



Telling the story of the Belgian Settlement in Wisconsin and working to preserve unique elements of Belgian culture

www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

February 2022

BHC Season Opening

Pre-Arranged Tours – Starting May 1
Call 920-493-5969 for information

Open Weekends - Starting May 27

2022 Events - Tentative Schedule

24
APR

Waffle Breakfast

26
JUN

Bread and Booyah

21
AUG

Belgian Heritage Center Kermis

Additional 2022 events are still being planned. Updates will be provided on Facebook, BHC website and upcoming newsletters. Watch for more events, as they are scheduled.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

In spring, Buhr Construction will replace 11 windows in the school/convent. BHC is looking for volunteers with carpentry skills to install replacement trim. We will also need volunteers to paint and clean. If you are interested, please call Joe at 920-343-6149 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

Dear Supporters –

This issue of the BHC newsletter recognizes our many financial supporters in 2021. We could not accomplish our mission without the generous support of so many people and organizations. We are especially pleased that we have many first time donors this year. We attribute our growing base of supporters to the increased volunteer effort to spread the word about Belgian heritage on the BHC website, Facebook, newsletters and several TV and radio interviews.

We are very grateful to the community for supporting our onsite events. Attendance at our fundraising events in 2021 was by far the highest ever. It was wonderful to welcome people back to traditional events, like the Kermis, and to see new faces at new events like the Helen Gillet concert. We were especially pleased that so many people attended the 150th anniversary special remembrance of the Great Fire.

BHC is thrilled to report that as of the end of 2021, BHC went over the \$1 million mark in total receipts since we started in 2010. This is an amazing accomplishment that would not have been possible without the support of everyone who donates, volunteers and attends our events. Thank you all for your generous support!

Joe Alexander, President



BHC on YouTube!

BHC is excited to announce the launch of our own YouTube channel! We will be sharing videos previously available only by visiting BHC. Because of the tremendous interest in Belgian heritage from people across the United States and Belgium, it has become important to share our stories online.

Our first featured video is The Great Fire of 1871. Released by BHC for the 150th anniversary of the fire, the video explains the causes of the fire, the immediate impact on

the Belgian settlers, and the transformation of the Belgian communities that occurred through rebuilding. BHC is releasing the video publicly at no charge because this is a key event in the history of the Belgian settlements that is often misunderstood or not known at all. Please watch and please encourage others to watch as well. You can find the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGaVfuitZY>. Be sure to "subscribe" to BHC's channel to receive notice of future video releases.

Belgian Ancestry and Identity Research

Belgian social scientist Francois Romijn is a visiting scholar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying how descendants of Belgian immigrants relate to their present and past Belgian identity. He was in the area in the fall of 2020 and met with many local Belgians for his research. In April, François will return to the Green Bay area for more interviews. Are you available for a 1-2 hours talk in April? Please contact him directly at frromijn@gmail.com. Those who have participated to date have enjoyed the experience.

Looking for a Good Book?

BHC has a variety of books available for purchase by mail. Books and DVD's are eligible for reduced USPS shipping rates and most orders can be shipped **for under \$4**. We have a variety of Belgian themed titles covering the Great Fire, settlement history and immigrant experiences. To order or for more information, visit belgianheritagecenter.org, email supportBHC@belgianheritagecenter.org or call Sandy at 920-493-2850.

You can view our entire catalogue on our website. Here are just two of the great reads available through BHC

The Lace Maker's Secret

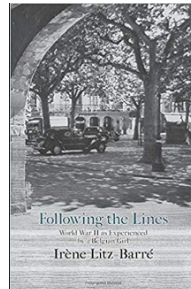
The Lacemaker's Secret - Kathleen Ernst \$16

A Chole Ellefson mystery set in Belgium and Wisconsin, past and present. Chloe takes a consulting job at Green Bay's Heritage Hill Historical Park, where an old Belgian-American farmhouse is being restored, thinking it will be a relaxing escape. Instead she discovers a body in a century-old bake oven. Inspired by a courageous Belgian woman who survived cholera, famine, and the Great Fire, Chloe untangles the clues.



Following the Lines: WWII as Experienced by a Belgian Girl

Following the Lines: WWII as Experienced by a Belgian Girl - Irene Litz-Barre \$13



Irene's teenage years in Belgium are spent in the chaos of World War II. In May 1940, after the German invasion, her father is sent to the front, while she and her mother evacuate under German Stuka bomber attacks. On their exodus, they find refuge in southern France. Three months later returning across the German demarcation line, they find her father also back home. He had escaped from the Germans twice. Soon, he is dangerously mixing secret underground activity with his Gendarmerie job supervised by the Germans.

Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!

