Share your voice at ‘Women of Spiegel Grove’ exhibit, tour

Take your picture in a women’s suffrage scene, record your own video about your experiences with women’s history and immerse yourself in historically important speeches by women in the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums’ latest special exhibit.

“Women of Spiegel Grove” features the stories of women who were connected to the Hayes family and Spiegel Grove, as well as national women’s history from suffrage to the #MeToo movement.

The exhibit also coincides with the 100th anniversary of Congress passing the 19th Amendment that extended the right to vote to women.

“The history of women in America is an ongoing and evolving story,” said Kevin Moore, associate curator of artifacts. “It is not a subject that should be learned about passively. We are adding interactive components to ‘Women of Spiegel Grove’ because we still interact with these concepts on a daily basis today.”

The exhibit features influential women in the Hayes Family, including Lucy Elliot Keeler, a prolific photographer and writer; Mary Miller Hayes, who served in the Red Cross and YMCA during World War I and founded what is today ProMedica Memorial Hospital in Fremont; and Winnie Monroe, a former slave from Kentucky who worked for President Rutherford Lucy Hayes and later started her own businesses in Washington, D.C.

Their stories are put into the greater context of women’s history, from colonial women to the “new woman” of the late 1800s to the women’s suffrage movement.

“It is one thing to learn about movements and trends throughout history but something else entirely to see how these things affected real people,” Moore said. “Lucy

Educated and a photographer and writer, Lucy Elliot Keeler was considered a “new woman” of the late 1800s.

Longtime HPLM staffer named head librarian

A longtime employee of the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums who has extensive experience with the library collections and research has been promoted to head librarian.

John Ransom, who served as interim head librarian for 11 months before being promoted in April, oversees the library operations and staff and works with patrons on their research questions. He has worked for the Hayes Presidential Library for the past 23 years.

“This is a great place to work,” Ransom said. “It’s a unique job. There are not too many jobs where you’re a librarian, work with genealogy and do it all at a presidential site.”

Ransom oversees two librarians and six volunteers. He catalogs new books, which he works with other staff members to order, related to President Rutherford B. Hayes, the Civil War, local history and other relevant topics.

He answers in-person and email questions from patrons seeking help with local history,
This is a summer of transition for the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums as we usher in new exhibits and programs, while also welcoming staff into several new roles.

One of our major programmatic themes is prompted by the centennial anniversary of women securing the right to vote through the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. While a major achievement, the struggle for equal rights did not begin or end with the 19th Amendment’s passage.

Through a variety of programs, we will show the evolution of thought and activity that brought the 19th Amendment to fruition, how women’s rights and roles have evolved since, gaps in equality that women are still striving to close, and how the women of Spiegel Grove impacted and were impacted by these movements.

Spiegel Grove women are a diverse group of individuals across time: Immigrants, former slaves, educated, uneducated, a first lady of the United States – they were a racially and socio-economically dissimilar group. Yet they all called Spiegel Grove home.

And they all were social engineers, ardently pushing or sustaining the gender boundaries of their eras, from First Lady Lucy Hayes to her African-American cook and housekeeper Winnie Monroe to the female German servants who spoke no English.

The women of Spiegel Grove were as complex and nuanced as the movements themselves.

For example, Lucy Hayes did not support women’s suffrage. Yet, her daughter-in-law, Mary Miller Hayes, voted for Warren G. Harding in 1920. Mary wrote: “This is a great day for the women as they are casting their first vote for president of the United States.”

The beliefs of Spiegel Grove women, like the women of the United States, fall along a wide spectrum. We believe sharing this complexity and context around the 19th Amendment will be fascinating for the public.

To compliment the new rotating exhibit, “Women of Spiegel Grove” (read more on pages 1 and 3), we are working to bring women of national renown to Spiegel Grove to talk about the changing roles of women in American society.

We’re thrilled to announce that author and radio personality Sarah Vowell will be coming to Spiegel Grove on Wednesday, Oct. 23. Ms. Vowell authored the books “Partly Cloudy Patriot,” and “Take the Cannoli,” among many others. She is a contributing editor to NPR’s “This American Life,” and she also provided the voice for Violet Parr in “The Incredibles” movies. For details, watch rbhayes.org.

In addition to programming transitions, we also are in the midst of several key staff transitions. We are happy to have the experience and steady leadership of John Ransom as our new head librarian, and we welcome the knowledge and dedication of Julie Mayle to the manuscripts department.

