



PLAIN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 13, Issue 8
August 2026

To promote, preserve and protect the heritage of Plain Township Stark County

Treasurer's Report

Account Balances:

Checking	\$3,279.41
Money Market	\$7,406.35
Endowment	\$75,638.52

We are a 501c3.

Contributions are tax deductible.

Current Officers

President: Cindy Guest
330-224-2660
cjguest@att.net

Vice-President: Phyllis Rustifo
330-936-6346
rustifop@gmail.com

Secretary: Susan Henry
330-477-3272
Susanhenry72@gmail.com

Treasurer: JoEllen Reikowski
330-806-3146
jreikowski@neo.rr.com

Directors:
Connie Blinn
Cheryl Hutcheson
Judith Pocock
David Ross
Jim Zurbuch

Aug 17th Meeting

*Early History of Car Companies –
Howard Thompson*

Beat the Summer Heat and Join Us for a Cool Ride

Thank you to the Stark County District Library Plain Branch for hosting us as together we explored "Authors of Plain Township." With the shift in self-publishing models, it was great to explore how topics and perspectives have changed from the 1800s until now through books with ties to Plain Township. It is amazing to see the breadth of work and even meet a couple of those authors who attended the event.

We have a big surprise for our August Free Community meeting. If you attended the picnic last year, we had antique car rides available and oh what fun that was. Well, guess what? We are bringing that opportunity back again at our August meeting. Howard and Teri Thompson will be providing antique cars to those that are interested (yes, they are free.) We are adjusting our meeting time to accommodate this opportunity. Car rides will start at 6:00 pm and run until 6:45 pm. So, if you want to



Plain Township Historical Society

August 17th, 2026

Meeting Adjustment Notice - Special Treat

For Our August Free Community Monthly Meeting, we
have a special treat for anyone attending:

Antique Car Rides

- Courtesy of our speaker
- 2 Antique Cars Available
- Rides will start at 6:00 pm
- Signed permission slip required to ride
- Snack will be available at 6:00 pm too
- Short business meeting at 7:00 pm
- Then straight into Howard Thompson's presentation on "Early History of Car Companies"



Come and Join us for a free meeting.

6-9 PM at the Plain Township Hall 2600 Easton St NE



Yearbook Want List

Middlebranch HS: 1955

GlenOak HS: 1981, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005 to present

Elementary, Intermediate and Junior High School

School Newspaper Want List

GlenOak, Oakwood, Glenwood, Middlebranch, Underground, Elementary, Junior High, etc.

Donations

To donate or share items, please let Cindy Guest know at preservingplaintwp@gmail.com or 330-224-2660. Also, if you know of someone in the community with information that will help us, please let us know.

Newsletter Articles

Due the by the first Tuesday of the month (aka Board Meeting.) Can be emailed to: preservingplaintwp@gmail.com.

Contact Info

Plain Township Historical Society
2600 Easton St NE
Canton OH 44721

Email: preservingplaintwp@gmail.com

Web: www.preservingplaintwp.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PlainTownshipHistoricalSociety/

go for a “cool ride” plan on coming early to the meeting. See below for more information. Car rides will be available weather permitting.

Stark Community Foundation Article

Did you see the wonderful article that the Stark Community Foundation did on our Board Member Jim Zurbuch in the Canton Repository? The article highlighted Jim's journey with us from 2nd grade to our youngest board member. We are excited that he is part of the team. Also remember that the July display on “Stark Parks Trails and Parks of Plain Township” is one of two display Jim designed. We are hoping to be able to springboard from this to attract other students to become engaged with our organization. But truly, this is an opportunity to promote volunteerism to a younger generation. Here is a link to the article: <https://www.cantonrep.com/story/news/local/plain/2026/08/03/glenoak-senior-jimmy-zurbuch-dedicated-to-preserving-local-history/91119235007/>. The article is also available on the Stark Community Foundation website in their Blog section.

America 250 August Edition

We are keeping July's exhibit up for the month of August which focuses on Stark Park Trails and Parks of Plain Township. The theme for August was to be “Stark County Fair and 4H”. We will save this theme for a future exhibit.

September's exhibit will be on sports. We are excited to bring a couple of different perspectives on sports to share with the community.

