

Champaign County Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

Museum at 809 East Lawn Avenue, Urbana OH 43078

January 2011

“The Underground Railroad in Champaign County” presented by Julie McDaniel and Ellen Seward

As part of a 2010 Choose to Read Ohio grant received by Urbana University, Julie McDaniel worked with a team of local citizens, University faculty members and students to identify Underground Railroad sites in Champaign County. One of those who worked on the project, Ellen Seward, local historian with a special interest in Mechanicsburg will join Julie in the presentation.

The photography project is based on the research done by the Friends of Freedom Society and Ellen Seward, who have extensively researched the reported Underground Railroad sites in Mechanicsburg, Ohio. Julie notes: “Only after starting with this small group of sites, did we discover how truly wide the Champaign County UGRR network was.

We hope that with this group of photographs, viewers will see what might have been – places where we believe slaves could have been hidden in houses in Mechanicsburg, North Lewisburg, and Woodstock. Viewers will also see the houses that currently stand on other locations that might also have hidden runaway slaves before 1862.” The presentation will focus on the photographs and the stories that go with the places in the photographs.

Julie McDaniel currently serves as Library Director at Urbana University. She attended (then) Urbana College in the mid-80s, researched and wrote the history of the Champaign County Library as part of a George Carroll Historiography class, met her future husband, Triad area farmer, Tim McDaniel, and then left to complete her undergraduate education in English at Baldwin Wallace College and earn her Master of Library Science at Kent State University. Tim moved her permanently to “God’s County” (aka Champaign County) where they farm.

Please plan on staying after our presentation to enjoy our hors d’oeuvres and desert buffet. We hope the afternoon will also give you some time to chat with friends and enjoy a stroll through the exhibits.

CURATOR’S CORNER: The mid-December snow storm forced the Champaign County Historical Society to postpone our annual open house. With the press of the holiday season we decided to hold the open house in conjunction with our Annual Meeting and January program. The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 30th at 2:00 p.m. In addition to the election of officers and board members, this meeting will feature a program on the Underground Railroad Sites of Champaign County by Julie McDaniel and Ellen Seward followed by our holiday buffet until 5:00.