

PRESS RELEASE

The Great Stone Viaduct Historical Education Society will partner again this winter season with the Bellaire Public Library to sponsor a Local History Winter Lecture Series. This joint effort began last year as a part of the educational outreach of the GSV Society to meet its mission of helping to promote public awareness of the rich local history of the Ohio Valley. The Bellaire Public Library, with cooperation from Laura Cramblet, Library Director, has worked to collaborate with the GSV Society using the Community Room as the setting for the lectures and displays which accompany the speakers.

The Winter Lecture Series, held on Wednesday evenings during the winter months of February and March, is now in its second year. A decision was made by the GSV Society and the Bellaire Public Library to expand the lecture season this year from six weeks to eight weeks based upon the favorable response from those in attendance last year. This expansion will broaden the topics that can be covered and allows a greater opportunity for those wishing to attend. The lectures sponsored last year saw attendance between 30 to 50 persons for each lecture, and those numbers will be targeted for increase this year.

The topics to be covered this year will once again bring together lecturers who are knowledgeable about the topics they present, while providing visual aids that will bring these topics to life. John Maddox of Flushing, Ohio and Director of the Underground Railroad Museum here in Belmont County, Ohio, will kick off the lecture series on February 5 with a presentation entitled "The Underground Railroad in Ohio". The museum, created by Mr. Maddox, features an extensive collection of publications, books, memorabilia, articles, and exhibits that portray what is known about slavery and the local efforts to assist the flight to freedom through Belmont County and Ohio. Dr. David Castle, Assistant Professor of History at Ohio University Eastern, will follow on February 12 to present a topic entitled "Belmont County and the Northwest Territory". Dr. Castle is a popular professor at OUE for his classroom presentations, and is followed widely on the David Blomquist radio show during the "Politics Left, Right, Center" segment as well as "American History X". Fred Ottoson of the Imperial Glass Collector's Museum will present "Imperial Glass-Gem of the Glass City" on February 19. Ottoson has a vast knowledge of the Imperial Glass operations since his father was the chemist that held the formulas for the wide array of glass colors once manufactured at the "Big I", and now on display in the museum. On February 26, Attorney Daniel Frizzi, Jr., will present "The Methodist Episcopal Church in Bellaire, Ohio - Bellaire's First Church". Now known as the First United Methodist Church of Bellaire, this congregation is celebrating in 2014 the 175th year of Methodism in Bellaire after first meeting in the winter of 1838 in a storeroom located in Old "Belle Air" to hear the words of the Circuit Rider, Cornelius D. Battelle.

Wednesday, March 5 will begin the month of March with John Bowman, of Wheeling, West Virginia, and his presentation "Steamboats on the Ohio River at Wheeling". Bowman is not only a historian and author on this subject, but is the builder of model steamboats that fill the personal collections and museums throughout the Ohio Valley. Laura Cramblet, Bellaire Public Library Director, will present on March 12 "Cultural Traditions of Early Coal, Glass and Steel Towns". The Ohio Valley's industrial heritage includes the richness and variety of the cultures which settled here to find employment, and Cramblet will touch upon the traditions which they brought with them. On March 19, Paul Cramer of Paul Jay Associates and Digital Solutions will present, "Archival Research, and Preservation of Historical Photographs and Documents". Cramer has a great interest in preservation of objects, photographs, and other important documents that bring a visual presentation to historical topics. On March 26, the lecture series will conclude with a presentation by Attorney Daniel Frizzi, Jr. entitled "Belmont County Common Pleas Court Judges: Decisions that Shaped History". The presentation will include a power point of the portraits of the judges, and includes a discussion of some of the important decisions that they made.

Open to the public, those interested in these topics are encouraged to mark their calendars for Wednesday evening during February and March. All presentations begin promptly at 6 o'clock p.m. Refreshments will be served immediately prior to and at the conclusion of each lecture. The GSV Society will sponsor a table with watercolor prints, maps and other historical collectibles for sale to the public.