



the
GARST
museum

Newsletter
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2025

937.548.5250 | GarstMuseum.org
205 North Broadway
Greenville, OH 45331
THE NATIONAL ANNIE OAKLEY CENTER
the GARST
museum

Become a Member

Help support the Garst Museum by becoming a museum member today. Your donation makes a difference!

Individual: \$30	Silver: \$500 <i>(Includes Donor Recognition)</i>
Family: \$50 <i>(Household family members)</i>	Gold: \$1,000 <i>(Includes Donor Recognition)</i>
Copper: \$100 <i>(Includes 4 One-Time Museum Entry Passes)</i>	Platinum: \$2,000 <i>(Includes Donor Recognition plus 4 Family Memberships)</i>
Bronze: \$250 <i>(Includes Donor Recognition)</i>	

Admission can be applied to membership on the day of your visit.

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Garst Museum Membership Benefits Include:

- Free Admission to the Museum (depending on membership level)
- Garst Museum Newsletter
- 10% Discount in the Garst Museum Store
- Exclusive Invitations to Museum Events
- Free Access to the Research Center

Calendar of Events

**Annual Meeting of
the Darke County
Historical Society
March 25**

**Hold Annie's Gun
July 26 & 27
*(during the Gathering)***

**Annie's GALA Auction
Oct. 22–Nov. 1**

OUR MISSION

The Darke County Historical Society is dedicated to preserving the history of our county and fostering education on its relevance to the American experience. Our mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, study, and interpret materials relating to the history and culture of Darke County, Ohio.

GARST MUSEUM

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MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday
10 AM–4 PM

Garst Celebrates 75 Years

When looking at Garst Museum, one may see a sprawling estate with over 35,000 square feet of exhibition space sprawling through a maze of several additions. Before there were several additions, and before there were over 300,000 artifacts, there was the Garst House, a singular prominent building that housed artifacts that pointed to the history of Greenville and Darke County.

The Garst House, now known as Garst Museum, has its roots in the mid-1800s when it was an inn next to the railroad. The house was built by George Coover in 1852. Welcoming many visitors throughout the years, the location has served many purposes over the years. Many people have visited Annie Oakley Days or the Gathering at Garst on the museum's grounds, but did you know the property hosted the Darke County Fair in 1853?

Approximately 10 years after Coover built the inn, the Garst family acquired the property, and it became a home for the Garst family.

The Darke County Historical Society (DCHS) was fortunate to eventually receive the property. In 1946, Nellie Garst Menke donated her incredible home, and because of her generosity, her namesake has lived on these many years through the Garst Museum.

The museum opened three years later. In 2024, Garst Museum celebrated 75 years of successfully fulfilling its mission of collecting, preserving, exhibiting, studying, and interpreting materials related to Darke County's history and teaching its relevance to the American experience.

The Garst House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Today, the museum holds treasures from the early days of Greenville as the country was moving westward, as well as individuals who made names for themselves globally—Annie Oakley, Lowell Thomas, Lewis and Clark—and artifacts from throughout the 1800s and early 1900s showing how America and residents lived, worked and played.

After 75 years, Garst Museum continues to grow its collection. The museum reopened after its annual January hiatus with new artifacts in several areas of the museum. Stop by today and see how Garst Museum is advancing as it moves toward its centennial.



**A program from the
dedication and opening of
the Garst House Museum on
Sunday, June 19, 1949.**



Discover Our History

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This newsletter is possible thanks to a donation from the Coppock-Hole Trust.

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Team Targets Annie Oakley’s Story with a New Chapter

An expanded chapter has been added to the story of Annie Oakley’s remarkable life through the items and information on display in the National Annie Oakley Center (NAOC) at Garst Museum. Renovations to the exhibits were funded by the Annie Oakley Center Foundation (AOCF). Owing to the generosity of the great-grandchildren of William Longfelder, the executor of both Annie Oakley’s and husband Frank Butler’s estates, a team worked in January to add many of the newly donated artifacts belonging to William and Jennie Longfelder to the NAOC. The Longfelders were friends of the Butlers, living just three blocks from each other in Nutley, New Jersey, from 1893 until 1904.