Come check out the exhibit at Plain Township Hall 2600 Easton St NE. Get inspired to walk through history or just celebrate family at one of the parks. Stark Park trail maps are available in the rack next to the exhibit. The exhibit will run through Aug 30th 2026.

***Up and Coming***

We got to have a little break this summer to rest and catch up. The fall is swirling up to be busy and out in the community. Mark your calendar so you do not miss an event.

- **2027 Programs** – the program committee is working hard to put together a slate of speakers for next year. Yes, I know it seems early to be talking about 2027 but many of the speakers get booked out and we need to get on their schedules. Also, if you have any ideas for future programs, please let us know. We keep a running list going to ease the planning process.
- **Sep 2nd – Massillon Public Library – 1:00 pm** – Cindy Guest will be presenting a program on “How the Ohio and Erie Canal Changed Stark County.” This is a free program. RSVP at <https://massillonlibrary.events.mylibrary.digital/event?id=375348>
- **Sep 3rd – Jackson Twp Historical Society – 11:00 am Lunch Series** – Cindy Guest will be presenting a program on the “Tam O'Shanter Property and How it has changed over time.” There is a \$5 charge for non-members.

Publications Available for Purchase

- Canton's Lost McKinley Home by Richard Haldi - \$20 each PTHS member
- From Reapers to Sweepers Vol 1 Reapers by Richard Haldi - \$20 each PTHS member
- From Reapers to Sweepers Vol 2 Watches by Richard Haldi - \$20 each PTHS member
- Images of America Canton Ohio 1998 Canton Preservation Society - \$15.00 each
- History of the Plain Township Fire Department - \$20.00 each
- Historic Ridgewood - \$20
- Educating Plain Township – Middlebranch High School 1927-1957 - 2 Volume Set \$20.00
- Educating Plain Township – Glenwood High School 1957-1975 - 2 Volume Set \$20.00
- Cruising Thru Plain Township – \$10.00 each
 - Volume 1 NE Qtr.
 - Volume 2 SE Qtr.
 - Volume 3 SW Qtr.
 - Volume 4 NW Qtr.
- And the Story Continues – 2 Volume Set \$10.00

Download from our website or Facebook page for free

- Exploring Plain Township – Piecing the Puzzle Together – North Canton Drive-In Theater

- **Sep 12th – 720 SideStreet Market Oakwood Square 10-3** – Booth “Celebrating America 250.” We will be participating in this event and hope to see you stop by the booth and say Hi!
- **Wreaths Across America** – This event will take place in December. PTHS sponsors the 7 wreaths representing the different branches of service. We will start fundraising for these wreaths in September. Any monies received about what is needed to cover the 7 wreaths will be used towards purchasing additional wreaths. These wreaths are for the Warstler Cemetery.

Videos and Website Links

Current docuseries video segments available: Stark County Library, MAPS Air Museum, Louisville-Nimishillen, Cruising Through Plain Township, The Settlement of New Guinea (Alliance), Canal Fulton Heritage Museum, Haines House Underground Railroad, Magnolia Flouring Mill and Massillon Museum.

Docuseries videos are being added every two weeks. Check out the links below to stay up on which historical aspect of our community is highlighted next (also available on Instagram and Tik Tok.) The response is exceeding our expectations for only being available since March. Keep viewing the episodes and learn about our area's history.

The Facebook link for the Stark County Local History group is:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1230527655386394>

The Facebook link for the Stark County Historical Pastport is:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586194382821>

The YouTube link for the Stark County Historical Pastport docuseries is:

<https://www.youtube.com/@SCHPastport>

Where to Find Information About America 250 Events

There are several sources of information available to discover what is happening with America 250. If you are traveling out of Ohio, each state has its own website, you will need to google each to find the website with event listings. As for our area:

- ❖ **America 250** is the nationwide coordinator of events. <https://america250.org/> is the website that contains a lot of information. There are links to the various states as well.
- ❖ **Ohio 250** is the state wide coordinator of events. <https://america250-ohio.org/> from here you can access a calendar of events and find out about various programs that are being offered: Ohio Goes to the Movies, Ohio Air & Space Trail, Murals Across Ohio, etc.
- ❖ **Stark County** - Visit Canton is the local coordinator of events. <https://www.visitcanton.com/plan-a-trip/trip-ideas/american-heritage/> from here can access what is going on in Stark County.
- ❖ Local communities, museums, and history groups may also have their own website and list of events.