Last, it is bittersweet for us to say good-bye to Kathy Boukissen, director of development, who is enjoying well-earned retirement after pouring her heart and soul into this organization for 12 years.
Happy birthday, Lucy Hayes! Celebrate with activities, dress display

First Lady Lucy Hayes’s birthday is Aug. 28, and this year, she would have been 188 years old.

To celebrate, the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums is bringing some of her dresses out of storage and putting them on display for five days only and offering special activities with a Lucy Hayes theme.

From Saturday, Aug. 24, through Wednesday, Aug. 28, some of Lucy’s dresses not normally on display will be showcased for viewing in the museum. Access to see the dresses is included with regular admission, and members are admitted for free.

On Saturday, Aug. 24, several special activities will be offered:

- 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Lemonade and treats will be available in the museum. Free.
- 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Lucy’s dresses will be on display in the museum. Included with regular admission, members are admitted for free.
- 10 a.m. – Lucy Hayes-themed tour of the Hayes Home. Included with purchase of a site pass, members admitted for free.
- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Learn to paint a butterfly using the same technique 19th-century artist Albert Bierstadt showed Lucy Hayes when he visited her in the White House. Free.
- 11:30 a.m. – Hands-on artifact activity featuring artifacts that belonged to Lucy Hayes. Put on the same white gloves Hayes Presidential curators wear and hold a piece of history. Included with regular admission, members admitted for free.
- 1:30 p.m. – Hands-on artifact activity featuring artifacts that belonged to Lucy Hayes. Put on the same white gloves Hayes Presidential curators wear and hold a piece of history. Included with regular admission, members admitted for free.
- 3 p.m. – Lucy Hayes themed-tour of the Hayes Home. Included with purchase of a site pass, members admitted for free.

On Wednesday, Aug. 28, which is Lucy’s birthday, complimentary lemonade and treats will be served in the museum.
After 32 years of working at the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, Curator of Manuscripts Nan Card is transitioning to fewer hours and turning her position over to Associate Curator of Manuscripts Julie Mayle.

“It’s time to make the transition,” Card said. “Julie is well qualified. We’ve worked as a team all of this time, and she has gained the institutional knowledge to take over the position. It’s a natural succession.”

Mayle will oversee nearly 6,000 linear feet of manuscript material composed of six areas: Rutherford B. Hayes and Hayes Family Papers, Gilded Age, Local History, Charles E. Frohman/ Great Lakes, Special Collections and Local Government Records.

Each year, researchers from around the world visit Hayes Presidential and use its online manuscript resources for projects that range from books, dissertations, theses and journal articles to local history and lesson plans.

A Seton Hall University professor recently visited to use Gilded Age collections for a journal article he is writing on 19th century publishing in Korea. Others visit to research presidential topics, Civil War, prominent individuals of the Gilded Age, 19th century politics and Ohio history.

In addition to researchers’ use of the collections, Hayes Presidential uses manuscripts in everything it does, from special exhibits to verifying and unearthing information for themed tours of the Hayes Home.

Mayle has worked for Hayes Presidential for eight years. She began working part-time in the library and in the manuscripts department and was promoted to associate curator of manuscripts in 2017.

“These are big shoes to fill,” Mayle said. “I’m not done learning from Nan. I’m glad it’s a slow transition. It’s something that was planned, but to actually see it come to fruition is exciting.

“I consider it an immense honor to continue to care for and make accessible the presidential papers and other unique manuscripts.”

Mayle has a bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Toledo. She served a year-long internship at Hayes following the completion of her educational requirements.

In 2014, she initiated the Northwest Ohio Veterans Oral History Project, in which she interviews war veterans about their experiences, scans their documents and photos and archives them at Hayes Presidential. The veterans receive a copy of all the materials and a recording of their interviews.

“The veterans project is very near and dear to my heart,” Mayle said.

Mayle and Card utilized the Frohman Collection to create a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) program that integrates the historical significance of topics such as early aviation, the Great Lakes and Cedar Point. Due to its popularity, the program will expand going into its second year.

Some of her favorite collections include those of Civil War surgeon Dr. John B. Rice of Fremont, missionary Della Barber, a local woman who taught children of freed slaves in the South, and Sardis Birchard, the president’s uncle and a successful Fremont businessman.

