came to view the exhibit and other special events at the courthouse and other places of the city.

Many improvements have been made to the old John C. Thomas house, which was officially opened in 1975 as the first real Museum in Ohio County, and the meeting room which was expanded and remodeled from the old kitchen, is a popular place for civic organizations and other meetings besides the society.

Yes, the Society had a dream, for when an organization of people cease to dream, it ceases to be human.

It hasn't been a smooth road all the way for there have been some periods of status quo, lack of interest, lack of expected support, and sometimes bewilderment. It has been a period of trial and error, for none of us have manned such an undertaking.

There have been many fund raising events -- bake sales, lemonade stands, auctions, musical variety shows, book sales, rummage sales, and other special events that were milestones such as

the presentation of a pageant, "The Story of Fort Hartford," began as a one year celebration to mark the 200th year of the founding of Fort Hartford, extended and expanded for two successive years after the first one in 1982.

But to dream the impossible dream, and to search the unsearchables, have been so rewarding.

The thousands of volunteer hours have been more than compensated by the members working together to preserve the rich heritage of the Green River valley, to promote Tourism -- one of our greatest potentials for growth and the economy, to create a better cultural environment for the county, and to encourage our young people to see and touch a part of their heritage.



**Bulletin, KY: Kentucky Historical Society,
Frankfort, KY, December 1990, pp.3-4:**

Profile: Ohio County Historical Society Involves the Community

The experience of the Ohio County Historical Society demonstrates what a local history group can accomplish with enthusiasm, creativity, and community support. Years ago, while working on a local newspaper, Mrs. Dorothy Gentry did research for an Ohio County history column written by the paper's editor. According to Mrs. Gentry, interest in the area's past "just rubbed off on me." When the county historical society was organized in 1971, with Mrs. Gentry as president, the organization's first project was publication of the late editor's collected columns. (The resulting 450-page book, *Fogle's Papers: A History of Ohio County, Kentucky*, is now in its fourth printing.)

Another early project of the Society was the establishment of a museum. Through her newspaper column, Mrs. Gentry publicized the need for a museum to preserve the region's material record and to energize the Society. This historical group, initially only fifteen members, campaigned widely for aid in their project. Their efforts, which even included "We Want a Museum" bumper stickers, eventually paid off. Donations of artifacts, financial loans, and fund-raising activities enabled the Society not only to publish *Fogle's Papers* and cemetery records, but also to purchase a three-room house for a museum.

That first structure was later replaced by a nineteenth-century two-story frame dwelling. In addition to this building, the grounds of the museum complex now include an 1838 log cabin, a country store, and a "rustic relic" building. Since the museum's 1975 beginning, the Society's collection has grown to encompass -- among many other items -- antique display cases, costumed mannequins, portraits of local historical figures, cabinets of donated books and photographs, genealogical resources for researchers, a Victorian bedroom, a miniature replica of pioneer Fort Hartford, and costumes, records, and instruments from Ohio County musicians. In addition, the "relic" facility contains a still, a representation of a coal mine, a cider mill, a variety of tools and railroad artifacts, plus prehistoric pieces.

Significantly, Society members are always on the lookout for ways to develop the museum and expand the organization's programs. A dress shop's disposal of mannequins produced the donation of figures for the museum. The availability of state funds resulted, after much paperwork, in the erection of a parkway sign which directs tourists, and their dollars, to the museum and the surrounding town. Such initiative has garnered even more helpers. The local chamber of commerce

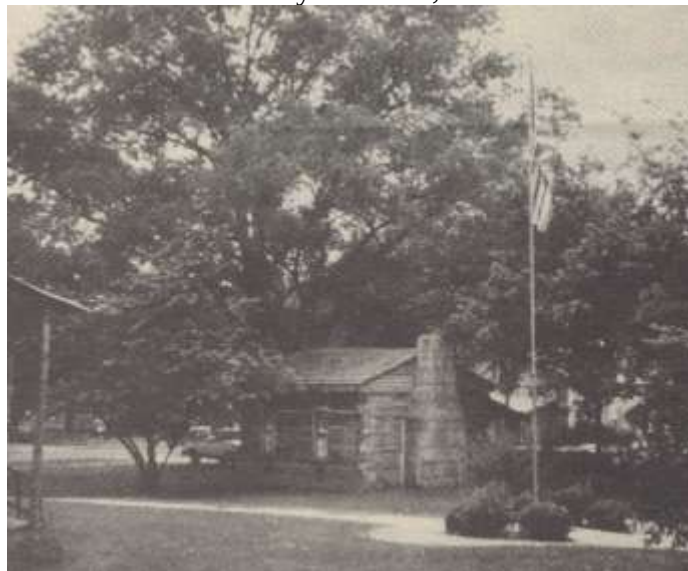
and bicentennial committee have “adopted” the museum program and are assisting in the restoring of the log cabin.

As important as soliciting broadly based support is the building of historical awareness in the county. All those interested in their local heritage merit the Society’s attention, but young minds in which the foundations of historical understanding can be developed deserve special attention. Consequently, youthful museum visitors are encouraged to learn the story of their own family as well as that of the museum’s artifacts. Schoolchildren also receive an individualized view of Ohio County history. The volunteer staff adjusts their interpretation of the museum to the visitor’s interests and age level.

To extend even more the historical comprehension of children, and adults, the Society sponsors various activities which stimulate general interest in the past. Special events like a mock frontier wedding and the staging of the pageant *The Story of Fort Hartford* intrigue the public. Furthermore, Society presence at fairs, festivals, and celebrations keeps the organization prominent in the life of the county. Through the allegiance and participation of its community, the Ohio County Historical Society prospers.



Ohio County Museum, Hartford



The grounds of the Ohio County Museum complex.
Showing the 1838 log cabin



Ohio County Historical Society

Dedicated to preserving the history of the Green River Country

**HARTFORD, KENTUCKY
42347**



The John C. Thomas home, 415 Mulberry St., Hartford, KY, built in 1880, was acquired by the Ohio County Historical Society in 1974. The society's Ohio County Museum opened there in August 1975.

