

## Remarks from the President: Tim McKee



It's been a busy winter season for the Tiffin Historic Trust. I am humbled to have been elected President during the January meeting subsequent to Brook Edward's resignation. Brook will be remaining as a board member, and I'd like to thank Brook for his past and continued work with the Trust.

While I am relatively new to the organization, joining the board over the summer of 2023, I am dedicated to help lead the organization with an emphasis on financial responsibility, community involvement and collaboration.

Over the winter we've held several wonderful and well supported events. Karin Brown and team hosted a Holiday Kaffeeklatsch to a sold out crowd. In addition, we hosted the annual Holiday House/Church tour, which was also a resounding success. Lastly, we hosted a Valentine's tea at the Grammes-Brown House which also featured live entertainment hosted by TJ McKee and Dani Hummel-Sass. I'd like to thank all involved who help with the events, both Historic Trust board members and other volunteers. Without your help and support these events would not be possible.

Speaking of volunteers, I'd like to extend an invitation to anyone interested in joining the Historic Trust to reach out and get involved! We'll be discussing our updated Strategic Plan at the upcoming Annual Membership Dinner as well as announcing new events and programs. Remember, our success rests on our team as well as our team of volunteers!

One of the ways to stay up to date is our website. If you haven't viewed it recently, our Treasurer, Mark Levans, just released a complete revamp of our site featuring a calendar of events to keep our members updated on our activities. The brand-new online membership system allows users to more easily select their membership level and to see the benefits and options available. Even more features are planned for the future. Thanks go to Mark and his team for this sorely needed update to our online presence.

Again, thank you for being a member of the Tiffin Historic Trust. We appreciate your support!

## Tracing Your House's History with Becky Hill

**March 26, 2024 6:30 p.m.**

*Tiffin-Seneca Public Library, 77 Jefferson St., Frost-Kalnow Room*

How old is my house? Who used to live in it? You can learn how to discover the age, architectural style, previous owners and history of your house when Rebecca (Becky) Hill highlights Seneca County research tools. Some of the resources discussed will be land records, tax records, censuses, maps, atlases, city directories and more. Even if your property is outside of Seneca County or even Ohio, comparable sources are available in other jurisdictions.



Rebecca Hill served as Head Librarian at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center until she retired in 2018. While there she

administered the first presidential library in the U.S. overseeing its print collections and reference sources, including robust genealogical collections of materials and its website. Prior to her position at the Hayes Center, Hill was Reference Librarian at the Tiffin-Seneca Public Library, where she became very familiar with local resources that patrons could consult not only to research their personal family histories but also to learn about their homes and landholdings.

Join the Tiffin Historic Trust for an educational program by librarian and genealogist Becky Hill to learn how to research the history of your home and other local buildings. The March 26th program is at 6:30 p.m. at the Tiffin-Seneca Public Library Frost-Kalnow Room, 77 Jefferson Street, Tiffin, Ohio. This event is free and open to the public. No registration is required. Light refreshments will be available.

# Local Preservation News

# Endangered?

## The Cunningham House, TCS Administration Offices

Another old but grand Tiffin home is being **threatened with demolition**. The Cunningham House at 244 S. Monroe Street in Tiffin was built in 1904 by local architect George Netcher. It currently serves as the Administration Building for the Tiffin City Schools. If the plans to modernize Columbian High School are approved, the home would be slated for removal.

The Seneca County Historical Society Facebook page on February 13, 2024, includes photographs and history of the house. <https://www.facebook.com/senecacountyhistoricalsociety> and <https://www.facebook.com/senecacountyhistoricalsociety/posts/vintage-photos-yesterday-we-posted-a-photo-of-the-cunningham-house-at-244-s-monr/855738063024119/>

senecacountyhistoricalsociety/posts/vintage-photos-yesterday-we-posted-a-photo-of-the-cunningham-house-at-244-s-monr/855738063024119/

Several years ago Tiffin Historic Trust board members were given a tour of the building and were amazed at the beautiful architectural details still evident both inside and outside of the building. For more information on the Cunningham House/TCS Administration Building see the article by Doug Collar in the Winter/Spring/Summer 2021 issue of the *Preservation Post*. <https://www.tiffinhistorictrust.org/Past-Newsletters.html>



