

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Victoria Van Harlingen

Lebanon Antiques Study Forum with Riley Humler of Antiques Roadshow

Since 1948 our Lebanon Antique Shows have been the backbone of our financial support. But in the last ten years as the antiques market has softened our revenues have declined to the point that we now produce only the January show. To support that show and help develop some interest in antiques we are offering the Lebanon Antiques Study Forum on Saturday November 15. The forum is a one day event of four separate talks given by dealers from our January show. These dealers are actively working in the antiques market and have years of knowledge to share. At noon we will join Riley Humler, "Antiques Roadshow" appraiser, for lunch at the Golden Lamb where he will tell us what's hot and what's not in the antiques world. Lunch is \$40; the lectures are just \$20 each. You can buy one or more lectures or just the lunch or \$95 dollars for the whole day with lunch included. Advance purchase required; more information at WCHSMuseum.org or call 513-932-1817.

Annual Dinner

We've had an exciting year at the Warren County Historical Society and are anxious to celebrate our successes with you our valued members. The Annual Dinner is a once a year membership and business meeting. It's also a great time to meet new members, visit with long time members and enjoy a delicious meal and musical entertainment. This year's event includes the unveiling of our new permanent exhibit honoring former Lebanon resident, Neil Armstrong. Armstrong was a Lebanon-area resident for 23 years and raised his family here. Through a generous donation of artifacts and memorabilia from his long time personal secretary, the staff has completed our tribute to Ohio aviation with this presentation featuring the famous astronaut.

Reaching Out to the Community

Your Warren County Historical Society is a valuable cultural resource, important to individuals and families and especially children. The staff works everyday to reach out into our community to form alliances and partnerships that

expand our visibility in the community. This holiday season we are partnering with three Warren County non-profits to share our holiday spirit and our museum facilities:

Our *Gingerbread House Display and Contest* benefits Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Warren and Clinton Counties. This is our first annual Gingerbread House Display and Contest, and the houses will be on display at the Warren County History Center from Friday, November 28 through Saturday, December 6. All entry fees go to support Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Warren and Clinton Counties. Get details at our website WCHSMuseum.org.

Zachariah Johnson 1898 Story Teller returns to the Warren County History Center (WCHC) on Saturday, December 6. Mr. Johnson will be appearing amid the gingerbread house display in the Village Green room. The event is free to the public as part of Lebanon's Christmas Festival and Horse Drawn Carriage Parade. Special donation buckets will be present and all donations received that day will benefit the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Warren County.

Christmas at Glendower returns every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in December from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Professional designer Patti Johnson of Patti Johnson Interiors has returned with her crew of designers to decorate Glendower to the theme of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." This year \$1 of every admission will go to the Warren County Community Services (WCCS) Early Learning Centers. A donation basket will be on hand for members (who get free admission to Glendower) to make a donation to this worthy cause.

Interested in Volunteering?

The following volunteer positions are needed at the Warren County History Center. These volunteer jobs can be accomplished in just one day a week or can be spread out over a couple of mornings a week. The important thing is a commitment to at least one day a week.

Librarian – shelves books, files, dusts and generally keeps the Research Library in ship shape.

Curator's assistant – polishes silver, dusts furniture, cleans glass items and cases, preserves leather, etc.

Online Sales—manage selling old books on Amazon.com. That would mean typing in descriptions of the books and keeping that updated. It would also mean packaging the books and sending them out to the buyers.

150th Anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre and the Warren County Natives Responsible

By Lynley Dunham-Cole, Exhibits Curator

Most often we tell the stories of local men and women who have made great contributions to our community and beyond. We know the names of many of the influential Warren Countians who have gone on to impact the world for the better, but sometimes there is cause to remember those who have caused great harm and injustice. As we near the 150th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado Territory on November 29th, it is an occasion to recall one of Warren County's most heinous natives, and another, one of its most controversial favorite sons.

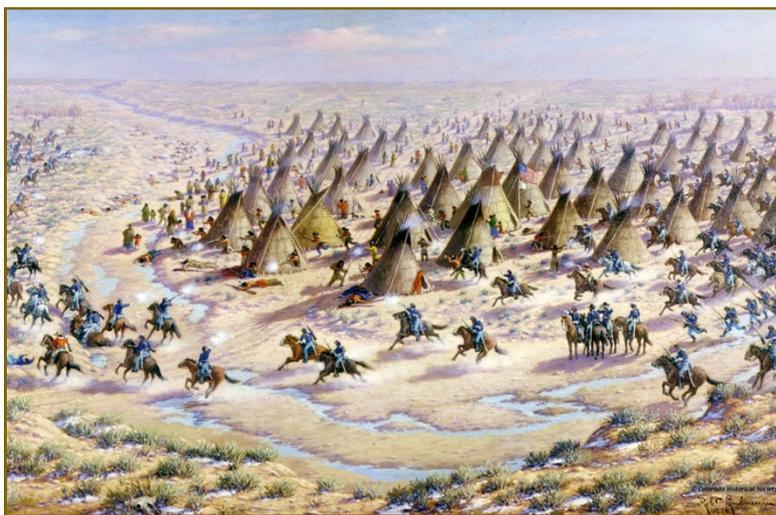
In November 1864, President Lincoln was re-elected to a second term, and William Tecumseh Sherman began his famous "March to the Sea." As the Civil War raged on in the east, tensions with Native Americans continued with the country's expansion west. Waynesville native, John Evans, was at that time the territorial governor of Colorado.

