



Old Tyme Chronical

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November 12th Program...

The Life and Service of Bob Hope

presented by

Van Young



Bob Hope

Bob Hope was a staple of American cinema and television for decades. A fixture with his many NBC specials and Oscar night award shows. Yet Bob Hope's real contributions were to the many men serving their country overseas in time of war. His Christmas shows were viewed by millions of Americans each year and his dedications to providing entertainment to our servicemen overseas was unparalleled. Come learn about the life of this remarkable entertainer and why he is still remembered for his generosity, wit and charm. A real American gem.

Last month in the Old Tyme Chronicle, we noted Hope's many stops for food in the Sunbury Diner on Rainbow Avenue when he was traveling between Cincinnati and Columbus. Come learn more about him and then "thank him for the memories."



Van Young

Van Young has been a very popular speaker in the Myers Inn. He was born and raised in Ohio. He has been a resident of Worthington for many years. One of his retirement goals from AT&T was to spend time studying and learning about the Civil War.

Van has been active in three civil war organizations and is part of Worthington Presidential Round Table, a discussion group that meets on Monday mornings at the Griswold Center.

Still he has found time to research many other historical times and people. Our program chair, Roger Roberts, says he has over 70 different programs he can share. He presents to area history groups and senior centers on many historical people and events.

Once Again It Is Election Time

As a non profit organization, the Big Walnut Area Historical Society is run by volunteers who serve as Trustees and officers. Each year we elect 2 Officers, and 3 Trustees to run our organization. This year we will elect a Vice President as Mike Wise will be moving to President. Our Secretary and Treasurer still have a year to serve in their terms.

Trustees are elected in opposite years from the Officers and serve 3 years per term. Those with unexpired terms are Brad Orndorf, Dave Martin, Mel Myers and Porter Welch.

We are glad Chad Neeper was able to continue to serve on the Membership Committee when he had to resign as a Trustee last year.

We still need more Trustees if you are interested, stop by the Myers Inn Saturday or Sunday and let us know.

Election . . . Remember Victoria

By Polly Horn

While researching General Rosecrans, I went to Homer, Ohio, where I first heard of Victoria. Years later I was a guide at the State House and Rachel Edwards was portraying Victoria. Still more years passed and I went to Granville's Robin Hunter Museum where Marion Ackerman had led a team to restore-renoate it with its Victorian Clock Tower which features Victoria.

It was hard to believe someone this famous from our own backyard was never mentioned in my many history classes.

Although the Myers Inn Museum features local history from the Big Walnut School district, as the museum curator, I felt justified in putting a one page tribute to her in the Women's room in the museum.

One day our BWAHS Treasurer, Bill Kavage, wore a Woodhull t-shirt to the Myers Inn. Between guests we discussed our mutual fascination with her.

What better time to bring Victoria Woodhull to your attention. Kavage is sharing a brief history of this lady who ran for President!

Victoria Claflin Woodhull

The First Woman to Run for President

by *Bill Kavage*

Victoria Claflin Woodhull began her life on September 23, 1838 in Homer, Ohio, Licking County under the most trying, primitive and squalid circumstances.



She was the seventh child of Reuben Buckman "Buck" Claflin, Esq. and Roxanna "Roxy" Hummel Claflin and given the name of Victoria by her mother in honor of Queen Victoria, recently crowned in England. Her father was known to be a con artist, horse thief, arsonist, drug peddler, sexual predator, and responsible for a manslaughter charge brought against his daughter Tennessee, Victoria's younger sister and life long companion. Her mother was illiterate, had strong beliefs in spiritualism and made, by Buck, to earn money conducting spirit sessions telling fortunes and calling visions. This was an indication of things to come in the lives of the Claflin sisters.

There were eventually ten children born to the couple of which 6 survived to adulthood. In addition to her family Buck's twin brother with his wife and nine children moved into their home in Homer a community of 400. As an impoverished and by some accounts an abused child, Victoria survived with her siblings by begging the locals for food. An appealing five year old she lucked upon a kind soul in Rachel Scribner who nurtured her for a year before her passing. Upon Rachel's death, Victoria experienced a spiritual awakening which would become a lifelong belief. Victoria had only 3 years of education but by all accounts was extremely bright. Later Victoria claimed she was "a child without a childhood".

In 1849 events occurred that changed life in Homer suddenly. Buck insured and then burned down his dilapidated mill. He was run out of town and the family was left to fend for themselves. The Homer residents conducted a benefit for the family with the condition they move. They departed from Homer and soon relocated to Mt Gilead, Ohio and moved in with the Claflin's older daughter Margaret Ann.

Eventually Buck showed up with his next money making scheme, having become aware of the successful Fox sisters of New York practicing Spiritualism for the public. Soon 5-year - old Tennessee was telling fortunes

and predicting the future while Victoria was conducting trances, often becoming intense and erratic. Buck was cruel to the extreme, often abusing and starving his daughters to enhance their effect. In later years Victoria claimed Buck made her "**a woman before her time**".