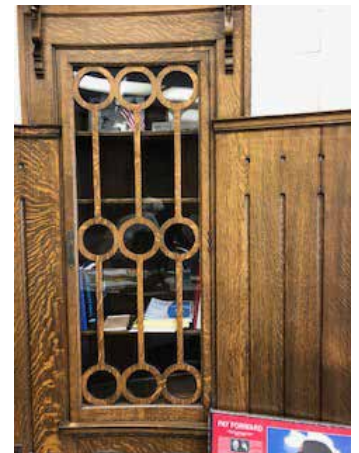
Cunningham House.



Curved windows.



Decorative moldings and woodwork.



## Camp Pittenger Listed on the National Register of Historic Places



On a more positive note, an area landmark was recently named to the *National Register of Historic Places*. The "Old Camp Pittenger" located outside of McCutchenville, Ohio, has joined an esteemed list of recognized historic sites as of January, 2024, according to the website of the Northwestern Ohio Christian Youth Camp. <https://nwocyc.org/>

Established by the Findlay YMCA Camp in 1931, it was purchased by the Tiffin YMCA in 1938. Beginning in 1940 it offered a summer camping program for disabled children and teens under the auspices of the Ohio Society for Crippled Children. That program continued until 1978.

The current owners are planning to build a new dining hall. According to a January 28, 2024 article in *Seneca News Daily*, rather than tear down the earlier 1940 facility, the NWOCYC board intends to raise the funds to save and restore Tappan Lodge to use as a gathering place.

# CASA Raising Funds for Preservation of Court Street Building

Another non-profit organization is taking on the task of preserving its beautiful 1890s building at 21 Court Street. Originally built to serve as a bowling alley, restaurant, club room, and billiard parlor, the building has served various roles, including as a telephone office, American Legion facility, a doctor's office, and the Seneca County Board of Elections. CASA has owned it since 2000.

Although the role of CASA of Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties is to serve youngsters by providing "Court Appointed Special Advocates" it is conducting a special finance campaign to acquire the funds needed to make repairs to the interior of its office building due to water damage caused by a previous roof leak and for façade enhancement and side alley brickwork. The project is estimated to cost \$170,000. They have received some donations already, but more is needed to complete the repair work. As preservation-minded individuals, our members may want to help out another organization by making a donation to CASA and specifying their building campaign. Donations can also be made through their website [www.casaofsw.org](http://www.casaofsw.org).

To learn more about the project and CASA's proposal, go to the October 2, 2023 *Advertiser-Tribune* article by Kayla Trevino. <https://advertiser-tribune.com/news/482842/casa-seeks-donations-for-building-renovations/>



Image from Seneca News Daily, 02/19/2024

## Meet Jennifer Kahler - Our Newest Board Member



After **Jennifer Kahler** attended several Tiffin Historic Trust board meetings as a guest, the board members invited her to join them as a trustee. She was elected on February 5 to serve out the remainder of a term ending on June 30, 2024; she is eligible for reelection.

Kahler has always had an interest in history and historic preservation and has an

undergraduate degree in history. She resides in Tiffin with her husband, John Kahler and works as an attorney with her husband in their law practice located in Tiffin.

Jennifer and John purchased their 1890s house located in the North Sandusky Historic District in 1999 and have worked tirelessly to restore and renovate their home.

The Tiffin Historic Trust is pleased to welcome Jennifer as its newest board member.

## Tiffin Historic Trust's Social Media Presence



Historic Trust board member **Katelin Romick** is managing and expanding our Social Media presence. The best way to keep up to date with our activities is

by following Tiffin Historic Trust on your social media.

Most of you connect with us on Facebook from our old "profile page," but we are transitioning to a "Community Page" format, which is more appropriate for an organization. We need you to please 'like' and 'follow' our new main community page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069546683603>.