Evans was given the position by his friend Abraham Lincoln. After finishing medical school in Ohio, Evans moved first to Indiana, where he opened the state's first insane asylum. He then went to Chicago where he was instrumental in the establishment of the Illinois Medical Society, the state's Republican Party, and Northwestern University.

By 1864, he was settled in Denver, where he along with fellow Warren County native, Colonel John Chivington, helped establish the University of Denver. Evans endorsed Chivington for promotion to brigadier general, writing to both President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in his favor. Despite Chivington's previous success in New Mexico for the Union cause, his promotion was rejected when his former commanding officer, John P. Slough, accused Chivington of plotting to

have him assassinated. Evans did make Colonel Chivington commander of the 3rd and 4th Colorado Cavalry Regiments. On November 29, 1864, approximately 700 soldiers, under the orders of Colonel John Chivington, attacked a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, with the instructions to kill all.

This event became known as "The Sand Creek Massacre" and is considered one of the worst atrocities in United States history. The Native Americans came to the encampment, located 180 miles southeast of Denver, under assurance from Governor Evans that any Indians who chose peace would be protected. Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle had recently returned from Washington D.C., and convinced his people to relent. The American flag given to Black Kettle by President Lincoln was flying over the camp alongside a white flag of peace. Black Kettle and many of the other men of the camp were out



Robert Lindneaux's 1936 painting of the Sand Creek Massacre

hunting as the soldiers surrounded the encampment, leaving women, elderly and children unarmed and open to gun and howitzer fire. For the next several hours Chivington's men carried out unimaginable acts of horror, killing 150-200 Arapaho and Cheyenne, the majority being defenseless women, children, and elderly. There are accounts of Indians committing

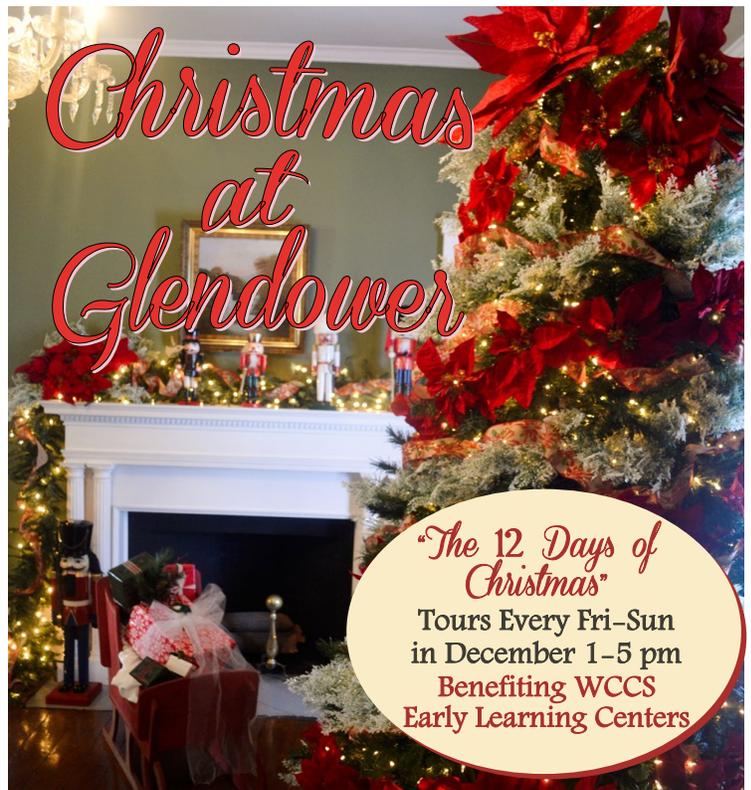
suicide and of parents killing their children to save them from being tortured by soldiers. When it was over, Chivington went to Denver and showed off scalps, paraded body parts as "trophies" through the streets, and even presented them on the stage of a theater. Chivington was initially received as a hero, but as details of the slaughter became known, public opinion began to shift. He escaped punishment by leaving the military at the beginning of 1865.



Chief Black Kettle

After leaving the military, Chivington tried to make a living to accommodate his preferred lifestyle, having gained a reputation for living beyond his means. Although ordained as a Methodist Episcopal minister in Butlerville, Warren County, in 1846, the remainder of his life was plagued with what could be considered as

immoral choices and scandal. When his wife Martha and his only son Thomas died within a few months of each other in 1866, Chivington soon married Thomas's widow, Sarah, his own daughter-in-law. The marriage, which allowed Chivington to take control of Thomas's estate from Sarah, lasted only a few years, ending in 1871 with Mrs. Chivington accusing Mr. Chivington of abandonment. He resurfaced in Ohio, where he was said to have squandered away his dying mother's money. Chivington settled back in Warren County, and in 1873 married Isabella Arnzen. The couple moved to Blanchester when their farm was suspiciously destroyed by fire. It was there in Clinton County that



