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A CONVERSATION WITH BOB TAFT

by David Weaver

On October 10, the Ohioana Library will celebrate its 85th anniversary and present the 2014 Ohioana Awards in a special event held at the Ohio Statehouse. We are honored that former Ohio Governor Bob Taft will join us as a special guest and to accept the Ohioana Book Award on behalf of presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin. Her latest book, *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism*, is this year's winner in the About Ohio category. I spoke with Governor Taft recently about Ohioana, Goodwin's book, and the remarkable legacy of his great grandfather, William Howard Taft.

DW: Governor Taft, let me first of all thank you. You and Hope have been great friends and supporters of the Ohioana Library for many years. We're delighted that you can join us for the Ohioana Awards and to celebrate the 85th anniversary of Ohioana's founding by one of Hope's predecessors as First Lady—Martha Kinney Cooper.

BT: Thanks, David. The Ohioana Library has always had a special significance for Hope and me—as a place that helps create an Ohio identity by highlighting and preserving the works of Ohio authors.

DW: Governor, Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft made a great team in that historic period we know as the Progressive Era that Doris Kearns Goodwin writes about in *The Bully Pulpit*. They were very different men in style, temperament, and personality. Do you think those differences explain why they became such great friends and allies and then, later on, such determined foes?

BT: Their friendship had been formed in their earlier years together in Washington. Taft and Roosevelt were both progressives, advocates for civil service reform and efforts to break up business monopolies. Their personalities were complementary—Roosevelt an energetic talker and Taft a good listener. TR was a natural political

The Director's Chair

Dear Friends,

Eighty-five years—and counting. On October 5, 1929, Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper convened a meeting of thirteen leaders from across the state to set up an organization that would solicit the donation of books by Ohio authors and on Ohio subjects for the library at the Governor's Mansion. By the end of that meeting, a board of trustees had been formed, a list of objectives adopted, and a director chosen. The Ohioana Library Association was born, embarking on a remarkable journey that continues today.

On October 10, we will celebrate our 85th anniversary with two events. First, our annual meeting will be held at the State Library of Ohio at 2 p.m. At 6 p.m., we move to the beautiful Museum Gallery of the Ohio Statehouse for the 2014 Ohioana Awards. We are honored that former Governor Bob Taft will be among our special guests. With our award-winning authors, wonderful hors d'oeuvres, and Ohio wines, it promises to be a memorable night.

leader, bold and self-assured. But he needed someone like Taft, who was steadier and worked well with others, to help put his policies into effect and troubleshoot problems that would arise, whether in Panama, Cuba, or elsewhere.

Of course their friendship ended with the election of 1912. Roosevelt was unhappy out of office and felt Taft was not carrying on a number of his policies. Taft felt betrayed when his former friend ran against him and, as a former judge, was shocked by Roosevelt's more radical proposals, such as submitting judicial decisions to public referendum.

DW: Stephen Colbert interviewed Doris Kearns Goodwin recently, and she said that while both Roosevelt and Taft were Republicans, today they would undoubtedly be called RINOs by many in their party. I had to chuckle, because I know that's a label you found yourself tagged with several times! In this age of cable television, talk radio, and social media, how do you think Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft would fare today as candidates for political office?

BT: I think Goodwin is right, although the election of 1912 pushed Roosevelt to the left and Taft to the right. As Goodwin points out, TR was a master in dealing with the media; I think he would still be able to dominate the debate if he were governing today because he was such a dynamic, fascinating personality. My great grandfather would not do so well. He was thoughtful about issues, but not politically very astute. I don't think he could have mastered the

art of the sound bite or the kind of concise, direct talk required by electronic media.

DW: In 1921, President Taft realized his greatest ambition when President Harding appointed him as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a role in which he would serve until a month before his death in 1930. No man before or since has held both our nation's highest executive and judicial posts. *The Bully Pulpit* is the fourth book about William Howard Taft to win an Ohioana Award—no other Ohio political leader has been written about as much. What would you say is his greatest legacy?

BT: Taft was miserable as president. He said, "Politics, when I am in it, makes me sick." He had a passion for the law and his only aspiration was to serve as Chief Justice. It was in that role that he made his greatest contribution. He streamlined the administration of justice and eliminated the court's backlog. Working collaboratively with other members of the court, he sought consensus among the justices wherever possible. One of his great legacies is the stately and historic building that is home to the U.S. Supreme Court today. He conceived of the need for a separate building for a separate branch of government, won approval from the Congress, and was active in its design. Unfortunately, he died before the building was completed.