Let's get all 3,000+ of you, our old friends, as our "new" friends on our new/main page! Unfortunately, we are unable to transfer your account; you have to do it yourself. (If you need to refer back to the old profile page it is still available at: <https://www.facebook.com/tiffinhistoric.trust>)

- We are posting our upcoming events to Facebook, including the "Tracing Your House's History" presentation by Becky Hill at 6:30 p.m. March 26 (you can find the event link here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/713403887305614>)
- And, the "Solar Eclipse Open House" taking place at the Grammes-Brown House during the Solar Eclipse

weekend, April 6 & 7, noon – 4:00 p.m. (posted here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1329815277837448>).

- Keep following Tiffin Historic Trust to learn about more events to come as the details are finalized!
- Please share our event pages on your personal Facebook page and 'invite' your friends using the 'invite' button on the event link. Also, encourage your Facebook friends to share these event pages on their Facebooks to spread our reach!
- Follow us on Instagram as we begin posting pictures on our newest app @tiffinhistorictrust <https://www.instagram.com/tiffinhistorictrust/>

# Providing Affordable Housing by Rehabbing Older “Heritage Homes,”

by Nancy Rubenstein

While driving around Tiffin and its outlying small towns, I am often struck by the number of older homes that are poorly maintained or even unoccupied. Heritage Ohio hosted a webinar, “Historic Properties and Affordable Housing in Ohio’s Appalachia Region,” in which Brent Lane of the Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service described a study he conducted in Athens County. He wanted to evaluate whether rehabilitating “heritage homes” could have a positive economic impact on the small Appalachian communities.

Heritage homes are those pre-1970 single family homes that are not designated as “historic” but are “representative of their communities’ cultural heritage.” Too often the tendency is to tear down the affordable but dilapidated homes to replace with new housing stock. Not only do those new homes eliminate the historic aesthetic of the community, but they are no longer affordable for the people in the community.

Looking at Athens County, Ohio, Lane used an economics tool to determine the benefits of rehabilitating a home by doing the repairs necessary to bring it from a substandard housing unit to one that met current standards. Based on homes that were uninhabited and consequently underpriced, his study found that an average investment of \$50,000 using local labor and materials resulted in a significant economic impact. Lane determined that every one million dollar investment in rehabilitating

housing resulted in 17 new local jobs and increase in state and local tax income while enabling new home buyers and young families to attain affordable homes. His study revealed that rehabilitating older homes actually has a higher economic impact than new construction. Lane also noted that, with the current trend of employees working from home, they can move to rural communities and villages outside of the big cities and enjoy the benefits of small town community life along with affordable home ownership.



View Brent Lane’s presentation on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQboe4ReR4M&t=52s>

As a member of Heritage Ohio, Tiffin Historic Trust is given access to a variety of their webinars.

The next presentation is “Top Tips for National Register Nominations” on March 27, 1:00-2:00 p.m., by Abby Marshall of the State Historic Preservation Office of Ohio History Connection. To learn more about this program go to: <https://www.heritageohio.org/2024/03/10/webinar-top-tips-for-national-register-nominations>

## Past Events of 2023 and Early 2024

### Old Fashioned Christmas Open House,

December 2, 3, 9, 10, 15, 2023, noon – 4:00 p.m.

Responding to comments that the Grammes-Brown House needed to be used and seen more by the community, the Historic Trust held a special open house during the holiday season. The decorating team of Ed Goshe, Paula Crum, Jackie Fletcher and Karin Brown set to work transforming the Historic Trust’s headquarters into a marvel of holiday décor, even going so far as to move large pieces of furniture to new locations that they preferred! And, as the Holiday House Tour on December 3 overlapped the dates of the Open House, the Grammes-Brown House was looking its finest!



## Holiday House Tour,

December 3, 2023

Amanda Davidson-Johnston took on the assignment of quickly putting together the Annual Holiday House Tour the first Sunday in December. This year's tour featured three historic church buildings in addition to four residences and the Grammes-Brown House. The turnout was terrific with nearly two hundred tickets sold!



## Chili Dinner for Tour Hosts, Members and Friends,

December 4, 2023

On the evening following the Holiday House Tour it is a long standing tradition for the Tiffin Historic Trust board members to invite the tour hosts, members and friends of THT for a dinner of chili, appetizers, and desserts. It provides an opportunity for the tour hosts and members to get to know us better.