"The 12 Days of Christmas"
 Tours Every Fri-Sun
 in December 1-5 pm
 Benefiting WCCS
 Early Learning Centers

105 Cincinnati Ave., Lebanon 513-932-1817 Glendower.org

SURE-FOOT FARM
 Where horse and owner gain
 agility and improve safety
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 120 S. BROADWAY, LEBANON, OH
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the third Mrs. Chivington, beaten and bruised, brought charges against her husband for stealing, forgery and abuse. She later dropped the charges. Chivington tried to launch a political comeback, but the Indian-sympathizing Quakers of Clinton County wanted no part of it. The Chivingtons moved back to Colorado, where John still had many supporters. He was hired to work for the Denver sheriff, and was subsequently accused of perjury. After being acquitted on a technicality he next gained employment as a coroner, but was charged with robbing corpses in 1892. Unemployed and ill, Chivington spent the remainder of his life seeking a military pension and suing the Oglala Sioux for over \$30,000 in deprecation damages. Both attempts failed. Chivington died in October 1894. He received a hero's funeral, with full religious and Masonic tributes. He is buried in Fairmont Cemetery in Denver.

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JOIN THE FUN!

Gingerbread House Display & Contest

At the Warren County History Center & Glendower Historic Mansion

✓ Register Now!

513-932-1817 WCHSMUSEUM.ORG

Sponsored By **Anyone May Enter!** To Benefit
 Awards Given in Several Categories!
 Teams Welcome!

April Gardner, D.O. & Associates, Inc. ✓ Deliver Completed Gingerbread Houses by Nov 22!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren & Clinton Counties

Special Deals at THE ROCKING HORSE GIFT SHOP

Inside the Warren County History Center

UNIQUE GIFTS, DÉCOR, BOOKS & MORE For Holiday and Home

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT
NOVEMBER 8TH, 4PM TO 9 PM



Ladies, get a jump on your holiday shopping and enjoy a night out with the

girls in historic downtown Lebanon. special deals, prizes, and treats at the Rocking Horse and many other downtown shops!

Holiday
Members-Only Discount!

Skip the mall madness! Bring your membership card to the **THE ROCKING HORSE GIFT SHOP** and receive 20% off your entire purchase (for members only)!
Good through December 23rd, 2014



Continued from page 3

John Evans was forced out of politics because of the massacre and the attempts cover it up, his involvement in both is still disputed. He resigned from office in 1865, but went on to have a distinguished career with the railroads. He is credited for establishing both Northwestern University and the University of Denver. Both schools have established committees to research Evans' role in the Sand Creek Massacre. Mount Evans in Colorado and Evanston, Illinois are named in his honor. There is also an Ohio Historical Marker near the Waynesville home where he resided as a young man. John Evans died on July 2, 1897 at the age of 83.

In 2007 the National Park Service dedicated the Sand Creek Massacre National Park Historic Site. On November 29, 2014, its 150th anniversary, the park and the nearby town of Eads, Colorado will host a series of commemorative events. For more information on these events, the Sand Creek Massacre and those involved, visit <http://www.nps.gov/sand/index.htm>.

Sources

Lori Cox-Paul, "John M Chivington The 'Reverend Colonel' 'Marry-Your-Daughter' 'Sand Creek Massacre,'" Nebraska History 88 (2007): 126-137, 142-147

The National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/sand/index.htm>

Northwestern University, <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2014/05/john-evans-study-committee-issues-report.html>

WCHS Team Works to Restore Art Collection

By Michael Coyan, Professor of Art and Architectural History

Since January of this year, Gene and Rosemary Chute and I have been assessing, cataloging, and conserving the paintings and sculpture in the collection of the Warren County Historical Society, both at the Warren County History Center and at Glendower Historic Mansion.

In recent weeks our focus has been exclusively on the sculpture collection. After the careful examination of each piece to determine its condition, we research the artist, check all known information about the work, prepare a written report, and decide what will be needed to conserve each work. We have carried out research on cleaning methods, repair materials, and finish materials for each medium. We have, when needed, consulted professional sculptors as well as art conservators.

Early in the year, we cleaned and repositioned the magnificent collection of bronze sculptures in the library at Glendower, created by the Quaker sculptor Eli Harvey. Noted for sculpting the BPOE elk, Mr. Harvey's celebrated Lion House at the Bronx Zoo has recently undergone a \$4 million-dollar restoration.

At the History Center, one cannot ignore the impressive work of Lebanon native Vernon Jones (1885-1914). While his large plaster sculptures "Lucifer" and "Transfiguration of the Soul" will soon receive our conservation efforts, we have uncovered two additional works by his hand: a relief of Lincoln and a head of Bacchus (this was likely created in his student days at the Cincinnati Art Academy.) The most significant work, and perhaps his most poignant, lay broken in a corner of the old chapel (in the basement of the Warren County History Center) for many years. The work is entitled "Kneeling

Shepherd." Badly damaged in 1983 when pipes burst in the museum, the sculpture's condition was dire. The left leg was broken off and separate from the base. We removed old repairs which caused an ill fit, Rosemary re-carved the leg ends, Gene worked on in-fill, and I worked to stabilize the leg join and base repair to bear the weight of the work again. Amazingly, we came to realize that this most beautiful of Jones' work is in reality a self-portrait of "Lebanon's most promising young man."