These experiences undoubtably began a lifelong effort for Victoria to liberate women from their status as second class subservient individuals and with the right to control their own bodies. This became a defining mission for the rest of her life. Make no mistake that her methods were not always pure and ethical, but they were effective as we will see.

At age 14 and overcome with constant abuse Victoria became ill. A Dr. Canning Woodhull was brought in for treatment and Victoria seeing a way out of the grips of Buck and Roxy agreed to marry Woodhull at the age of 15. "**My marriage was an escape**". An escape it was not since the next several years were fraught with one misadventure or another including prostitution. An imbecile son, Byron, was born followed by public seances in the midwest, an acting stint in gold rush San Francisco where she met Helen Josephine Mansfield (a later ally), and a return to Chicago where daughter Zulu Maud nearly died from a botched delivery by a drunken Dr. Woodhull. Resolved to set out on her own she concluded "**Why should I any longer live with this man.**"

During the period 1860 to 1865 she joined Tennessee's successful Spiritualism sessions as a faith healer especially with women suffering from sexual perversion, poverty, and oppression, giving these women hope. Finally she divorced Dr. Woodhull in 1865 and left for St Louis where she met Col. James Harvey Blood. Together they resumed a Spiritualism and magnetic healing tour but now added their beliefs in a doctrine of free love, at odds with conventional religions. They were married in 1866 but divorced 2 years later after declaring their opposition to the confinement of marriage laws.

Victoria with Tennessee, now known as Tennie, left for New York City and soon after established a relationship with Annie Wood, the operator of the finest entertainment house in New York according to The Gentlemen Guide. When Josie Mansfield, the actress from California, came calling she was shepherded to the services of Annie Wood. Josie became a critical ingredient in the future financial success of the sisters.

Enter Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, a railroad baron, a believer in spiritualism and supernatural visions, but also well known to have an unsatiable sexual appetite. A meeting with Vanderbilt, arranged by recently arrived Buck, began a complicated relationship

with Victoria and Tennie. By 1868 Victoria was providing Vanderbilt with inside business information and making him lots of money. He did not question the source, spirit or other, of the information and began giving Victoria and Tennie a share of the profits - \$93,000 in late 1868. When asked how do you do it he replied "do as I do, consult the spirits". What was the source of this financial information? Enter Jim Fisk, robber baron, infatuated by Josie Mansfield whom he lavished with money, jewels, a house and shared his business secrets. Annie Wood had advised ladies to encourage their clients boasting and although Victoria always professed her source was spirits, common sense would point to Josie. Victoria claimed her actions were done to advance her purpose of a social revolution.

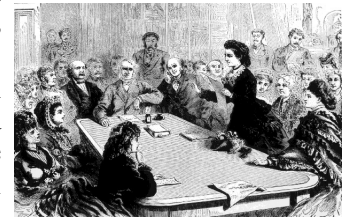
Black Friday - In spring of 1869 - \$100 worth of gold cost \$134 US greenbacks and had volatile speculation. Enter Fisk and Jay Gould with a plan to corner the gold market, drive up the price, and to control the government from selling gold from the treasury. They needed to bribe several officials in the Grant administration including the Treasury Secretary. Grant was "persuaded" to instruct Secretary George Boutwell in a secret letter not to sell gold. Sept. 18 Victoria in a "trance" advised Vanderbilt to buy gold. He invested his entire fortune (\$9,500,000) in gold at \$132. Fisk and Gould met in Josie's house and decide to push the price up to \$150 and advise their bribed officials to not sell treasury gold. That evening Victoria advises Vanderbilt to sell his stake at \$151 probably based on intel from Josie. Within a few days Sept. 24, 1869 Black Friday n Grant ordered Boutwell to sell gold and buy greenbacks. The price dropped to \$130. Vanderbilt made \$1.3 million and gave Victoria and Tennie half of the profits. Suddenly the sisters were wealthy. In todays dollars \$750,000 equals \$17 million and now plans for progress toward women's equality and freedom were underway. The fallout from the Black Friday crash were 25 suicides, Secretary of Treasury resigned, Julia Dent Grant was suspected of receiving \$25,000 but US Grant not found to be complicity involved.

February 5, 1870 the firm of Woodhull, Claflin and Co., a Wall Street Brokerage House was opened. It featured a rear entrance for women only and a front office for the exclusive male clients.

In 1870 Victoria met Benjamin Butler, a US Representative and a strong supporter of women's rights. This is the same Gen. "Beast" Butler from the civil war era in New Orleans. Now her campaign began to get the Judiciary

Committee in the House to pass a 16th amendment franchising the women's rights to vote. After attempts by Butler to get this started in the House it was tabled, the graveyard of the legislation.

May 14, 1870 they published Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly and Victoria under a "trance" generated articles concerning women's rights. This attracted the attention of Elizabeth C. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. In spite of Victoria's unorthodox views on free love, Stanton realized the need of a new evangel of womanhood and Victoria declared **"I am that evangel."** Their relationship would have many ups and downs over the next few years but for now they were working for common purpose.



