



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

www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

April 2022

BHC Season Opening

Open by Appointment – Starting May 1
Call 920-493-5969 for information

Open Weekends - Starting May 27
Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 10am-3pm

2022 Events

24
APR

Waffle Breakfast

4
JUN

**Genealogy Presentation and
Research Assistance**

26
JUN

Bread and Booyah

9
JUL

**Kathleen Ernst Presentation "The
Lacemaker's Secret" - 3:30pm**

21
AUG

Kermis

8
OCT

Great Fire Remembrance

20
NOV

Helen Gillet Concert

Additional 2022 events are still being planned. Updates will be provided on Facebook, BHC website and upcoming newsletters.

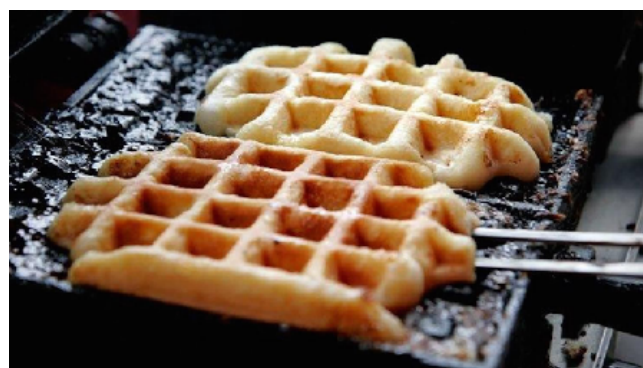
WAFFLE BREAKFAST

Sunday, April 24

The Waffle Breakfast is back!

BHC is pleased to host our waffle breakfast. Price will be \$10 for adults, \$6 for children (no charge for children under three). Breakfast includes homemade waffles, eggs, tripple breakfast links and coffee. Breakfast will be served from 9:00am until 1:00pm. Gluten free waffles will be available.

Weather permitting, we will provide outdoor seating as well as seating inside BHC.



Consider the Heritage Center for your Next Event

The Belgian Heritage Center is a perfect church-like setting for weddings and wakes/funerals. The BHC is also available for rental for private events such as meetings, conferences and family reunions. Traditional Belgian food and a Belgian heritage presentation are available on request. For more information call Sue Havel at 920-493-2789 or email: events@belgianheritagecenter.org.

150 Years Ago



Spring Planting After the Great Fire



“BURNT DISTRICT – COURTESY BAY MAPS LLC”

middle of April. Each district was to see that all seeds were well cleaned as the farmers in the burnt districts would have no means of doing so. The seeds were then to be sent to either Green Bay or Milwaukee, at the expense of the committee, making as low a contract price for delivery as possible. The circular would also go on to say that at least one thousand ploughs would be needed. Not unlike the previous calls for aid, the seed response was admirable, ensuring an adequate supply of grass seed. One thousand bushels were sent from Milwaukee and another 25 tons were sent from Racine to Ahnapee. (Source: Door County Advocate, 1872-01-04 issue; Vol. 10 Issue 34)

Upon receipt of the seeds, farmers were also encouraged to employ a practice of “snow seeding”. During the progress of the fires, the soil was burned to some extent below the surface, killing the grass and destroying the roots. Farmers of experience would share that it would be to an advantage to sow grass seed on the snow as the birds will not find it and when the snow melts in the spring, the seeds fall into the moist ground and promptly take root. An issue, however, is the yet continuous burning of some of the marshier areas of the district. In the lower Red River area, near the Bay shore, smoke can still be seen issuing from the ground where the snow is melted off. It is where the ground is swampy and the soil is filled with small roots that the fires are holding due to the long and severe drought. (Source: Door County Advocate 1871-12-28, Vol. 10 Issue 33)

The months following the Great Fire were full of activity by various relief committees dedicated to aiding residents in the burnt districts of Brown, Kewaunee and Door counties. For the farmers who had lost everything in the Fire, the spring planting season would be key to getting back on their feet. Local newspapers reported on the activities, challenges and recommendations associated with doing so.

In January, 1872, in preparation for the spring planting season, the Governor and the Green Bay and Milwaukee Relief Committees would put out an impassioned plea to the State of Wisconsin for continued relief. To farmers, the committee would ask to furnish seeds for the burnt districts. To manufacturers, the plea would go out for donated wagons, ploughs and other necessary farming tools. The Committees advised the town committees to canvas and collect seeds, marking the packets as “for seed” and where they are to be sent. The Committees were asking for grass seed by the middle of February, spring wheat, spring rye, oats and garden seeds by mid-March and potatoes by the

Historic Photo Feature - Spring Planting



Spring was a busy time for Belgian farmers. Planting was a priority along with associated work like plowing, clearing rocks and spreading manure. It was also a time for building barns to store the harvest. These were much bigger jobs in the past when tools and farm machinery were much less advanced than today. If you have photos like these, we would love to add them to the BHC collection. Email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or call 920-825-7319 if you have photos to share. You can also upload them directly on the History tab at belgianheritagecenter.org.