Currently our research is tracking the sculptures Jones created in 1914 for the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.

Famous sculptor John Frankenstein created the large plaster bust of Judge John McLean. We have discovered the original of this work in the collection at the Mercantile Library in Cincinnati. Frankenstein's career ended in failure in New York City where he authored

critical polemics against art in America. Repairs fixed hairline cracks, many abrasions and old repairs, and he was given a new archival finish. In addition we stabilized, cleaned, and touched-up the McLean death mask.

Two busts of Prof. Alfred Holbrook have been stabilized and conserved. Damage to his ears, lapels, nose, and hair were in-filled and pencil markings on the works

removed. The sculptor of these works is a focus of our research as both pieces are unsigned.

The Neoclassical bust of Thomas Corwin has, in its day, been attributed to two sculptors: Thomas Dow Jones and John Frankenstein. There are no records, signature or inventory notes which would provide insight into its origin. It is to be noted that Corwin did pose for Jones in 1840 for a bust at the request of the Whig Party. This work remains undetermined. Yet, if we examine the works of both Jones and Frankenstein, we find that their styles are too florid, almost Baroque in execution. This should be contrasted with the Corwin bust's clarity of line and the crisp delineation of the head in its Greco-Roman poise.



Professor Michael Coyan with Rosemary and Gene Chute, who have been working to restore the art collection at WCHS. Seen here with the bust and death mask of John McLean

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December Events Summary



Nov 28 — Dec 6

Gingerbread Houses on Display at the WCHC

Dec 3

Members Annual Dinner

Dec 5 — 28

Christmas at Glendower, Fri-Sun

Dec 6 & Dec 10

Zachariah Johnson, 1898 Storyteller

Lunch & Learn ²⁰¹⁵

11:30 A.M. — 1 P.M.

AT THE WC HISTORY CENTER

MEMBERS — \$20, NON-MEMBERS — \$22

FOR LECTURE AND GOURMET LUNCH.

PAID RESERVATION REQUIRED BY THE

SATURDAY PRIOR TO THE EVENT

January 14

PREHISTORY VS. HISTORY

Fort Ancient Archeologist Jack Blosser will explore how Native Americans' lives were forever changed after encountering Europeans for the first time.

February 11

GREAT GRAPES! OHIO WINES

Cincinnati and Soup author Cheri Brinkman will discuss Ohio's wines and wineries—from their historical significance to current trends.

March 11

VERNON H. JONES

WCHS Historian John Zimkus will present the life, death, and art of this young and talented Warren County sculptor.

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This work may be a product of two of Ohio's most famous sculptors of the period—Hiram Powers and Shobal-Vail Clevenger. Clevenger, born in Butler county, but raised in Ridgeville, Warren County, met Powers as a fellow student in the atelier of Cincinnati's "first" artist, Fredrick Eckstein. Powers career, supported by patron Nicholas Longworth, carried him to Washington, DC, New York, and Florence, Italy. Clevenger—with Longworth's support—saw clients such as Henry Clay, Thomas Corwin, Salmon P. Chase, and Daniel Webster sit for sculptural busts in 1837-38.

His commissions flourished and soon he was hired by the Boston Athenaeum. (It should be noted that portrait busts in either plaster or marble took an average of 5-7 years to complete in this era.)

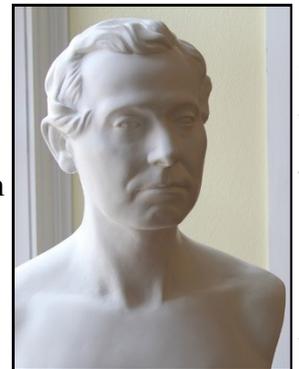


Photo courtesy of Lyndon Dunn

Clevenger's health broke from the strain, and so he traveled to Florence via Rome to visit with Powers. There he collapsed from the

The restored bust of Tom Corwin is on display at WCHC

plaster and marble dust that was destroying his ability to breathe. Powers sent for his wife in Boston. On her arrival they embarked on a ship bound for the United States, but Clevenger did not survive the journey. He perished at sea, in the arms of his wife and best friend Hiram Powers, within sight of the Rock of Gibraltar. His body was consigned to the sea, one month before his 31st birthday. Edward Emerson in Boston wrote a poem in memory of Clevenger's artistic gifts.

Powers, seeking to provide for Clevenger's widow, Elizabeth Wright Clevenger, and their three children, finished the backlog of sculpture portrait busts which had been contracted.

Perhaps then, this may explain the visual power of Thomas Corwin's sculpture? Two hands, working in the Neoclassical style. One starting the work, the other bringing it to fruition and passing the image into the hands of history.

Much work is ahead of our "art team" at the Warren County Historical Society, and soon we will again turn our attention to the prodigious task of conserving the paintings, prints, drawings, and engravings within this incredible collection.