DW: Finally, Governor, since leaving office in 2007 you have taught education and government at the University of Dayton. Do you find that young people are interested in the Progressive Era—and why do you think it is

Through its collection, publications, awards, and events, Ohioana has truly become, in the words of Cleveland playwright Jerome Lawrence, "the literary Fort Knox of our state." But we are not simply resting on our laurels. October will also see the debut of the newly redesigned *Ohioana Quarterly*. And next spring, we will move the Ohioana Book Festival, our largest and most popular event, to the heart of downtown Columbus.

We're proud of Ohioana's past. We're excited about its future. And we thank all of you who have helped to make this possible. Here's to the NEXT 85 years!

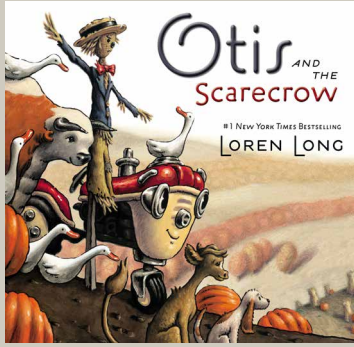
David E. Weaver
Executive Director

important that we continue to study this period of American history?

BT: It's unfortunate that few young people today have a deep interest in the Progressive Era. It was a time of excitement and reform in local, state, and national governments. It was the beginning of the end for smoke-filled rooms and corrupt city bosses. The people won the right to directly elect U.S. senators and initiate laws and amendments to their state constitutions. Fresh breezes were blowing through the corridors of power, and government became more responsive to the concerns of average workers and families. Finally, that era reminds us that with strong leadership, change for the better is possible.

DW: Thank you again, Governor Taft, for taking time to talk with me. We look forward to seeing you at the Ohio Statehouse on October 10.

REVIEWS



Long, Loren. *Otis and the Scarecrow*. Philomel Books (New York, NY) 2014. HC \$17.99.

When a scarecrow is added to the farm where Otis the tractor lives, Otis and the farm animals are excited about making a new friend. When they greet him, however, he just stares at the cornfield with a frown on his face. So they leave him alone, and weeks pass. One rainy autumn day, however, when he and the animals are snuggled together under a tree, Otis can't stop thinking about the solitary figure in the cornfield...

Long's illustrations, done largely in earth tones with pops of fall color, perfectly evoke rural autumn days and the playful antics of the farm animals. Although the scarecrow's reaction at the end of the rainy day is unclear, this story does a wonderful job of showing how one small act of kindness can grow.

Reviewed by Stephanie Michaels

NEW BOOKS

The following books arrived at the Ohioana Library in August. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

Nonfiction

Dehan, Amy Miller. *Cincinnati Silver 1788-1940*. Cincinnati Art Museum & D Giles Limited (London, England) 2014. HC \$100.00.

The Cincinnati Art Museum holds more than 400 pieces of silver that were designed and created in the Queen City. This comprehensive and lavishly illustrated book documents the history of the silver trade in Cincinnati, from its birth just one year after the city's founding through the Arts and Crafts and Art Deco periods. More than 250 color plates, 200 hallmarks, numerous archival images, and thorough appendices make this a resource for silver enthusiasts, scholars, and admirers of the decorative arts alike.

Fox, Jon Hartley. *King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records*.

Univ. of Illinois Press (Urbana, IL) 2014. PB \$25.00.

This is the first comprehensive history of Cincinnati's King Records, an influential independent record label that released music by artists ranging from legendary banjo player Grandpa Jones to a young James Brown.

Polley, Eva Louise. *African American Life in Franklin, Ohio*. Penmor Lithographers (Lewiston, ME) 2014. PB \$15.00.

A combination of genealogy and local history, this book focuses on African American families living in Franklin, Ohio from the 1860s to the present. Poley provides information about family histories, local businesses, and military service as well as numerous anecdotes and photographs depicting daily life.

