

BUTLER COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

The Benninghofen NEWSLETTER

327 NORTH SECOND STREET • HAMILTON, OHIO 45011 • 513.896.9930

January 2022
Issue No. 2022-1

Annual Meeting



The Butler County Historical Society's Annual Meeting was held on November 18th. The dinner was enjoyed by over 50 members, who were able to gather together in the Emma Ritchie Auditorium. A short business meeting was held which included the election of new board members, the year in review, and a look ahead to next year.

Special recognition was given to Rick Fornshell as he was named the BCHS 2021 Volunteer of the Year. Rick (above, right) has been a dedicated volunteer at the Soldiers, Sailors, and Pioneers Monument since November 2019. He has dedicated his time to completing an exhaustive inventory of artifacts at the Monument. He has an attention to detail, and a love of history. Thank you to Rick for all his hard work in helping keep and teach our history. The program this year was a much enjoyed Liars Club. The featured "liars" were Greg Young, Joanne Williamson, Rick Fornshell, and Ed Creighton who amusingly tried to mislead the crowd as to what various items from our collection were really used for. We would like to thank Board President, Greg Young, for the wonderful job of leading the meeting. We would also like to thank all those who could not attend in person, but helped support the night with their generous donations

The Butler County Historical Society Winter Hours
Monday - Friday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

General Inquiries: info@bchistoricalsociety.com
Kathy Creighton, Executive Director: kathy@bchistoricalsociety.com
Christina Beckett, Admin. Assitant: christina@bchistoricalsociety.com

General Monument Inquiries: monument@bchistoricalsociety.com
Butch Frederick, Monument Curator: butch@bchistoricalsociety.com

Board Members for 2022

The 2022 BCBS Board welcomes 4 new members this year. Janet Sohngen, Nancy Follmer, Rich Piland, and Brian Smith will be joining the board. Returning trustees for the 2022 year are: Liesl Bauer, Linda Benninghofen, Valerie Elliott, Doug Fraits, Kelsey Stryffe, and Joanne Williamson. The executive board remains the same with President Greg Young, Vice President Sara Butler, Treasurer Ted Hunter, and Secretary Chris Carroll. We would like to thank members who are leaving the board this year: Josh Braun, Patty Fawns, Gayle Niehaus, and Katie Wright, for their dedicated service to the BCBS.



Nancy Follmer



Rich Piland

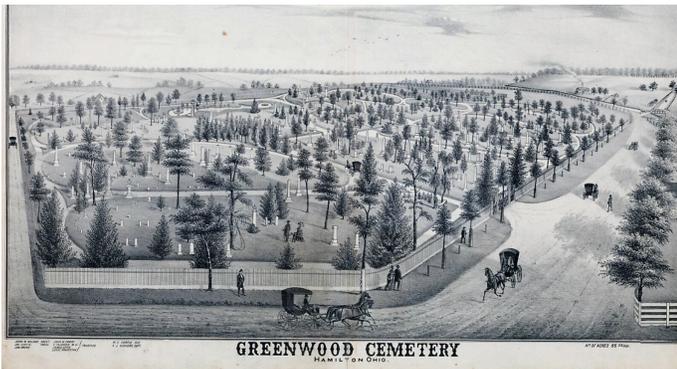


Janet Sohngen



Brian Smith

Civil War Tour



Walking With History LLC is hosting a walking tour in Greenwood Cemetery on May 28th at 10:00am. The tour will feature discussions on Civil War Veterans buried in the cemetery. The tour is free, however all donations will be given to the Butler County Historical Society. The tour is about 2 hours long. Please meet at the GAR monument at 9:45 am. The walk will cover about one mile, so wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather. The tour will be at an easy pace, with plenty of stops. You might consider bringing a portable chair to use at each stop.

Quilt Exhibit



The BCBS will be hosting a quilt exhibit this spring. The exhibit will open to the public on May 2nd, with a Members Only sneak peak at the April 28th speaker event. Quilts from the extensive collection here at the Historical Society will be on display. Come enjoy the history and craftsmanship of these beautiful quilts.

Members Only Events

Thursday February 24th 7:00 PM

“Custom Made: Dressmakers and Tailors 1820-1920”

Lead by Dr. Sara Butler this topic will cover designers and makers of clothing with many local recognitions.