Neil Armstrong: The “Reluctant American Hero” Who Was Our Warren County Neighbor

By John J. Zimkus, WCHS Historian/Education Director

(The following is the text of a speech given at the dedication ceremony of Neil Armstrong Way in Lebanon, Ohio on October 7, 2014.)

Today at this dedication of Neil Armstrong Way, the connector between Ohio State Routes 123 and 63, we are not honoring Neil Armstrong the astronaut and the first man to walk upon the moon. Likewise we are not here to commemorate the Neil Armstrong who flew 78 combat missions during the Korean War, the civilian test pilot who flew the X-15 rocket/jet, the aerospace engineer, nor the university professor. We are here to remember the Neil Armstrong who was our former neighbor, and who was a citizen of Warren County, of Turtlecreek Township and an active member of the Lebanon, Ohio community. For 23 years Neil Armstrong lived only about a mile and a half from this very spot. He lived here longer than any other place during his 82 years on this earth.

Many news articles written about Neil after his NASA days refer to him as being a recluse, a person who prized his privacy above all and was therefore reluctant to give interviews. But, as many of you know, Neil did not live a “solitary life” here, nor did he “withdrawal from society” in Lebanon. As James R. Hansen, author of Neil’s 2005 authorized biography, *First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong*, pointed out earlier this year in a speech at the Armstrong Air and Space Museum in Wapakoneta, Ohio, “The idea that he was a recluse and wanted to avoid the media was false, He did not want to be rich or famous based on being the first man on the moon alone. He left that part of his life for the history books.”

Perhaps the best way to describe Neil can be found in the statement his family released through NASA the day that he died on August 25, 2012.

“Neil Armstrong was . . . a reluctant American hero who always believed he was just doing his job.”

Neil, being a former Naval Aviator would probably have agreed with WWII Admiral “Bull” Halsey’s statement that, “There are no extraordinary men . . . just extraordinary circumstances that ordinary men are forced to deal with.” Still as Hensen, who spent ten years in communication with Neil, pointed out, “He was down to earth, yet really complex. He was such a remarkable character.”

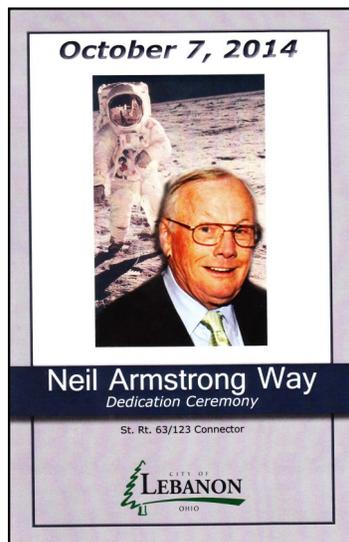
Neil could be very sociable and is said to have possessed a good, albeit corny, sense of humor. On July 20 1994, the entire Apollo XI crew, Neil along with

“Buzz” Aldrin and Michael Collins, was being honored at the White House in Washington, D.C. as the nation celebrated the 25th anniversary of their historic lunar mission. When it was Neil’s turn to speak he began his remarks by saying, “Wilbur Wright once noted . . . that the only bird that can talk is the parrot, and he doesn’t fly very well . . . So, I’ll be brief.”

The next day, July 21, Neil went to visit his long time secretary in Lebanon, Vivian White, at her home in the Walnut Hills subdivision off of North Broadway. As he sat in Vivian White’s easy chair wearing an old T-shirt he told her, “Yesterday I was at the White House, and today I’m at the White house again!”

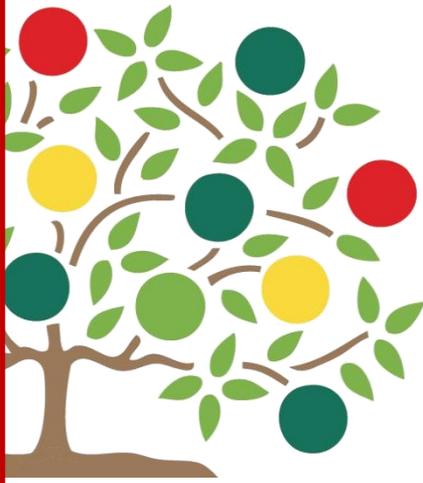
In 1971, Neil left NASA to become a professor of aerospace engineering at the University of Cincinnati. His wife Janet had hoped they could have a new beginning in suburban Cincinnati. As she put it, Neil “wanted to realize a more quiet life,” having “spent all those years in the program with little time to himself.”

Janet recalled her first impressions of Lebanon, Ohio for Hensen’s book. “We drove all around the area and it was the best thing outside the beltway at the time. I remember we went in to the ice cream parlor and just kind of cased the place. It seemed like a safe community



Neil Armstrong honored

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WCHSmuseum.org
513-932-1817

The Warren County Historical Society's Lebanon Antique Show

New Location! Warren County Fairgrounds (Under the Grandstand, indoors)
 665 N. Broadway, Lebanon, OH 45036

Admission
Members: Free
Non-Members: \$8.00

January 17 & 18, 2015
Saturday 10-5
Sunday 11-4

Featuring:
18th, 19th, & Early 20th century American & Continental
furnishings & decorative arts, textiles, jewelry, primitives,
folk art & fine art.