Rotuno-Johnson, Michelle. *The Marion Popcorn Festival: A Fun-Filled History*. American Palate (Charlotte, NC) 2014. PB \$19.99. In 1980, a group of Marion business owners met at a local restaurant to discuss ideas for bringing excitement to the community

after a decade of job loss. Because the city was home to the world's largest popcorn exporter at the time, the Marion Popcorn Festival was born. Rotuno-Johnson documents the festival's growth from that first year to an annual event that attracts more than 200,000 people for a weekend of parades, pageants, concerts, sports, and—of course—popcorn.

Smith, Joanne Huist. *The 13th Gift: A True Story of a Christmas Miracle*. Harmony Books (New York, NY) 2014. PB \$15.00.

As the holiday season approached, Joanne Huist Smith and her three children were still grieving the unexpected death of her husband. But thirteen days before Christmas, daily gifts began to arrive, signed "Your true friends." In this book Smith shares her family's experience with the healing power of kindness.

Zanon, Scott A. *Landscaping with Trees in the Midwest: A Guide for Residential and Commercial Properties*. Swallow Press (Athens, OH) 2014. PB \$26.95.

Author Zanon provides information about 65 targeted tree species to help both landscape professionals and homeowners choose the right tree for the right location and conditions. More than 325 color photographs illustrate the appearance of each tree throughout the year.

Fiction

Davis, Ed. *The Psalms of Israel Jones*. Vandalia Press (Morgantown, WV) 2014. PB \$16.99.

Aging rock star Israel Jones has begun to act unstable onstage, inciting his fans to violence. When Israel's son, Reverend Thomas Johnson, hears of the trouble, he joins the concert tour to see for himself. The journey gives him one last chance to reconnect with the father who abandoned him—and possibly his wife, his congregation, and God as well.

Harper, Karen. *Shattered Secrets: A Cold Creek Novel*. Harlequin Mira (Ontario, Canada) 2014. PB \$7.99. When Tess Lockwood inherits the family home and returns to Cold Creek, Ohio, she has no intention of awakening the suppressed memories of her childhood abduction. When another child goes missing, however, Tess is certain it's related to her return. Tess and Sheriff Gabe McCord will have to work together to unlock Tess's memories, save the missing child, and possibly unlock their hearts as well.

Resnick, Mike. *The Fortress in Orion: Dead Enders Book One*. Pyr Books (Amherst, NY) 2014. PB \$18.00.

Colonel Nathan Pretorius, a hero in the Democracy's war against the alien Traanskei Coalition, is about to get the riskiest mission of his life.

The Democracy has managed to create the perfect spy by cloning the enemy's master strategist. Pretorius and his team must infiltrate enemy territory, replace the real strategist with the clone, and—hopefully—escape with their lives. Resnick returns to the "Birthright" universe with this first book in a series about Pretorius and his team—the Dead Enders.

Umrigar, Thrity. *The Story Hour: A Novel*. HarperCollins (New York, NY) 2014. HC \$25.99.

As a psychologist, Maggie maintains a professional distance from most of her patients. But when she agrees to treat a young Indian woman who tried to kill herself, she quickly realizes that what Lakshmi needs is a friend. As these two very different women grow close, secrets are revealed that test their friendship and explore the nature of forgiveness.

Middle Grade & Children's

Anderson, Tanya. *Tillie Pierce: Teen Eyewitness to the Battle of Gettysburg*. Twenty-First Century Books (Minneapolis, MN) 2013. HC \$34.60.

In 1863, fifteen-year-old Tillie Pierce lived in the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This book does not focus on the story of the bloodiest battle of the Civil War, but instead shares Tillie's experiences in her own words as she and other townspeople tend to the wounded and deal with the battle and its aftermath.

Lewis, J. Patrick. *M Is for Monster: A Fantastic Creatures Alphabet*. Sleeping Bear Press (Ann Arbor, MI) 2014. HC \$16.99.

This book by former Children's Poet Laureate Lewis includes an

alphabetical list of monsters from many cultures. Each creature is described with a short verse as well as a few paragraphs about its origin and history. Gerald Kelley's illustrations range from humorous to truly creepy.

Mosham, Lisa. *Around the Sun We Go*. Learning Moon Books (Stow, OH) 2014. PB \$10.00.

Simple text and colorful photographs describe the sun's journey across the sky.

Salamon, Julie. *Cat in the City*. Dial Books for Young Readers (New York, NY) 2014. HC \$16.99.