## Kaffeeklatsch – A German Holiday Tradition Recreated at the Grammes-Brown House,

December 16, 2023

Our authentic German Christmas Kaffeeklatsch on December 16 was again a huge success. Guests visited from several different states and all enjoyed tasting the cakes and cookies created by our own German-born member, Karin Brown, who loves to bake original German recipes which she also loves to share. Her Springerle cookies have become a holiday staple in Tiffin.

With her deep German roots, Karin spoke about how Christmas is celebrated in her native country going back to the customs of the



Middle Ages, many of which are celebrated to this day. Over the years these traditions were brought to the United States by German immigrants and have become part of a typical American Christmas celebration.

Before leaving the event, and after having toured the splendidly decorated Grammes-Brown House, every guest was able to fill a plate with Karin's delicious cookies to take home.



## Valentine Tea Returned to the Grammes-Brown House,

February 10, 2024

It was wonderful being able to again host a Valentine Tea. The event quickly sold out and wishful guests were placed on a waiting list. The entertainment was provided by baritone T J McKee who performed a program of "Soulful Sounds of Music" accompanied on piano by Dani Hummel Sass. In addition to the always elaborate tea trays, the table settings were enhanced by clever heart-shaped pretzel candies and decorated jars filled with Ukrainian tea bags and pink Springerle hearts, compliments of Karin Brown. This year's tea planning committee consisted of Jackie Fletcher, Karin Brown, and Nancy Rubenstein, with assistance from Mary Lewis, Verna Jean Fruth, Sue Johnson, and Jeannete Conley.



## New Website Launched

by Mark Levans

The Trust has launched a new and improved website at [www.tiffinhistorictrust.org](http://www.tiffinhistorictrust.org).

We listened to our members and this greatly improved site is more pleasing to the eye, easier to read and will keep everyone better informed.

Tied to the website is a robust non-profit membership portal specifically designed for organizations like Tiffin Historic Trust.

We have merged the old membership database with the new and there were unique challenges. Fortunately, with the help of technical support and creative thinking we are resolving the inconsistencies.

In the past THT has had challenges keeping our members informed about the organization, upcoming events and the many benefits of membership. This new website is a major step in solving this issue.

Check [tiffinhistorictrust.org](http://tiffinhistorictrust.org) often. It is a work in process, and is an important part of your membership experience. If you encounter any problems using the website or other issues, please let us know. Email your comments to treasurer and web site manager at [treasurer@tiffinhistorictrust.org](mailto:treasurer@tiffinhistorictrust.org).

**TIFFIN HISTORIC TRUST**

Home Member Services Become A New Member Calendar of Events Schedule An Event Email Newsletter Contact

Welcome to  
**Tiffin  
Historic  
Trust**

We are a nonprofit organization working to promote historic preservation in Tiffin, Ohio through meetings, publications, tours and more.

**BECOME A MEMBER**

**ALREADY A MEMBER**

**DONATE**

**Become A New Member**

Tracing Your House's History  
April Board Meeting  
Solar Eclipse Open House

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Lifetime Membership - \$1,000 one-time fee**

**Sustaining Membership - \$75 per year**

**Individual Membership - \$25 per year**

# Calendar of 2024 Upcoming Events

## Tracing your House's History

Tuesday, March 26, 6:30 p.m. at the Tiffin-Seneca Public Library, Frost-Kalnow Room



Retired librarian and genealogist, Rebecca Hill, will disclose the Seneca County print and online research tools to find the age and history of your house. Among the resources discussed will be

land records, tax records, censuses, maps, atlases, city directories and more. This event is free and open to the public. No registration is required. Light refreshments will be available.

## Solar Eclipse Open House

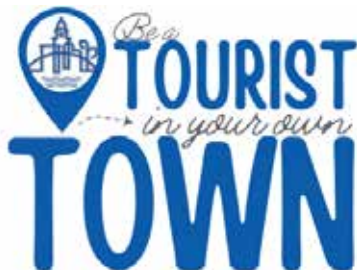
Saturday, April 6 & Sunday, April 7, 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m. at the Grammes-Brown House



Out of town visitors and local residents are invited to an open house and tour of the Tiffin Historic Trust's headquarters, the lovely Victorian-era Grammes-Brown House, on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons preceding the total Solar Eclipse.