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and a good place to raise children. We thought we were seeing people we could identify with in the town.”

They found a 19th century farmhouse on North SR 123 they liked and bought it. It had to be gutted to make it livable, so for a while Neil, Janet and their two boys, Rick and Mark, lived on Turner Drive off of North SR 48. After some significant renovations, they moved into the farmhouse as the remodeling continued.

Janet remembered, “Neil did not like debt and wouldn’t take out another loan, so it took 7 years as we paid cash for the work to be done. It got so that the builder could answer the telephone if I wasn’t there, and go pick up the kids at school! He just became part of the family!”

Neil named his 300-plus-acre farm “Rivendell” after the secluded valley of J. R. R. Tolkein’s fictional middle earth in *Lord of the Rings*. In the book it was the last home of the half elf and half human nobleman Elrond. This kind of information could easily excite anyone who was at the same time a diehard Tolkein fan and a U.S space program aficionado. It seems that in another one of Tolkein’s book, *The Hobbit*, the main character Bilbo Baggins, while invisible jumps over the lecherous Gollum in a move the Tolkein describes in the book as “Not a great leap for a man, but a leap in the dark.” Sound vaguely familiar?

Alas, Neil had not read the books before his historic Apollo XI moonwalk. He had told Hensen his sons had suggested he read the series when they were living in Warren County. He said, “I read all the books, but I don’t remember bumping into anything even then that made me

think about what I had said” while stepping on to the moon’s surface.

Once the Armstrong family lived in the area, Neil became almost a regular at the Village Ice Cream Parlor and Restaurant on Broadway in Lebanon. He usually ordered the daily soup and sandwich special with a glass of water. He initially would sit alone unrecognized at the counter.

In the back of the Village Ice Cream Parlor was a raised area four steps above its main floor. It was here you would find what was referred to as “the businessmen’s table.” It was actually three tables pushed together, where a dozen or so of Lebanon’s prominent citizens met everyday for lunch. The men included Marvin “Barney” Young, Dr. Woody Testerman, Orville Keever, Dr. Dick Shroder, Bob Olson, Dr. Ralph Young, Bob Kaufman, Larry Crisenbery and others.

One day, Phyllis Hartsock, part owner of the restaurant, told Neil as he sat by himself, that he should join the men in the back at “the businessmen’s table.” He said he thought they wouldn’t want him there. She then approached long time Lebanon attorney “Barney” Young and told him he should invite Neil to sit at their table. Barney said he wasn’t sure Neil would want to sit with them. She said he would. The invitation was extended and Neil accepted.

Today in the Village Ice Cream Parlor is an autographed copy of a Milton Caniff drawing of Neil Armstrong. Caniff, an Ohio native, was the creator of the comic strips “Terry and the Pirates” and later “Steve

Canyon.” He also was, until his death in 1988, the official portraitist of the inductees to the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio. Neil was inducted in 1979 and had autographed the copy with the inscription, “Phyllis, with appreciation for your patience, Neil Armstrong.”

In 1971, industrialist Ralph J. Stolle and land developer George Henkle had a vision of creating a worthwhile place for children to spend time after school in the Lebanon area. They enlisted other community leaders to join them. Their efforts would eventually produce the nation’s largest YMCA -The Countryside “Y.” Today its 220,000 square feet facility is situated on 126 acres of land in the southern part of the city.

Neil first met Ralph Stolle, the man who developed the machinery that allowed pop-top cans to be mass-produced, in 1972. Neil would golf with Stolle ever so often, and occasionally hunted pheasants on the Stolle farm. Stolle asked Neil to help create his vision.

So in 1973, Neil was part of The Design and Building committee for their proposed YMCA. Some of the others on the committee included “Barney” Young; Charlie Hamilton, President of Charles H. Hamilton Company, one of the Midwest's leading site development contractors; Mike Norris, a Lebanon businessman and Ralph Stolle’s son-in-law; and realtor and developer Ellis Thompson. According to Mike Carroll, current CEO and president of the “Y,” Neil was the only engineer in the group, so Neil and Charlie Hamilton conceived a good deal of the basic design of the facility.

Neil was quoted in Stolle’s 2004 biography, *Ingenuity in a Can*, as saying, “It was not clear in the beginning under which organization umbrella the facility would operate. After studying the alternatives, we concluded the YMCA was the most appropriate organization. We then visited a number of ‘Y’s around the country—usually using Ralph’s plane—to learn the best and worst features of their building construction and governance structure.” Neil in this quest would visit 27 different YMCAs located throughout the United States.

The new Countryside YMCA was opened in September 1978 and officially dedicated on Sunday November 5th of that year with Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes in attendance. Neil, who became one of the original members of the “Y” board of directors, and his wife Janet were present at the dedication.

In 1980, Neil left his teaching job at the University of Cincinnati. In February of 1980 he rented a small office on N. Broadway above the Good Housekeeping Store in Lebanon. He soon hired Vivian White as his administrative assistant. She had worked in local real estate for 28 years and was a part-time secretary for the

mayor of Lebanon for a while. Vivian was the perfect choice in part because as she explained to Hensen, “You can tell what a private person he is, and I just made it a point that I don’t ask him anything that I don’t need to know for my job.”