Thursday March 24th 7:00 PM

“1913 Flood - Firsthand Accounts”

Executive Director Kathy Creighton will read firsthand accounts of those who lived through the devastation of the 1913 Flood.

Thursday April 28th 7:00 PM

“Quilted Treasures: Stories in the Stitches”

BCHS Member and Volunteer Mary Royer will lead a discussion featuring the many quilts in our collection.



Mother and Me Tea

Join us on April 30 for our Mother and Me Tea at the Benninghofen House. Dressed in your finest tea party attire you will learn Victorian Era etiquette, and the language of the fan. An assortment of teas and sweets will be served and each participant will get their own fan to take home. Tickets available by calling or stopping by the Butler County Historical Society.

Ticket Prices:

Adults \$25 Members \$20

Children Ages 4-18 \$10

Tea Times:

10:00am - 11:30am

1:00pm - 2:30pm



2021 Annual Report

When 2021 started, we had no idea what would happen with Covid-19 still threatening. Do we plan for virtual or live events? Will we be able to be open for tours and research?

The decision was made to proceed with normal programming but adapted for both virtual and live presentations. With this in mind, we resumed our popular "Members Only" events and offered six programs with both virtual and live options. Topics included: the Spanish Flu; George W. White; the history of various annual holidays; the 19th Amendment; Decoration/Memorial Day postcard presentation; and Victorian funeral traditions.

Changing exhibits continued to be part of our programming. Two large exhibits, Summer Fun in Butler County and Funeral and 1800s Medical Practices were featured in the Benninghofen House. Two art exhibits featuring George W. White and Robert McCloskey were located in the Emma Ritchie Auditorium. Following the George W. White exhibit, three paintings were sent to Wiebold's in Cincinnati for restoration work. The paintings are due back in early 2022.

Attendance was down for the multi-generational programs. There were several contributing factors besides Covid-19. The weather was a problem, with extreme heat for one program and heavy rain for another. A 5-K race through German Village that closed the roads didn't help a third program! Those that did attend had a great time.

In August, we invited teachers from throughout the county to an open house at BCHS. We suggested topics and programs that could be presented to their students through the Speaker's Bureau, along with showing them the opportunities for field trips. As a result, our school outreach programming expanded. Programs were presented to the Lakota, Ross and Talawanda School districts, along with numerous homeschooling groups. Popular topics were Native Americans of the Miami Valley and What is it and How Does it Work?

The Speaker's Bureau resumed on a live basis in the fall, with Westover and the Waterford Retirement facilities. Several programs were also presented at Miami Hamilton Downtown and several civic and social organizations.

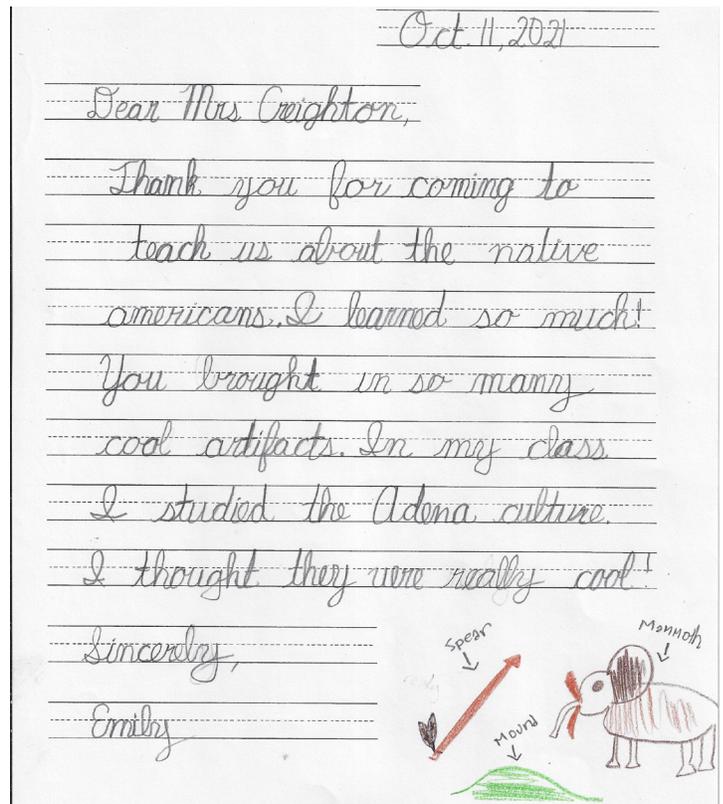
Several special events were held. An arbor was installed and dedicated in honor of Master Gardener Karen Kessler and her husband, Mel, for all of their dedication and service to BCHS.