Mayle enjoys helping create the content for the annual History Roundtable sessions and assisting patrons with their research.

“I love it when people come in with questions,” she said. “They think they’re at a dead end, and we try to break through that for them. I like finding the unknown. It’s a challenge and it’s the excitement when we finally figure it out.”

The Hayes Presidential Library & Museums’ director of development, who led the organization’s largest-ever fundraising campaign and introduced new ways of raising money for the organization, has retired.

Kathy Boukissen retired in May after 12 years as the organization’s director of development.

“We’ve really worked as a team here, and people feel the passion we have,” Boukissen said. “I’ve never felt like it was a job or career because of my love for the organization and what we stand for. I truly believe in it.”

During her years at Hayes Presidential, Boukissen introduced sponsorships for events and programs, helped connect numerous Hayes family members with the organization, started the Gateway to the Future annual fundraising appeal and began the annual membership appeal to recruit and retain Hayes Presidential members.

Additionally, she wrote grants to obtain funding for programs and exhibits.

To read more about Boukissen, visit rbyhayes.org/news/2019/04/12/general/hplm-director-of-development-retiring-after-12-years-with-organization/.
The ever-popular History Roundtable with Mike Gilbert returns this fall to the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums with new stories and a virtual tour of Oakwood Cemetery in Fremont.

During these sessions, Gilbert, a local historian and retired teacher, will share his research on topics ranging from Native American Chief Tecumseh to Sandusky County Athletes. Sessions take place on six Saturdays in September and October.

This is the sixth year for History Roundtable.

Due to the overwhelming response to past roundtable trolley tours of Oakwood Cemetery, History Roundtable will feature a virtual tour of the cemetery that will accommodate more people. Participants can view the cemetery through drone footage while watching from the Hayes Presidential auditorium.

Each History Roundtable session is from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Cost for each session is $5 or $25 for all six.

Also new this year, pre-registration and pre-payment are required for all sessions to better accommodate demand. To register and pay, contact Nan Card or Julie Mayle at 419-332-2081, ext. 239, or ncard@rbhayes.org or jmayle@rbhayes.org. Payment can be made to Card or Mayle with cash, check or credit card.

The title sponsor for History Roundtable is Mary Wonderly, M.D.

Individual session sponsors are listed in the schedule:

- **Saturday, Sept. 7 – Virtual Tour of Oakwood Cemetery**: Gilbert will discuss the men and women buried in Oakwood during this tour, which will be shown from the Hayes Presidential auditorium. Enjoy a bird’s-eye view of the many distinctive tombstones throughout the cemetery. Hear new stories thanks to the increased range and capabilities of enhanced technology. **Virtual cemetery tour sponsor is George J. Schrader, attorney at law.**

- **Saturday, Sept. 21 – Tecumseh**: Native American Chief Tecumseh is considered by many historians as one of the greatest leaders of the past. Gilbert will discuss the legacy of Tecumseh and the footprint he left on Sandusky County.

- **Saturday, Sept. 28 – Sardis Birchard**: President Rutherford B. Hayes’ uncle, Sardis Birchard, is arguably one of the biggest influences on the city of Fremont. However, little is known concerning Birchard’s rough road to success.

- **Saturday, Oct. 12 – Mary Pinchot and Dorothy Kilgallen**: These women were major figures in the President John F. Kennedy assassination. Pinchot’s role as paramour to the president and Kilgallen as the intrepid reporter played important parts in the controversy surrounding Kennedy’s death.

- **Saturday, Oct. 19 – Snapshot of Sandusky County Athletes**: Gilbert will revisit the great athletes, men and women, from the Sandusky County area. **Athlete session sponsor is NorthCoast Showtime – John & Lindi Cahill.**

- **Saturday, Oct. 26 – Ghost stories**: Gilbert brings back one of his most popular sessions. He will explore urban legends from all 50 states.
Craft beer, historic drinks, living history to be featured at event celebrating special exhibit

Rutherford and Lucy Hayes famously disallowed alcohol during state dinners in the White House. This decision fit with their personal convictions and their support for the temperance cause.

To learn more about the temperance movement and the support the Hayeses provided to the cause, please visit the temporary exhibit “Demon Rum and Cold Water: The Two Sides of Temperance,” open through Oct. 6.