There are a lot of opportunities this year to explore our history.

Dues Reminder – Just a reminder that your 2026 dues are due. If you are 90+ as of Jan 1, 2026, then your dues are free. 2026 is going to be a very busy year and you will not want to miss what is happening.

“Invest in Plain’s History” by becoming a member, volunteering, making a monetary donation and/or donating items related to Plain Township!

Endowment Giving

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

☐ In Memory of: _____☐ In Honor of: _____☐ Endowment Fund: _____☐ Community/Educational Fund: _____

Mail Check to:

Plain Township Historical Society
C/o Endowment
2600 Easton St NE
Canton, OH 44721

Or SCF Online:

www.starkcf.org/give-plain-historical

PTHS is a
501c3
organization.
Your donation
is tax
deductible

Dues Form

Dues run from January 1 to December 31

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - Plain Township Historical Society

I want to join - Check One (Annual):

☐ Student \$5.00 ☐ Patron \$50.00☐ Individual 10.00 ☐ Organization 100.00☐ Family 20.00 Life Time Dues:☐ Non-Profit 35.00 ☐ Individual 250.00☐ Family 500.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Membership is open to everyone who wishes to promote our
Mission.

Please make check payable to: Plain Township Historical Society

Mail this form and check to:

Plain Township Historical Society
C/o Membership
2600 Easton St NE
Canton, OH 44721

Preserving History since 2005.

Archives Donations

- Lisa McKibben – Early Diamond Portland Cement Photo
- Mark Neading Estate – Additional Edgefield Vol Fire Dept Items

PLAIN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2026 EVENT SCHEDULE

General Meetings are the third Monday at 7 p.m.**Board of Directors Meetings are the first Tuesday at 2 p.m.**

General meetings: Plain Township Hall, 2600 Easton St NE, Canton OH unless otherwise noted. Meetings are free and open to the public. There is a brief meeting, followed by refreshments and then a historical topic presentation. **Board of Directors meetings:** Plain Township Hall. Check our website www.preservingplaintwp.org, Facebook and newsletter for current schedule.

Aug 17th – PTHS Free Monthly Community Meeting – Early History of Car Companies presented by Howard Thompson

Sep 2nd – Massillon Library 1 pm – PTHS presenting “Ohio and Erie Canals Impact on Stark County”

Sep 3rd – Jackson Twp Historical Society 11 am – PTHS presenting “Tam O’Shanter Golf Course History”

Sep 12th – 720 Sidestreet Mkt at Oakwood Square Booth – Celebrating America 250

Sep 21st – PTHS Free Monthly Community Meeting – Joshua Twing Brooks – Presented by Salem Historical Society



Ohio 250 Monthly Themes

Here are the themes for our exhibit space each month. We are looking for your input into people, places and events that might fit those categories. If you have any information or know someone who can help us, please contact either Cindy Guest or Phyllis Rustifo. The content must tie to Plain Township in some way.

- ❖ January—Plain Township Originals and Firsts [Ohio Originals and Firsts]—**Closed**
- ❖ February—Plain Township Inventions, Innovations, Business and Work—**Closed**
- ❖ March—Plain Township Music and Entertainment—**Closed**
- ❖ April—Plain Township Transportation, Aviation, Automobiles and More—**Closed**
- ❖ May—Plain Township Arts and Culture—**Closed**
- ❖ June—Natural Resources—**Closed**
- ❖ July—Plain Township Parks [Ohio Statewide Picnic and Homecoming]—**Still Available**
- ❖ August—Stark County Fair and 4-H in Plain Township [Ohio State Fair]—**Postponed until a future Date**
- ❖ September—Plain Township Sports (this could be at any level pro, high school, community, business, etc.)
- ❖ October—Plain Township Agriculture and Food
- ❖ November—Plain Township Veterans and First Responders
- ❖ December—Plain Township Education [Future Ohio]



Plain Township Historical Society

Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Program Date & Topic



Aug 17th, 2026
Early History of Car Companies
Speaker: Howard Thompson

Come and Join us for a free meeting.