The Butler County Fair resumed, and we had over 2000 people stop by the booth to learn

about our mystery items. The Hamilton Joes Baseball Team held BCHS Night at a game which was a lot of fun. We finished out the year with two ghost hunts, which continued to be very popular.

Work continued on the restoration of the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Flag project and the development of a special exhibit to welcome the flag home. The flag should be finished by mid to late summer 2022.

Speaking of the military, BCHS undertook a major project to document all veterans from Butler County. Once completed, the list will be available at a special kiosk at the Soldiers, Sailors and Pioneers Monument, as well as on line. As the close of 2021, research on WW I was completed. The War of 1812, Korean and Spanish American Wars were close to being done. WW II, Vietnam and conflicts since Vietnam are underway and will hopefully be completed in 2022. Through our research, we have discovered that the listing of the veterans on the Monument walls are incomplete and work has begun on updating the names of Revolutionary War, Mexican-American and Civil War veterans. As part of



the research for the 35th OVI exhibit, that Civil War unit has been completed.

2021 was a year for maintenance problems. We replaced the heating and air conditioning unit for the basement of the auditorium, as well as the units for the Benninghofen House. The auditorium also got a new roof, and an animal barrier was installed under the corner of the Benninghofen House that had become home to neighborhood skunks, raccoons and opossums.

The Annual Dinner meeting was held in the Emma Ritchie Auditorium in November after last minute Covid restrictions required a change in venue. Rick Fornshell was honored as Volunteer of the Year. The program was a rousing game of Liar's Club Round 3.



The Christmas Walk was held, but changed to an outside only event. We still hosted Santa Claus, but he was located on the front porch. Crowd estimates were over 1000 people for the event.

Two grants were received during the year. The one from the Michael J. Colligan History Project paid for half of the flag restoration project, and the W.E. Smith Family Trust provided shelving for the garage, upgraded computer equipment and programming expenses.

We continued to staff the Soldiers, Sailors and Pioneers Monument and attendance figures were steady throughout the year. A Vietnam exhibit was opened.

The BCHS would like to extend a big thank you to all of our volunteers. We have a wonderful group that comes in on a regular basis to help with day to day tasks such as research, putting up displays, giving tours, sorting the files, and much more. We couldn't be as successful without their generosity of time. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please reach out!

Negotiations to assume the operation of Heritage Hall progressed through the year, with BCHS assuming responsibility effective January 1, 2022. Heritage Hall was open on a limited basis but did have two very successful projects. In May, in cooperation with the Lane Public Library and BCHS, they participated in the two day Make Way for McCloskey Walk where participation exceeded expectations. They also produced a Robert McCloskey Coloring Book.

Despite another pandemic year, the BCHS was able to continue with popular programming for the community and maintain a regular schedule of research, Benninghofen House maintenance, and daily historical society responsibilities.



Have a new phone number?
Want to be on our email list?
Recently moved?
Now is the time to update your contact information with the BCHS. Please contact Christina to change or add any information. Call 513-896-9930 or email: christina@bchistorysociety.com

Butler County Historical Society
327 North Second Street
Hamilton, OH 45011

Vintage Valentines now on display at the BCHS



For the One I Love

During the Victorian era, the valentine evolved from a handmade card, to a ready-made, elaborately decorated card purchased from a printer or stationer. 'Valentine Writer' books contained poems and verses that could be hand written onto the plain valentine for a special touch. Ornamental, lacy, embossed valentines were popular from 1850 - 1915. Printed verses and trimmings such as ribbons, fringe and fabric added embellishments so favored in Victorian times. The pulldown valentine (pictured) consisted of three layers and created a three-dimensional effect which surely charmed the recipient. Honeycomb paper added further dimension to the pulldown valentines of the early 20th century and these cleverly designed cards were aimed at children rather than grownups. The postcard craze of the late 1800s - early 1900s inspired a fad for valentine postcards. They were mass produced and affordable for the average person to send messages of love and affection. Although styles have changed, romance and affection continue and valentine cards are a perfect way to express fondness and romance.