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We cannot accomplish our mission without your help!***

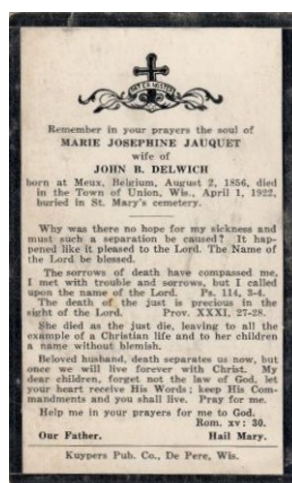
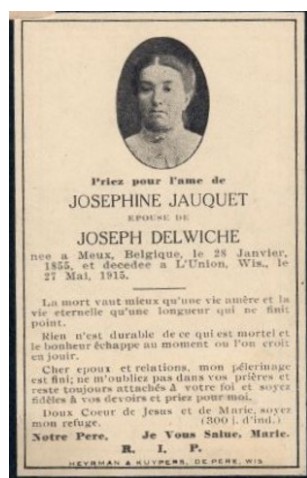
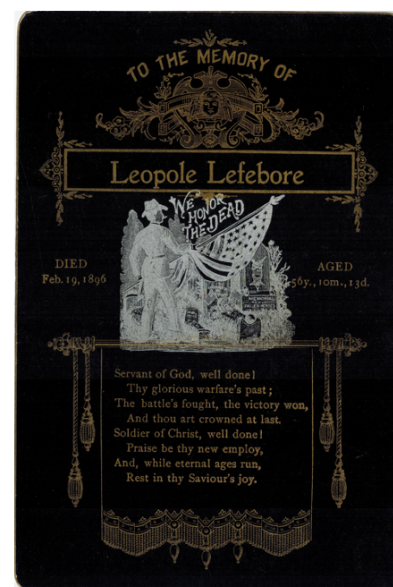
Prayer Cards & Family Research



An important part of BHC's mission is to collect and share information about our ancestors and their experiences. As anyone who has traced their family history will attest, there can be a lot of detective work involved. We currently have two projects underway to expand our information resources. One is the collection of photos with documentation of where and when each photo was taken and who is in it. The other is the collection of prayer cards (or memorial cards) that help us identify people in other photos and contain genealogical information.

BHC has hundreds of prayer cards that we are scanning so they can be made available for research. Many of these cards are very old and contain information and imagery not found on today's cards. For example, the card at right in memory of Leopole Lefebore shows that he died in 1896 at the age of 56. It also includes an image recognizing his service in the Civil War.

A common identification challenge stems from the tradition for families to use the same names in multiple (or the same) generations, making even photos with names written on them difficult to connect to the right person. The prayer cards below are for sisters with the given names Marie Josephine Jauquet and Marie Josephe Jauquet, born one year apart, who also had the same



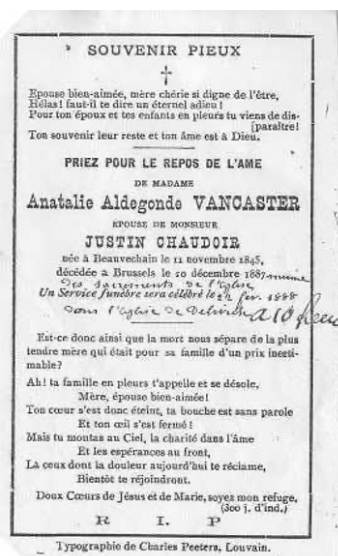
married name (Delwiche). It would be easy to confuse them, but the photos and information on the prayer cards help to distinguish them.

Even when the prayer cards are in French or somewhat damaged, they provide helpful information to connect maiden and married names. It was common for old prayer cards to mention the spouse of the deceased as well as where they were born and died. Like any other document, prayer cards can contain errors so it is best to validate them against other information

sources. And, names given at birth in Belgium were often "Americanized" and may be different on the prayer card and tombstone.

BHC's photo archive includes almost 2,000 scanned photos and the collection continues to grow. The photos span many generations, including photos taken in Belgium before the immigration. We have individual, family and wedding portraits as well as photos of daily life in the early days of the Belgian settlements. Some of the photos are well documented but most are missing key information. Prayer cards are just one of the tools we have to fill in the missing pieces.

If you are interested in helping us scan photos and documents or assisting in our identification efforts, please email supportBHC@belgianheritagecenter.org. If you have photos or prayer cards you would like to add to our collection, they can be uploaded at the History tab on BHC's website or contact us by email.



Historic Photo Feature - Horse Drawn Sleighs



Back in the old days, winter work and travel depended on horse drawn sleighs. These are a few of our favorite donated photos of horses (and a calf) pulling sleighs. If you have pictures like these, we would love to add them to our collection!



Unidentified photo found at a local auction. If you recognize this photo, please let us know. Courtesy of Monica Thiry



Bader horse team logging. Courtesy of Margaret Rueckl



Jules Delebreau with his horse and sleigh.
Courtesy of Harvey Lefevre



Edward Delebreau and Edwin Ronsman hauling
firewood. Courtesy of Harvey LeFevre

Thank You Volunteers!





Belgian Heritage Center
PO Box 173
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Donations can be made at www.belgianheritagecenter.org (major credit cards accepted).

- ☐ Please check if you **DO NOT** wish to be recognized in publications under the names provided above.

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