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INTRODUCTION

Ohio Historical Markers identify, commemorate, and honor the important people, places, and events that have contributed to the state's rich history. The Ohio Historical Markers Program, administered by the Ohio Historical Society, is a vital educational tool, informing residents and visitors about significant aspects of Ohio's past.

The Ohio Historical Society sets marker standards and procedures to ensure that the subjects of Ohio Historical Markers are historically significant and that the information included on the markers is historically accurate. State historical markers stand as a valuable and important means of presenting Ohio history to the public, and they encourage community interest in state and local history. In addition, appropriate marker dedication ceremonies publicly celebrate Ohio's past and help to promote the preservation of the state's cultural, natural, and physical history.

The Ohio Historical Marker is a registered trademark of the Ohio Historical Society and no one may use the name or design of an Ohio Historical Marker without the consent of the Ohio Historical Society. The copyright on the text of Ohio Historical Markers is owned by the Ohio Historical Society and no one may copy the text of an Ohio Historical Marker without the consent of the Ohio Historical Society.

CRITERIA

Individuals, public agencies, or private organizations are encouraged to nominate historic properties, persons, and events of significance on a local, state or national level for the Ohio Historical Markers Program. In some instances, the Ohio Historical Society will work with sponsors to broaden the scope of local history topics to address state and/or national significance.

Nominations should address at least one important aspect of Ohio's historical, natural, or physical development in one of the following areas: history, architecture, culture, archaeology, ethnic associations, natural history, and folklore.

All marker subjects must meet at least one of the following criteria of significance in order to be eligible for an official site marker. They must:

- ◆ Be associated with events that date back at least 25 years that have made a significant contribution, to broad patterns of history. The 25-year requirement may be waived for topics of overwhelming state or national significance. Please contact the Local History Office to check if your topic is eligible.
- ◆ Be associated with persons deceased at least 10 years who have made significant contributions to patterns of history and culture. The 10-year requirement may be waived for persons of overwhelming state or national significance. Please contact the Local History Office to discuss the eligibility of an individual to receive an Ohio Historical Marker.
- ◆ Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, style, period, method of construction, architecture, or represent the work of a master.
- ◆ Yield, or be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- ◆ Be associated with ethnic groups who have made distinctive and significant contributions to history.
- ◆ Embody characteristics of the state representing significant aspects of the physical or natural history of the earth and its life.
- ◆ Represent popular stories or myths that, although not verifiable, are significant to history and culture.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

The Ohio Historical Society administers the Ohio Historical Markers Program. The Historical Markers Coordinator manages and oversees applications to the program. Applications are required for all official Ohio Historical Markers.

The sponsor or applicant is responsible for costs related to the markers and all required research.

The Ohio Historical Society reviews and approves applications for markers that meet the program requirements.

Marker requests will not be approved when it is impossible to authenticate or verify information included in the marker application to the satisfaction of the Ohio Historical Society.

RESEARCHING THE SUBJECT

Once you choose an appropriate subject based on the Criteria of Significance listed above, you should begin to research the marker subject. A thoroughly researched subject will result in a well-documented, comprehensive text, as well as an approvable marker application. The burden of proof for all historical claims rests with the applicant.

Marker subjects should be approached with the following questions in mind as they relate to the individual marker.

- ◆ Who was associated with the subject? Include their names, birth and death dates, chronology of the important events in their lives, and their significant contributions.
- ◆ When did the event occur? What is the subject's time span of significance?
- ◆ How did the historical event develop? What influence did the marker subject or event have on the country, state, or local community?
- ◆ Why is the marker subject important to the community or state? Why is it special, unusual, or significant?
- ◆ Are all statements of fact and dates documented with footnotes and supported by at least one primary source? *See # 10 Suggested Marker Text for definition and examples of primary sources.*
- ◆ Have words like "first," "oldest," "unique," or "only" been avoided unless there is irrefutable documentation?

Local libraries, historical societies, and newspapers are excellent sources for information, in addition to the Ohio Historical Society's Archives/Library (<http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/archlib/>).

APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS

The following are step-by-step instructions for completing the Historical Markers Application Form:

1. Title of Marker

The title of the marker should be about the historic property, person, site, or event. The name appearing in this section should be the marker subject's historic name (i.e., the name/title that will be shown on the marker).

2. Classification

The classification of site, property, or place to be marked indicates both the ownership of the property and the marker subject category.

3. Location

The original or actual site of the subject being marked is the preferred location for an Ohio Historical Marker. However, if this site is not accessible to vehicle or pedestrian traffic and/or poses safety concerns, a suitable alternative location should be suggested. As Ohio Historical Markers are not designed to be read from moving vehicles, the Ohio Historical Society suggests that markers are not placed on highways unless an appropriate vehicle pull-off or parking lot exists in close proximity to the marker.

The location of the proposed marker should show exactly where the marker would be placed. The description of the proposed marker's geographic location should include the name of the property, if known. The address of the location must be exact, including the number and street, city or village, and county. For rural property, include the nearest rural roads, section, township, and county. A photocopied, marked map and labeled photographs should also be included.

4. Owner of Property

This is the person or agency that has the legal title to the property upon which the marker is to be erected. The information should include the owner's name, street, state, zip code, and telephone number. A signature of the individual property owner or a representative of the agency that owns the property is required. In addition, when a marker is to be placed on private property, the owner must provide written permission to attach to the marker application.

5. Type of Marker

The marker can either have the same text on each side or have different text on each side. Please check the appropriate listing. Custom artwork can be accommodated but will increase both the marker's cost and time for production. Ohio Historical Markers are 45 inches wide and 42 inches tall.

6. Funding Sponsor of the Marker

The cost and installation of the marker are the sole responsibility of the applicant or sponsor.

7. Maintenance of the Marker

It is the responsibility of the funding sponsor to maintain and keep the marker in good repair. This includes mowing, keeping area around marker clear of debris, retouching paint as necessary, and notifying the Ohio Historical Society if the marker is damaged or needs to be repaired or replaced. You must designate who will be responsible for long-term maintenance of the marker and include the name, address, and telephone number of the responsible person or agency.

8. Shipping Address

The shipping address is required for the foundry to ship the completed marker. Since shipping regulations restrict trucks in residential neighborhoods, a commercial address of an office or shop that is open during regular business hours is required.

9. Statement of Significance

The statement of significance is the most important section of the historical marker application. In this section, you state why the marker subject is significant to Ohio's history and document the subject's importance on a national, state, or local level.

The information in the statement of significance should be as specific as possible and relate directly to the marker subject. In general, you should research the marker subject and write a narrative history answering, as applicable, the following questions:

- ◆ Who was associated with the marker subject?
- ◆ What significant events occurred at the proposed site?
- ◆ When did the marker subject occur?
- ◆ Where did the marker subject occur?
- ◆ Why is the marker subject important or significant?

The statement of significance must be fully documented and footnoted. When appropriate, photocopies of cited passages found in documents listed in the bibliography should be attached to the application form. Photographs that document the marker subject should also be included with the application. Supporting materials become a permanent part of the marker file. Do not submit original documents or photographs.

10. Suggested Marker Text

The suggested marker text is the inscription as it might appear on the proposed marker. You should draft a preliminary marker text, keeping in mind that it should be concise, accurate, and compelling. In general, text information should be confined to factual information answering questions of who, what, where, and when. **Any statements of fact must be supported by at least one primary source.** The Ohio Historical Society defines primary sources as a source created by people who actually saw or participated in an event and recorded that event or their reactions to it immediately after the event. In comparison, secondary sources, including textbooks and county histories, synthesize and interpret primary materials. Examples of primary sources to look for while researching your subject are manuscripts, photographs, maps, artifacts, diaries, audio and video recordings, oral histories, postcards, census records, and newspaper articles. If the marker application is approved, you and the Historical Markers Coordinator will work together on the text until a final version is reached. The number of words on a marker is limited by the size of the lettering. Most texts are approximately 65-120 words in length per side.