There was no furniture in the office so initially they sat down on folding chairs at a card table. Eventually Neil and his son Mark



John Zimkus, Mark Armstrong, and Rick Armstrong

carried some furniture into the bare office.

Around 1986 the office was moved to Neil farm of SR 123. It then moved briefly to a building on Fields-Ertel Road in southern Warren County. In 1992, it was in the Thompson Building on Columbus Ave. in Lebanon. During the entire 25-year period Neil had an office in Warren County the address was a Lebanon post office box number.

For the first 12 to 15 years Neil would actually sometimes sign autographs when he was asked. Then it became obvious that his signature was being sold over the Internet. In 1993, form letters under Vivian White’s signature became the response to about 99 % of the requests sent to Neil. They were placed into 11 different boxes or files according to what type they were. They ranged from requests for autographs, to having Neil write the forwards for their new books, to having him give a speech at their functions. Others wanted information on

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piloting and space travel, or on astronaut qualifications.

One box was dedicated to having Neil write congratulatory letters to new Eagle Scouts. This is something that Neil, who was a former Eagle Scout, used to do quite readily until it was put on the Internet that Neil Armstrong would write such letters. After that the floodgates were opened. During a five-month stretch in 2003 he received over 950 Eagle Scout letter requests.

If Neil chose to answer a technical question he would write the answer and give it to Vivian to type it up. She would then write, “Mr. Armstrong asked me to give to you the following information.” She would then sign the letter.

Vivian remembered, “We never [answered] personal questions—they were just too much an invasion of privacy.” As she told Hensen, they would go in to “File Eleven”—the wastebasket.

Over his years here a very interesting relationship developed between Neil Armstrong and the City of Lebanon. As the *Dayton Daily News* pointed out in July 1994, “Armstrong’s fellow citizens generally fall into two categories: protective acquaintances who guard his privacy and curious strangers . . . who eye him from a respectful distance.”

In 1999, Lebanon postal clerk Patsie Gillespie recalled that she felt OK saying “Hi” to him but felt, “I can’t say ‘Hi Mr. Armstrong,’ because someone behind him in line might hear. They might bother him.” Georgie Puckett remembered when she worked at Town and County Cleaners on Columbus Ave. and Neil came in the building. “We all knew who he was . . . But when we asked what name to put on the ticket, he would say ‘N. A. Armstrong.’” Frankie Proffitt,

secretary of at the Warren County OSU Extension office, which used to be located near Neil’s office in the Thompson Building on Columbus Ave., remarked that she had spoken “to him several times” and found Neil “very personable.”

In 1994, Dr. Jim Davenport a golfing buddy of Neil’s, lunching at the Village Ice Cream Parlor told the *Daily News*, “This is what he liked about Lebanon—he knew he could come in here and sit at a table and be left alone.”

In 1999, Dick James, who for years was the golf pro at Harmon Golf Course where Neil often played, told the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, “The first time I met him I tried to talk about the moon . . . That was the last time. “He [didn’t] want to talk about that . . . He [wanted] to talk about golf, about mowing the lawn. He [wanted] to be one of us.”

His golfing buddies included, besides Davenport and James, Jack Hedges, Herb Gardner, Dr. Vince Moran, Mike Norris and several others. Sometimes they would travel on golf outing to courses like Bright Leaf Golf Resort in Harrodsburg, KY. Jack Hedges recalls that after a round of golf several members of the group were sitting having a drink in the clubhouse. They included Neil wearing a ball cap. A golfer came up to their table and, not recognizing Neil, and said, “I

understand Neil Armstrong is in your group.” Mike Norris then piped up saying, “Yes, that would be me.”

Many of the citizens of Lebanon felt very protective of Neil especially when he was periodically put back in the media spotlight like when he was asked by President Ronald Reagan to be the vice-chairman of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster in 1986, or at the various anniversaries of the Apollo XI Lunar landing. Although Neil and Janet were divorced in 1994, and Neil remarried later that year and moved to Indian Hill, north of Cincinnati, his former

ST. RT. 123-63 CONNECTOR FACTS

- Lebanon received a \$3.2 million federal grant in support of the new connector.
- The connector is the first *NEW* state route to be constructed in the City since By-Pass 48, which was built in the early 1970’s.
- As part of the project, the first sound barrier wall was constructed within the city limits. The wall is 528 ft. long and ranges in height from 10 to 20 ft.
- The connector adds 4,000 feet (3/4 of a mile) of new 2-lane roadway to the City’s inventory.
- 2.6 miles of new curb and 1.5 miles of new storm sewer were installed in support of the new connector.
- 4,050 cubic yards of new asphalt was required to build the new connector. That is the amount equal to fill about 1 ½ outdoor swimming pools at the Countryside YMCA.



Information about the new Neil Armstrong Way

friends and neighbors around Lebanon continued to look after him when reporters came to town to try and uncover the “real” Neil Armstrong.