To celebrate this exhibit, we are excited to put the two sides of temperance on display during Craft Beers, Cocktails and Crusaders from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 31, at Spiegel Grove.

Come to the Grove and try out the tastes of some of our local craft brewers, including Wild Side Brewing Company (Grand Rapids), Catawba Island Brewing Company (Port Clinton), Findlay Brewing Company, 4kd Crick Brewing Company (Defiance), Black Frog Brewing Company (Toledo) and Earnest Brew Works (Toledo).

In addition to the craft brewers, we will be serving a number of mixed drinks prominent in the late 19th century. And to have fun with the topic, we will have a number of costumed living historians interacting with guests and providing their appeals to give up the drink.

Admission is $25 for non-members and $20 for Hayes Presidential members. Admissions gets you 10 tickets you can redeem at our craft beer tents for 4-ounce pours or at our living history tent for samples of the era-appropriate mixed drinks. We will also offer $10 designated-driver tickets for those who would like to come enjoy the event without the alcohol.

This event is the first of its kind at Spiegel Grove. Come out for the living history and the craft beer and mixed drinks. We also will have food trucks on site and live music. Updates and tickets will be available at rbhayes.org.

We hope you will be available to come out and celebrate the end of summer!

Grounds tours, painting activities, themed tours, more offered on Saturdays, concert Wednesdays

Hold a piece of history, take a themed tour, paint a butterfly using the same technique as First Lady Lucy Hayes and more at the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

Hayes Presidential’s schedule of activities will be offered throughout the day each Saturday through Nov. 9 and on Wednesdays when Verandah Concerts take place.

The schedule of special activities can be viewed at rbhayes.org/visit-us/scheduled-museum-activities-and-themed-hayes-home-tours/.

Most of these activities are included with regular admission, and Hayes Presidential Library & Museums members are admitted for free. Activities include gallery talks, hands-on artifact activities, kids crafts and more.

Activities offered for an additional fee include the Hayes Home Backstairs Tour and guided grounds tour with butterfly painting activity.

The Backstairs Tour features stories of the servants who worked for the Hayes Family and includes fresh-baked ginger snaps and some behind-the-scenes looks at the home. Some of the Hayes Home servants were former slaves from Kentucky, and others were immigrants from Europe who spoke little to no English.

The grounds tour points out fascinating historical spots on the beautiful, 25-acre wooded Spiegel Grove. Participants in the painting activity will learn to paint a butterfly in the same way 19th-century artist Albert Bierstadt showed Lucy Hayes to paint the colorful insects when he visited her in the White House.

On Verandah Concert Wednesdays, the museum will have extended hours and be open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Visitors can tour the home and museum, participate in special activities and enjoy a free evening concert.
Meet #LilHayes!

Introducing #LilHayes, the mini Rutherford B. Hayes. Follow along on the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums’ social media pages as he travels to interesting, fun and unusual places. Find Hayes Presidential on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @rbhayespres. So far, Lil Hayes has visited Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Point Pelee National Park in Canada, Ohio Tourism Day and more. See his travels, and follow him on new adventures!

HPLM featured on Ohio. Find It Here’s History Road Trip

Just in time for summer travel, TourismOhio has launched a Highway to History Road Trip that includes the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

This trip maps out 10 fascinating historical stops across the state and includes recommendations for where to eat and other places to visit while in each stop’s area.

See the Road Trip and highlights of the stops at http://roadtrips.ohio.org/trips/highway-to-history/. Other stops on this road trip include Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial on South Bass Island and Lakeview Cemetery in Cleveland.

The Highway to History Road Trip is one of 10 road trips TourismOhio has launched to help travelers find their perfect Ohio road trips.

The trips are based on themes with some routes highlighting major celebrations, including the Lunar Landing 50th anniversary and the Cincinnati Reds’ 150th year. Other road trips provide adventures in family fun, cuisine, thriving cities, romance, outdoors, arts and culture and more.

“Ohio is located within a day’s drive of 60 percent of the U.S. population, and research tells us Ohio visitors are driving here from surrounding states,” said Matt MacLaren, director of TourismOhio. “We created RoadTrips.Ohio.org to be a fun and easy way for families and friends to find experiences they can enjoy together.”

The new RoadTrips.Ohio.org site provides more than suggested attractions. It also shares insider tips - such as must-try eateries, distinctive lodging and more “along the way” information that transforms a drive into a truly memorable experience.