11. Annotated Bibliography

The annotated bibliography should include the most important sources used for developing and documenting the history of the marker subject. You should include a full citation for each reference, specifying author's name, title of publication, publisher, place of publication, and date. A brief annotation of one to two sentences for each source should include a summary and evaluation of the source and description of how it was used to support information in the statement of significance and/or marker text. Consider these questions when preparing an annotation:

- ◆ What type of reference is it?
- ◆ Is the source very specific or a broad overview?
- ◆ How did this source help you understand the subject being marked?

Here is an example of an annotated source:

“Eddie Rickenbacker Army Expeditionary Force Identity Card.” Ohio Memory. National Museum of the United States Air Force. 23 December 2005 <<http://www.ohiomemory.com>>.

This card, issued during World War I, identifies Eddie Rickenbacker’s rank in the Army Expeditionary Force and includes his signature and photograph. This document helped to confirm Rickenbacker’s military service and was used to compare his signature with other documents associated with him.

12. Application Submitted By

If you are submitting the form as an agent for a sponsoring organization, you should also include the organizations name, address, and telephone number. Finally, you must sign and date the form.

AFTER THE SUBMISSION

After a completed Ohio Historical Markers Application Form has been submitted to the Ohio Historical Society, you will be notified of its receipt. Next, the Historical Markers Coordinator will review the marker application. Experts in the field relating to the marker subject may be consulted in order to determine the subject's eligibility for the Historical Markers Program. Additional information may be requested during this review process.

The Ohio Historical Markers Advisory Panel reviews the marker application and recommends approval or disapproval. The board will meet twice a year in April and October. The staff at the Local History Office will notify you within two weeks of their decision.

If the Ohio Historical Society approves the application, you and the Local History Office will work together to draft the final marker text for inscription on the marker.

When the final version of the marker text is agreed upon and payment by the applicant or sponsor has been received, the historical marker will be ordered from the foundry. Delivery time is usually from six to eight weeks. The process from the approval of the application by the Advisory Panel to the marker arriving at its location usually takes three months. After being notified of the shipping date, sponsors should identify a date for a dedication ceremony. Sponsors receive details on planning dedication ceremonies after the text is approved.

After the marker has been received, the sponsor is responsible for mounting and landscaping the marker. Once installed, the sponsor must also maintain the marker. This includes correcting any damage to the marker and refurbishing it when necessary. If new information is found that disproves information presented on a marker, the Ohio Historical Society may require that a marker be corrected, removed, or replaced. If a request of the Ohio Historical Society is not complied with, the Society may withdraw its consent to use its trademark and name and may remove the marker.

All material submitted for Ohio Historical Markers becomes part of the Ohio Historical Society’s archival record. Approved markers become part of a database maintained by the Ohio Historical Society and are featured on the website *Remarkable Ohio* (www.remarkableohio.com).

RESTRICTIONS

Official Ohio Historical Markers may not be used to mark sites other than those approved by the Ohio Historical Society. Markers may not include the name of the current owner of the property where the marker is erected, nor may they include the name of any living person. Personal acknowledgments, dedications, and similar memorials are not included in marker texts.

All markers must be accessible to the general public at all reasonable times and be placed in locations that do not create potential safety hazards.

As a condition of the use of its registered trademark and trade name, the Ohio Historical Society retains the right to require the removal of any marker that does not meet the requirements of the Ohio Historical Markers program.

CONCLUSION

The Ohio Historical Society appreciates your interest in the Ohio Historical Marker program. We are interested in working with you to identify and erect appropriate historical markers. If you have any questions regarding these guidelines or about any aspect of the marker application process, please contact us at:

Ohio Historical Markers Program Coordinator
Local History Office, Ohio Historical Society
1982 Velma Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43211
(614) 297-2340 or 800-858-6878
FAX (614) 297-2340
bsuch@ohiohistory.org