## Be a Tourist in Your Own Town!

Saturday, April 20 & Sunday, April 21, 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m., The Grammes-Brown House



For the first time the Grammes-Brown House is included in this Destination Seneca County event where all the museums and art galleries are open to visitors, admission-free.

# SAVE THESE DATES!



**Annual Dinner and Membership Meeting**  
Thursday, June 13, 5:30 p.m.



RUTHERFORD B.  
**HAYES**  
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUMS

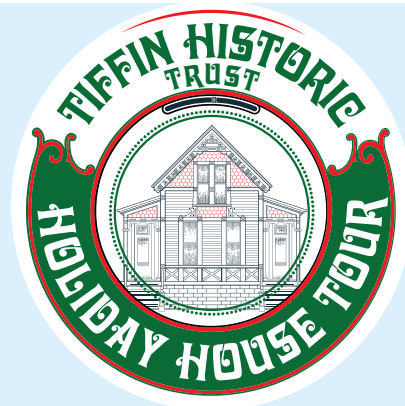


at  
SPEIGEL GROVE

Josh Dubbert, Hayes Presidential Center historian and Victorian history specialist will be the guest speaker. The Historic Preservation Award winners will be announced and the business meeting will conclude the evening. Watch for your invitation to learn the place and dinner arrangements.

**Saturday, September 28, the Grammes Brown House Garden and Carriage House**

The Fall Fundraiser Program, as yet to be decided!



## Holiday House Tour

Sunday, December 8, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m

Save the date to attend Tiffin Historic Trust's Annual Holiday House Tour, the major fundraiser for Tiffin's historic preservation organization. The Historic Trust appreciates all who attend the tour and the gracious and generous hosts who open their homes to the public.

# TIFFIN HISTORIC TRUST

P.O. Box 333  
172 Jefferson Street  
Tiffin, OH 44883-0333  
419-447-4789



## TRACING YOUR HOUSE'S HISTORY

**MARCH 26TH @ 6:30PM**  
TIFFIN-SENECA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
FROST-KALNOW ROOM  
77 JEFFERSON ST, TIFFIN, OH 44883

How old is my house? Who used to live in it? Learn how to use local and online resources to find the age and history of your house. Rebecca Hill will highlight Seneca County tools which can also be applied elsewhere. Some of the resources discussed will be land records, tax records, censuses, maps, atlases, city directories and more.

Free. All are welcome. No RSVP Required

### Give The Gift of a Membership To Someone You Know!

I want to help preserve our architectural heritage. Please enroll my friend/relative as a member in the following category:

Annual Memberships:  New Member

- Individual \$25       Business/Corporate \$100
- Supporting \$75       Lifetime \$1000

Visit [tiffinhistorictrust.org](http://tiffinhistorictrust.org) for membership details and benefits of becoming a member.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



P.O. Box 333  
Tiffin, OH 44883  
[www.tiffinhistorictrust.org](http://www.tiffinhistorictrust.org)  
419-447-4789

### Our Mission

*"To promote historic preservation in Tiffin by meetings, publications, tours, or other means. To act as a non-profit organization to apply for and accept any grants that may be appropriate to further the cause of historic preservation. To promote and develop any plan for the preservation and restoration of Tiffin and to work with all interested groups and individuals to put this plan into effect."*

### Tiffin Historic Trust Board of Trustees Officers

Tim McKee (President)  
Jackie Fletcher (Vice-President)  
Mark Levans (Treasurer)  
Nancy Rubenstein (Secretary)

| Term Expiring 2024 | Term Expiring 2025 | Term Expiring 2026 |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Karin Brown        | John Bing          | Amanda Davidson-   |
| Jennifer Kahler    | Mary Lewis         | Johnston           |
| Mark Levans        | Tim McKee          | Brook Edwards      |
| Vacancy            | Nancy Rubenstein   | Jackie Fletcher    |
|                    |                    | Katelin Romick     |

### Preservation Post Staff

Nancy Rubenstein, editor

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