Join in the Ohio.Find It Here. road trips conversation and share photos by using #WorthTheDrive, #OhioFindItHere and #rbhayespres. For more travel inspiration, follow the Hayes Presidential on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @rbhayespres.
Fred & Elaine Recktenwald
David & Judith Reed
Dale & Kay E. Reiter
Ray & Mary Lou Rendon
Bill & Rea Ripple
Juanita & Ned Robinet
Ron & Nancy Root
Anthony & Ruthann Ruggiero
Nancy Sattler
Gary & Pat Schaal
Jack & Linda Schell
Schiets Tender Touch
Car Wash
Ernest Scholz & Julie Johnson
Buddy & Brenda Schwab
Jim & Cindy Scran
d
Doris M. Seaman
Arnold Seeger
Dave & Jan Serwin
M/M Thomas Sevits
Mark & Christine Smith
David & Nancy Souder
Jim & Carol Spinal
Howard Sterwart M.D.
Larry & Barbara Stout
James & Brenda Stultz
Karen Swedersky - In memory of Dale Swedersky
Terry & Donna Thatcher
Cdr./Mrs. David C. Thompson, USN. Ret.
Henry & Martha Timman
Burk & Kay Tischler
James & Trudi Tooman II
Thomas & Barbara Trout
Neal & Cindy Ungar
Robert & Rose Wagner
Michael & Marilu Walerszak
John W. Walker
Jeanne Walter
Virginia (Penny) Walther
Jim & Connie Warner
Kent & Sharon Watkins
Mary & Bob Weichel
Judy Weickert
Noretta Weigman
David & Lynda Weininger
Cheryl Wendt & Rob Boukissen - Wendt
Key Team Realty
Westview Veterinary Hospital
Beverly Whisler
Marty & Roy Wilhelm
Gary & Judy Wilkins
Charles Willer
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Sharon Wirnker

Dwight Wise
Ursula Wolfe
Wonderly Collision, LLC
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Mike & Kay Yeagle
Bob & Lil Zilles
Russ & Ruth Zimmerman
Betty Zoeller

Library
Rebecca Thames-Simmons
Sandusky Co. Kin Hunters
- In memory of Rosalyin Rosie' Reno

Library In-Kind Gifts
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Caryl J. McCormick
Henry R. Timman
Patrick & Ruth Smith

Manuscripts / Archives
The Sidney Frohman Foundation
Mike & Linda Gilbert

Manuscripts / Archives In-Kind Gifts
Anonymous
River Raisin National Battlefield Park

Manuscripts & Photographic Collections Educational Programming
Hoffert Trust

Manuscripts & Photographic Collections Endowment
The Sidney Frohman Foundation
Burke & Sarah Hayes Hoffert Trust

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Chuck & Nancy Almroth
Walter & Victoria Bahnens
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June Baughman
Alice Beier
Ann Berenbaum
John Berschied
Dr. Mark Beudert
Scott & Yvonne Bilger
Bliss Memorial Public Library

Library
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Christopher E. Bowman
Irene Bray
Natalie Bredbeck
Phil & Barbara Brooks
M/M Jim Brower
Mr. Harold Brown & Dr. Marsha Bordner
Mary Brown
Kathryn Burkett
Joe & Nancy Campisi
Becky Childers
Robert & Dianne Clary
Constance A. Claycomb
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Mary Combs
Timm & Debbie Cox
Patricia A. Cutzer
Barbara Czerwony
Margaret S. Deben
Donald D. Durnwald
Martha Dykes
Robert J. & Margaret A. M. Elliott
Tom & Bonnie Eyestone
Jim & Ilse Faist
Sandra Faller
James Finn
Tom & Connie Fishbaugh
Michael P. Fisher
M/M James L. Framstad
M. Elizabeth Frank
Jim & Linda Georgski
M/M Michael R. Geiger
Maury & Sandy Gnepper
M/M David Goodman
Peter K. Griffin
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Kirk & Ann Kistler
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Kim Knepper
Daryl & Cate Knipp
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Barbara Krzewinski
Mike Kudlac
Walter & Amy Lamson
Margaret Latham
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Dennis & Amy Schwartz
Kristine Sedlak
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Michael Selmon & Sarah Horn
Leanna Shaberly
Barbara Sharp
Bruce & Barbara Shealy
Diane Sheets
Richard A. Sherman
Frances Sinclair
Jolyn Smith
James R. Smothers
Jean Stanton
Jon G. & Julie Stawowy
Ron & Kathy Stout
James L. & Brenda M. Stultz
William G. & Karyl Summers
Martin & Amy Sutter
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Dorothy Swedersky
Dr./Mrs. Terry Thatcher
Timothy & Christine Thomas
Rebecca Tiiken
Scott & Kathryn Venema
M/M Allan Voggenthaler
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Paul & Karen Wagner
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Virginia (Penny) Walther
Ed & Colleen Warner
John & Carol Wasserman
Robert & Amy White
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Lynne Wilson
M/M David E. Wilson
Robert E. & Judith A. Wink
Tom & Terry Wolfe
Raymond O. & Nancy L. Wright
Terry & Sharon Wurzel
Jim Yeager
Carolyn Young
Sally Zeller
M/M Jack Zimmerman