On January 11, 1871, through the blessing and efforts of Benjamin Butler, Victoria presented The Memorial of Victoria C. Woodhull to the Judiciary Committee in the Congress. This the first time a female had spoken before congress.

Victoria presented the following arguments -

- #1 - the US Constitution used the word "persons not male or female", defining citizenship
- #2 - 14th amendment Section 1 granted citizenship to any person born or naturalized in the USA,
- #3 - 15th amendment "the right of citizens of any state to vote not abridged by the government".

This was reinforced by the women's right to vote in the state of Wyoming, passed on December 10, 1869

The efforts were for naught - with a 6-2 vote against suffrage. Note worthy, John Bingham, the chairman from Cadiz, Ohio, screamed to Victoria **"you are not a citizen, you are a woman"** just before her address.



Leaders of The New York sect of the women's rights organization, Isabella Beecher Hooker and Susan B Anthony sat in the audience completely taken by the personal magnetism of Victoria and the fact that the Committee was intently listening to the argument.

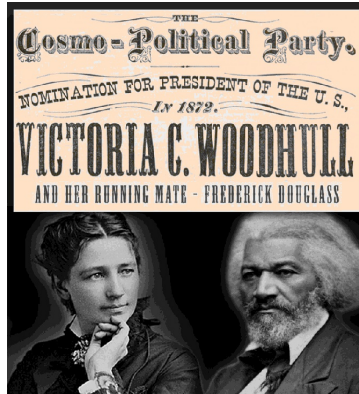
Later, Charles Sumner (senator from Mass.) informed Mrs. Hooker that 20 senators could not answer the arguments and that disenfranchisement means the same to you as me.



These event confirmed the relationship of this wing of the women's suffrage movement with Victoria as a prominent spokeswoman and leader.

After her announcement to run against US Grant's re-election, Victoria spent the next 18 months public speaking, at one point making public speeches for 150 straight days. She was nominated by the Equal Rights Party and chose Frederick Douglas as a VP running mate without his knowledge, approval, or acceptance.

Her platform issues were: Women's Suffrage and Equal Rights in all aspects of society, Labor Reform, Regulation of Monopolies, Nationalization of Railroads, 8 hour workday, Direct Taxation, Welfare for the poor, Free love -To Marry, Divorce, and Have Children without government interference, and to Abolish the Death Penalty.



Significantly but seemly ignored was that Victoria was only 34 years of age and not eligible to be president besides not able to vote.

At the time she was campaigning, Victoria was in a public battle with Henry Ward Beecher, the most prominent preacher of the day serving Plymouth Church in Brooklyn. Beecher was on a national campaign to protect and restore his name against the onslaught of multiple claims of adultery with wives of the members of his congregation. Victoria had become aware of his hypocrisy several years earlier and resented his campaign against her ideas of free love. In the November 2, 1872, 3 days before the election, Victoria published an expose of Beecher, accusing him of adultery. This caused a national scandal but also resulted in Victoria being arrested on obscenity charges and spent 6 months in jail, undoubtedly under primitive conditions. Suffragettes were treated harshly and unjust in the 1872 era judicial system. The trial exonerated her - "insufficient evidence of obscenity" but none the less destroyed Victoria's reputation and ultimately her campaign for women's rights. The next 4 years were a struggle for a place in the women's rights battle.

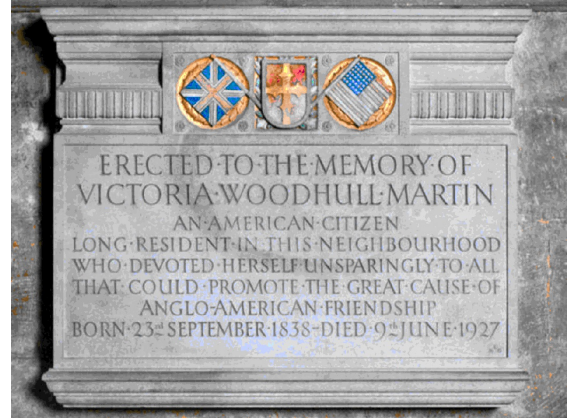
Financial woes followed and in 1876, with a \$100,000 payment from Vanderbilt's son William, under a blackmail threat from Victoria, the sisters emigrated to England.

At 38 Victoria had another 51 years and she used it

fully. She attempted 2 more runs for president in 1884 and 1892. She remarried to a wealthy Brit and became a well known philanthropist. Her only monument is in England. Her story is hardly complete or finished by this selective summary of several historians efforts.

... William Kavage

A Monument To Her In Great Britian



"Whoever I am, whatever I have done, belongs to the spirits." - Victoria Woodhull Martin
September 23, 1838 - June 9, 1927

Thanks For the History Lesson, Bill

Calendar of Events

Nov. 12 6 p.m. Trustees Meeting in Myers Inn
Nov. 12 7:30 p.m. BWAHS Program: "Life and Service of Bob Hope"
by Van Young

Myers Stagecoach Inn Museum and Gift Shop are Open
Saturdays 10 to 3
Sundays 12-4

To arrange a tour at another time or for a group, call 740-965-3582 and leave a message with your phone number

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