7-9 PM at the Plain Township Hall 2600 Easton St NE



Plain Township Historical Society

Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Program Date & Topic



Sep 21st, 2026
Joshua Twing Brooks
An entrepreneur and visionary who help to shape Salem Ohio's economic growth.
Speaker: Salem Historical Society

Come and Join us for a free meeting.

7-9 PM at the Plain Township Hall 2600 Easton St NE



Plain Township Historical Society

How the Ohio & Erie Canal Changed Stark County?

At the Massillon Public Library

Presented by the Plain Township Historical Society - Cindy Guest, President and Archivist

How did a simple ditch transform Ohio? Come and explore how this remarkable engineering feat fueled economic growth, attracted immigrants, and shaped the Stark County communities we know today.

On Wed Sep 2nd at 1:00 pm

Plain Township Historical Society

At the Jackson Township Historical Society

Plain Township Historical Society - Cindy Guest, Present and Archivist Presenting

Tam O'Shanter Property - An Exploration How the Land Changed Over Time.

On Sep 3rd at 11:00 am

7756 Fulton Dr NW - Massillon OH 44646

Plain Township Historical Society

Celebrating America 250 Plain Township Style

Come Join the Plain Township Historical Society

At the Side Street Mkts at Oakwood Square

On Sep 12th from 10 am - 3 pm

Located at Oakwood Square Plaza on the Corner of Middlebranch Ave NE and Easton St NE



Dr. Maria Gilmore Pontius
1908

A Piece of the Puzzle

***Dr. Maria S.
Gilmore Pontius
(1857-1913)***

Maria was born to Nathaniel Gilmore (1815-1901) and Anna Dugan (1827-1911) in Tuscarawas County Ohio. She was the fifth of seven children: William J. (1846-1868), Albert N. (1848-1921), Eliza Jane (1850-1935), Anna Josephine (1851-1929), Florence Amanda (1862-1953) and George M. (1865-1929). Maria married Dr. Lorin Worth Pontius (1853-1910) on Oct 25, 1883 who was a surgeon and physician. They had no children and Maria was Lorin's second wife.

Dr. Maria Pontius was the first female physician in Stark County and paved the way for future generations. She and her husband, Dr. Lorin Pontius, established a joint practice after their marriage which continued until Lorin retired due to health reasons. Dr. Lorin Pontius was the son of Andrew W. Pontius (1829-1913) and Sarah Jane Correll (1828-1912). Lorin was born in Plain Township and his family was well established in farming and business in Plain Township and Canton City.

Her journey to a career in medicine was not an easy one, as woman at that time were not accepted into male career fields. She encountered obstacles and ridicule along the way, but her tenacity drove her to succeed. Education was important to Maria and after completing her elementary education in Tuscarawas area schools, she entered Scio College in 1876. After completing three years of study, Maria started to study medicine in 1879 under the supervision of Dr. J. J. Gooding of Gilmore town in Tuscarawas County where she was born. After her "apprenticeship" through a course of private reading, she enrolled in the Starling Medical College in Columbus Ohio and graduated in 1883. After graduation, Maria started to look for an appropriate location to hang out her doctor's shingle. She decided on Canton even though she realized she would receive unreasonable prejudice and opposition from other members of the profession because she was a woman. Maria undaunted by this challenge, excelled and began to be recognized as a qualified physician and soon the opposition to female physicians practicing in Canton began to fade. Due to the fact she was a female, her practiced was focused mainly on the diseases related to women and children. Dr. Pontius broke many glass ceilings in her career: the first female to graduate from Starling Medical College and first lady to graduate from any medical school in the city of Columbus. She was a member of the American Medical Association (AMA) of Canton and the Stark County Medical Society. Maria represented the local chapter at state and regional AMA conferences. In fact, in 1888, Maria was a delegate to the AMA convention in Cincinnati where there were 1500 physicians and only 12 were female. Also, she was on the staff of Aultman Hospital, mentored female doctor students, member of Tent #53 of the Ladies of the Maccabees, Daughters of Liberty and the National Protection League. We should also note that Maria was involved in the George Saxton murder trial, as she was the person who examined Mrs. Annie George after she was incarcerated for George's murder. Unfortunately, in 1910, Dr. Maria Pontius was in a car crash that left her with pain and injuries that made her unable to continue practicing medicine. She died three years later at 56 due to injuries resulting from that car crash.