George Henkle, in 1999 told a reporter, “We have all respected his privacy . . . He is one the best people I’ve ever known, and that’s all I want to say.”

There are stories about Neil trying to watch his son Mark play basketball at a home game at Lebanon High School’s gymnasium. To keep autograph seeking spectators from both the home and visitor’s side of the gym from bothering Neil, his friends would sit rather tightly all around him on the bleachers. This made access to Neil practically impossible so he could enjoy the game in peace.

In July 1989, at the 20th Anniversary of the lunar landing Neil wrote a copyrighted article about the history of the U.S. space program and its future. He allowed it to be published in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and in *The Western Star*, his local Lebanon, Ohio newspaper.

Later in 1989, on November 1, the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce honored Neil at their annual dinner meeting. It presented to him the Lebanon’s Ambassador to the World Award at its annual dinner meeting. Neil is the only person ever to be so recognized by the chamber.

That night, he was also presented with a proclamation from the City of Lebanon that proclaimed November 1, 1989 as “Neil Armstrong Day.” *The Western Star* reported that, “The audience received Armstrong with a resounding ovation,” and that “it was the first time many of the Lebanon residents had seen him in person.”

In reality, it may have been the first time that they had realized they had seen Neil Armstrong. They may not have noticed him as he picked up his mail at the Lebanon post office, or standing in line to get his dry cleaning at Town and County Cleaners or sitting at the counter or in the back of the Village Ice Cream Parlor.

Back in 1999, Jack Hedges, a former golfing buddy and friend of Neil’s, said, “I don’t know how, but we’ve talked about honoring him. But we couldn’t do it without his blessing.”

The Armstrong family in their statement released upon his death in 2012 said, “For those who may ask what they can do to honor Neil, we have a simple request. Honor his example of service, accomplishment and modesty.”

With that understood, I don’t think Neil Armstrong would mind having his name placed on a small but useful

$\frac{3}{4}$ mile stretch of road that will serve his former neighbors of Warren County, Turtlecreek Township, and Lebanon, Ohio. I think he would appreciate that this connector, not far from his old farmhouse home, will make their lives a little easier and safer. I am confident that would be . . . Neil Armstrong’s Way.

Neil Alden Armstrong was born on August 5, 1930, in Wapakoneta, Ohio. Fascinated by airplanes and flight since he was a small boy, Neil learned his pilot’s license before he received his driver’s license. He attended Purdue University to study aerospace engineering under a naval program. During his sophomore year, he was called up for training because of the Korean War. He became a July qualified Naval Aviator at age 20 and flew 78 combat missions. After graduation from Purdue, he married his first wife Janet, and together they had three children: Eric (Rick), 1957, Karen, 1959 (she died in 1962); and Mark, 1963.

In 1955, Neil went to work as a civilian test pilot flying rocket/jets such as the X-15. In September 1962, he was chosen to be in the second group of NASA Astronauts, dubbed the “New Nine.” While at NASA, Neil was the backup command pilot of the Gemini V mission in August 1965; command pilot of Gemini VIII, which performed the first docking of two spacecraft on March 16, 1966; the backup command pilot of Gemini XI in September 1966; and the commander of Apollo XI, the first manned lunar landing in July 1969. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon.

In 1971, Neil left NASA to become a professor of aerospace engineering at the University of Cincinnati. That year, the Armstrong family moved to the Lebanon, Ohio area. He left his teaching position at the university in 1979. In January 1986, President Ronald Reagan asked Neil to be the vice-chairman of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident.

Neil Armstrong was decorated by 17 countries. He was the recipient of many special honors as well, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal, and the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. Neil Armstrong died on August 25, 2012, at the age of 82, after complications from heart bypass surgery.



Pilot Neil Armstrong and the X-15

PROGRAM

Welcome & Introduction of Distinguished Guests
Pat Clements, City Manager
City of Lebanon

Remarks
Mayor Amy Brewer
City of Lebanon

Remarks
Mr. John Zimkus, Historian
Warren County Historical Society

Presentation
Unveiling of Commemorative Marker
Mayor Brewer & Armstrong Family

Refreshments



Members Annual Dinner

At the Lebanon Conference & Banquet Center, 121 S. Broadway, Lebanon, OH 45036

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 6:00 pm | Doors Open |
| 6:00-7:00 | Social Hour with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres; viewing of the new Neil Armstrong exhibit |
| 7:00 | Dinner Served |
| 7:30 | Neil Armstrong Exhibit Presentation and business meeting |
| 7:45 | Performance by Singer and Musician Bob Ford |

All WCHS members are welcome! \$27.00 per person.

Please reserve with your check or credit card by November 26th: 513-932-1817 or wchsmuseum.org

WCHS Members Annual Dinner Wednesday, Dec 3, 2014

(Please RSVP by November 26th!)

Details Inside

Join us for this special evening as we honor the late Neil Armstrong, a Lebanon-area resident and friend.

Enjoy a catered dinner, the unveiling of our new Neil Armstrong Exhibit, and musical entertainment, all in the company of new and long-time friends!

Dated Material, Please Open

Warren County History Center
105 S. Broadway
Lebanon, OH 45036