Independence can be lonely, so when a disheveled white cat meets a pack of dogs in New York City's Washington Square Park, he follows them home. The cat is renamed Pretty Boy, and as his circle of friends expands, his tale becomes the story of an entire neighborhood.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration*. Nancy Paulsen Books (New York, NY) 2013. HC \$16.99.

This fictional story follows one family that was part of the Great Migration, when more than six million African Americans moved north in search of a better life between the early 1900s and 1970. The titular rope, initially found under a tree in South Carolina, becomes an integral part of the family's story as it secures their belongings during the move to New York City, initiates a game of jump rope in a new neighborhood, holds up a family reunion sign, and eventually makes its way back to the little girl who found it, now a grandmother.

COMING SOON

Ohioana Book Awards October 10, 2014 at the Ohio Statehouse Museum Gallery, Columbus (6-9 p.m.) Celebrate Ohio literature with Ohioana as we recognize the 2014 Book Award winners. The evening will include award presentations, a round-table discussion, and book signings as well as hors d'oeuvres and Ohio wine. Tickets are \$40 per person. To order, call the library at 614.466.3831 or visit <http://ohioanalibrary.mybigcommerce.com/2014-ohioana-awards-ticket/>.

Books by the Banks October 11, 2014 at the Duke Energy Convention Center, Cincinnati (10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) This year's festival features 130 authors; publishing sessions; and an expanded Kids' Corner with book characters, story times, and other fun activities. For more information, see below or visit www.booksbythebanks.org.

Cincinnati USA Book Festival

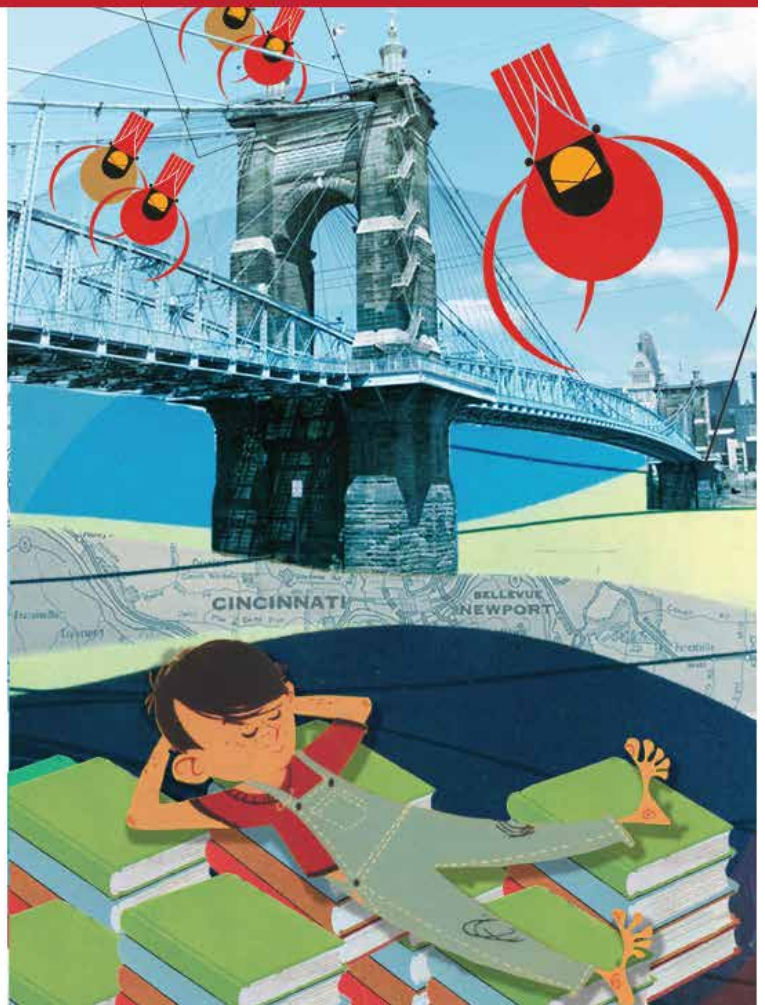


Saturday, October 11
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

DUKE ENERGY CONVENTION CENTER
5th & Elm | Downtown Cincinnati

FREE ADMISSION

Meet 130+ authors
Attend panel discussions
Enjoy the expanded Kids' Corner
and new Teen Area



www.BooksbytheBanks.org