“Photos of a Legacy” is an antique photo album with high-tech scanned photos that provides a new interactive exhibit for museum visitors. Browse through chapters of Annie’s life. Mostly candid and some professional photos are included, thanks to the generous donation from the family collection by Bonnie Perry, great-great niece of Annie Oakley. Some of these photos have not been seen before by museum staff familiar with many of Annie’s images. There are also some photos added from the Longfelder collection.

Deeply personal letters from Annie Oakley to Jennie Longfelder talk about her declining health and Frank’s. These letters provide personal information about their last days, which was not previously shared or a part of the story at Garst.

Of particular interest is an exceptional dainty .32 caliber, Smith & Wesson, pearl-handled revolver that Annie would sleep with under her pillow when she traveled. Look for it in the dressing-gown case on the pink pillow!

The team of Brenda Arnett (Annie historian and Office Manager at Garst), Nancy Cooper (Garst Board member and AOCF Director), Mike Ross and Eileen Litchfield (both Garst and AOCF Board members) met two years ago when first presented with an inventory of the Longfelder items to review and prioritize items of interest, and then to later incorporate them into the existing exhibits once the outcome of the donation was finalized.

More of the Longfelder donations will be displayed in a temporary case later this spring. The opportunity to add to the story gave great impetus to revising some of the other existing cases at the same time while the museum was closed in January for its annual deep cleaning. All agree that what is old is new at Garst Museum!



New “Photos of a Legacy” interactive display showcasing photos from different chapters of Annie Oakley’s life



Smith & Wesson, .32 caliber, pearl-handled revolver that Annie Oakley would sleep with under her pillow when she traveled

Many Thanks for the New Museum Sign

After years of sunshine, rain, wind, and a tornado, the sign in front of Garst Museum, at the corner of North Broadway and Wilson Avenue, was deteriorating. The wood was rotting and the wording on the sign was fading. The new sign is much more vibrant and features a couple of the major exhibits that can be found inside the museum—The National Annie Oakley Center and Crossroads of Destiny.

The Coppock-Hole Trust, a huge supporter of Garst Museum through the years, made it possible to refurbish the sign. Garst Museum appreciates that the Coppock-Hole Trust has enabled the museum to continue to grow to be a steadfast landmark in the community. Garst Museum would also like to thank Shelly Bohman of Graphic Communications for designing the new sign and Joe Wintrow of Wintrow Signs for printing and installing the sign.

Garst Museum is located at 205 North Broadway, Greenville. For more information, visit garstmuseum.org. Be sure to follow Garst Museum on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and Bluesky.



New exterior signage outside the Garst Museum

Lewis & Clark Trail Experience

The Garst Museum is now part of the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience! Available through your app store for both Apple and Android devices, the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience offers travelers a means of finding sites that are related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. These sites are organized on a map that spans the length of the trail from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Astoria, Oregon. By clicking on the sites represented, viewers are able to access information about each site along with upcoming events that are scheduled at each one.

Lewis and Clark initially met in Greenville, Ohio, during its fort period. Both men were present during the Treaty of Greene Ville where they learned a significant deal about how to communicate with Native Americans. Because of this, two exhibits detailing their experiences in Greenville and how Greenville led to the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were installed in the Crossroads of Destiny Wing last spring. Pictures of these exhibits, along with other wings of the Garst Museum, are on the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience app and website.



Garst Museum now part of the Lewis & Clark Trail Experience available through the app store

Thank You for Your Continued Support

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our donors who contribute to the Annual Fund and Capital Campaign. Your support ensures that the Garst Museum continues to preserve history, educate our community, and inspire future generations.

We are especially honored to announce a \$10,000 donation in Jim Buchy’s honor, designated for improvements to our Crossroads of Destiny exhibit. These funds will support much-needed technology upgrades to enhance the visitor experience and help us share our region’s rich history in new and engaging ways.

Thanks to your generosity, we are making great strides in our Capital Campaign, with a goal of \$1 million to fund critical museum improvements. We are excited to share that we are about halfway there, and with your continued support, we can reach our goal! While the Capital Campaign is geared toward facility updates and equipment replacement, your donations to the Annual Fund ensure that we can continue adding new exhibits and hosting educational programs.

On behalf of our board, staff, and volunteers, thank you for being part of the Garst Museum family. If you haven’t yet contributed and would like to support our efforts, please reach out to us at 973-548-5250 to help us keep history alive!