Memorials
In memory of Linda Geyman
M/M Paul Thatcher, II
In memory of Carl Irick
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Family Services Staff of the Early Childhood Program at GLCAP
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Leadership Sandusky County
Network for Good - Facebook Fundraiser
Dorothy Swedersky
**Billow family donates trees with historic significance**

During the War of 1812, First Lady Lucy Hayes' father was stationed at Fort Stephenson in Fremont.

Captain James Webb and some of his fellow soldiers were foraging for food along the Harrison Trail in what is today Spiegel Grove, the grounds of the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, when it started to grow dark.

“He didn’t want to approach the fort after dark and be mistaken for the enemy,” said Ralph Billow, retired longtime caretaker at Spiegel Grove.

So the group decided to camp out on the trail and built a fire in the buttress of a large oak tree. It was a freezing winter night.

“They were all right,” Billow said of Webb’s group. “People in the fort had frostbite that night. It was that cold.”

This story was passed down through generations, and the tree was believed to be identified on the property near where the first lady’s and President Rutherford B. Hayes’ tomb is located today. The Harrison Trail, which soldiers and Native Americans used, runs through Spiegel Grove.

In 1978, tornadic winds felled the tree, known as “Grandfather’s Oak.” It left a hole in the grove that always bothered Billow. So Billow purchased and donated a 25-foot white oak tree to replace it. The tree was planted on Wednesday, April 17.

“I’ve cared for this property for the last 70 years,” said Billow, who today volunteers his time on Hayes Presidential’s Building and Grounds Committee. “The history of it is so special and so important.”

Having a replacement for the tree helps preserve the history of Spiegel Grove, the 25-acre estate. The grove has an estimated 1,700 trees, some of which predated President Hayes’ living here and some planted by Hayes himself.

More online:
See a video of the 25-foot oak being planted at rbhayes.org/news.

During the same week, Ralph’s son and daughter-in-law, Dennis and Sue Billow, donated an oak tree seedling that came from a tree at President James Monroe’s Highland in Charlottesville, Virginia. The seedling also will be planted on the property.

Library, continued from page 1

genealogy and other research topics. He also oversees maintenance of President Hayes’ more than 10,000 personal books, as well as the library’s periodical and newspaper collections.

“John has become an expert in our book, periodical and newspaper collections as well as a respected genealogy guru,” said Christie Weininger, Hayes Presidential executive director. “I often receive compliments from library patrons about the library staff. As one patron said: ‘The Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums holds a special place in my heart due to the efforts of staff members like John.’”

Ransom enjoys working with the patrons and the books, manuscripts and artifacts at Hayes Presidential.

“Everybody has a different story to tell about their family,” he said of the patrons. “I like hearing their stories. I like helping people. You can help them find their long-lost relative they’ve been trying to find for years.

“I love looking at historical documents, President Hayes’ books and writings.”

His favorite artifact is the Waggoner sword, which belonged to John Waggoner, who settled in the Fremont area after serving as a body guard to George Washington. The sword was displayed in a case in the library at one time.

Ransom replaces Becky Hill, who retired last year and works one day a week in the library.

“Becky was a good mentor who helped to prepare me for this job,” Ransom said. “We have a great staff here. Everybody works together well and pitches in whenever needed.”

Ransom started at Hayes Presidential in 1994 as a volunteer in the museum, where he cataloged artifacts and helped with exhibits. That’s when he met his wife, Brenda, who was working as a part-time cataloger for the museum.

Two years later, a part-time library job came open, and Ransom successfully applied. Then the job became a full-time position.

In addition to working in the library, Ransom has helped plan events, such as the Frohman Summer Series: Hands-on History, genealogy classes and History Roundtable with Mike Gilbert. He also volunteers his time at Verandah Concerts and Christmas dinners in the Hayes Home.
Learn the fascinating stories of African-Americans who worked in the White House from the administrations of George Washington to Barack Obama, watch original films and more during the second annual American Presidents Film & Literary Festival this fall in Fremont.

This is the only film and literary festival in the United States to focus on the American Presidency. It will take place Friday, Oct. 4 – Sunday, Oct. 6, at various locations in Fremont, including the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums.

The festival is its own non-profit organization, and Hayes Presidential is one of the entities involved in the planning process.

Adrian Miller, author of "The President’s Kitchen Cabinet: The story of the African Americans Who Have Fed Our First Families, from the Washingtons to the Obamas," is the keynote speaker.

He will share the stories of White House workers during a dinner and Red Carpet Event on Saturday, Oct. 5, at the Strand Concert Theater.

Children’s book illustrator Jeff Ebbeler, who has illustrated more than 40 books, will work with kids in Fremont City Schools and also have a public event at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 3, at Fremont Middle School.

Former White House Chef John Moeller, who worked for three administrations, will return to the Hayes Presidential Library & Museums and give a cooking class in the Hayes Home during the weekend.

Lantern tours of Spiegel Grove featuring living history reenactors portraying figures who had a tie to the presidency will be offered on Friday, Oct. 4.

Films that have been accepted into the festival include:

• “JFK: The Last Speech,” which will be introduced by an Amherst College graduate who saw President John F. Kennedy deliver the speech at the college.
• “Raising Buchanan,” a fictional film about a woman down on her luck who steals President James Buchanan’s body and tries to ransom it.
• “Presidential Foresight: Theodore Roosevelt and the National Parks,” directed by Fremont resident Julia Mulheren.
• “The Invalid Corps,” a Civil War movie about injured Union soldiers who protected Washington, D.C., during a Confederate raid.

A wreath-laying at President Hayes’ tomb at Spiegel Grove will take place on Sunday, Oct. 6. Each year, the sitting U.S. president sends military representatives to lay a wreath at Hayes’ tomb in honor of his birthday which is Oct. 4.

A full schedule of events, film descriptions and event tickets will be available at americanpresidentsfilmfestival.org.
Becky Slater knew her family members’ initials or signatures likely were somewhere beneath some of the Hayes Home wallpaper.

Her family owned Wilson Brothers, a painting and wallpaper business in Fremont, and had done plenty of work in the historic home over the years.

Her father was the one who told her the position of caring for the Hayes Home had come open in 1982. Slater successfully applied and has had the job ever since.

Earlier this year, crew renovating the breakfast room in the home started pulling off the aqua-and-white wallpaper. Sure enough, they found several signatures and dates of the people who had papered that wall at various times.

“When they started, I thought: ‘Will there be anything under the paper?’” Slater said. “I knew they had done a lot of work up here. I thought it was great when they found it.”

Among the signatures was the writing “Papered by Wilson Decorating Co.” and the initiations “W.H., O.C. D.C. and R.S.” with the date of 1946.

W.H. was Slater’s grandfather, William H. Wilson, and R.S. was her father, Robert S. Wilson. D.C. was her uncle, Donn C. Wilson. She thinks O.C. might have been an employee of Wilson Decorating Co., which was the company’s name before it changed to Wilson Brothers.

“My mom and dad got married in 1945, so he would have been a newlywed when he did this,” Slater said.

In another spot, her family signed the wall again when they re-papered it in 1961 with the wallpaper that was removed for the room renovation. This time, they signed it “Wilson Bros. with their names, the date of Feb. 9, 1961, and the note “lots of snow.”

In her 37 years at the Hayes Presidential, Slater has seen many changes in the home. Decades ago, her uncle also worked on refurbishing the original wallpaper on the ceiling of the library parlor on the first floor. At one time, wallpaper was removed from Uncle Sardis’ room upstairs, and her uncle’s initials were on the wall.

“Now I’d like to see what’s under the paper in every room,” Slater said.