*Lillian Seville, Helen Took, Lillian Malcore, Desire Granius;
courtesy Monica Thiry*



*Rogation procession taken at St Hubert's Rectory, Rosiere;
courtesy Barb Englebert Chisholm*



John Gigot barn-raising, 1913; courtesy Monica Thiry



*Emerson Vanden Houten (center) farm, Tonet 1940's;
courtesy Dale Vanden Houten*

Historic Photo Feature - Spring Planting



Simmet men clearing rock: courtesy Door County Historical Museum



*Rose LaCroix Dellise, Louis Englebert, John Dellise, loading manure in Misiere;
courtesy Barb Englebert Chisholm*

Kathleen Ernst - The Lacemakers Secret Event



We are thrilled to announce that Kathleen Ernst, best-selling author of *The Lacemaker's Secret*, will return to BHC on Saturday, July 9. *The Lacemaker's Secret* is part of the award-winning Choe Ellefson mystery series. The story takes place in Belgium and in the Belgian settlements of Wisconsin, past and present, and features our history and traditions. Kathleen will share the artifacts and stories that inspired the book in a presentation at BHC on Saturday, July 9 at 3:30. The presentation is open to the public and will be followed by a book signing event. You will not want to miss hearing about Kathleen's fascinating research!

Kathleen is also hosting a special event on July 8 and 9 that will include the Belgian Heritage Center, a bus



tour of the National Landmark Historic District, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help and Heritage Hill. For more information and to make a reservation, please visit <https://kathleen-ernst-author.coursestorm.com/course/belgian-sites-tour>. Space for this event is limited so book early!

Volunteers Needed

BHC is planning for the 2022 season and needs your help! Volunteers are needed for events, starting with our Waffle Breakfast on April 24. Work as much or as little as you like – just let us know when you are available and what you like to do. We are looking for help with cooking, serving, set up/take down and sales at all events. We also need docents for shifts on weekends, starting Memorial Day weekend. No experience is necessary and there are two docents per shift on the schedule. Training is provided – a volunteer/docent training session is scheduled on Saturday, May 21 from 10:00 to noon. If you plan to attend, please contact Rebecca at 920-389-1768 or rdhealth6@gmail.com.

BHC would love to help local students by providing intern and community service opportunities. If you are interested in History, French Language, Graphic Art, Marketing or just want to learn more about Belgian heritage, please contact us to find out how BHC can help you gain valuable experience.

For more information or to volunteer, please email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or call 920-389-1768.

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"I enjoy being a docent at The Belgian Heritage Center. The on board training was great and prepared me well for my volunteer experience. What I enjoyed most about being a docent was meeting people from all over the world and sharing with them our Belgian ancestors experience." Mary Malcore, BHC Docent

Thank you again for letting me intern at the Belgian Heritage Center! It is special that you can connect with your ancestors in this way and I was glad that I was able to help."

Alexander Schirk, 2021 Intern, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Translation & Interpreting Studies

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Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!

Researching Our History



Finding Your Belgian Roots Genealogy Presentation and Research Assistance

Sue Havel will be presenting "Finding Your Belgian Roots" at the Belgian Heritage Center on Saturday, June 4 at 10:30. The presentation will provide helpful information to research your family tree, including a variety of online resources. Sue and Paul Neuville will be available after the presentation until 3:00 to answer questions and assist with your research.

This is also a great opportunity to bring your family photos to add to BHC's digital archive. Volunteers will be available to scan your photos and collect information - original photos will be returned before you leave.

Can you help?



Phyllis Haevers donated this picture which she was told includes one of her relatives - Agnes Haevers Hannon (first row, far right). But she doesn't know what school this is - only that it would have been in the Tonet area and the architecture is certainly Belgian! Do you recognize this school or anyone in the picture?

Positively identifying people in old photos can be challenging. Some photos have no identifying information. Others have incomplete information, such as a first name, but no last name. Or, they have a label like "Grandpa" that loses meaning as it's passed down through generations. And then there are those that are labeled but the information just doesn't seem right. This picture was submitted by Jim DuChateau. It is labeled as the Henry Nooyen family and listed the people as Matilda, John, Joseph, Henry, George, Alex, Rosalie, Pauline, Suzanna and Emily. But Jim is concerned this might not be accurate because the generation doesn't seem to correlate. Can you help? Do you recognize this family?



If you are having trouble identifying old photos, BHC's photo archive might be a resource. You can also help others by contributing digital scans of your family photos to our collection.

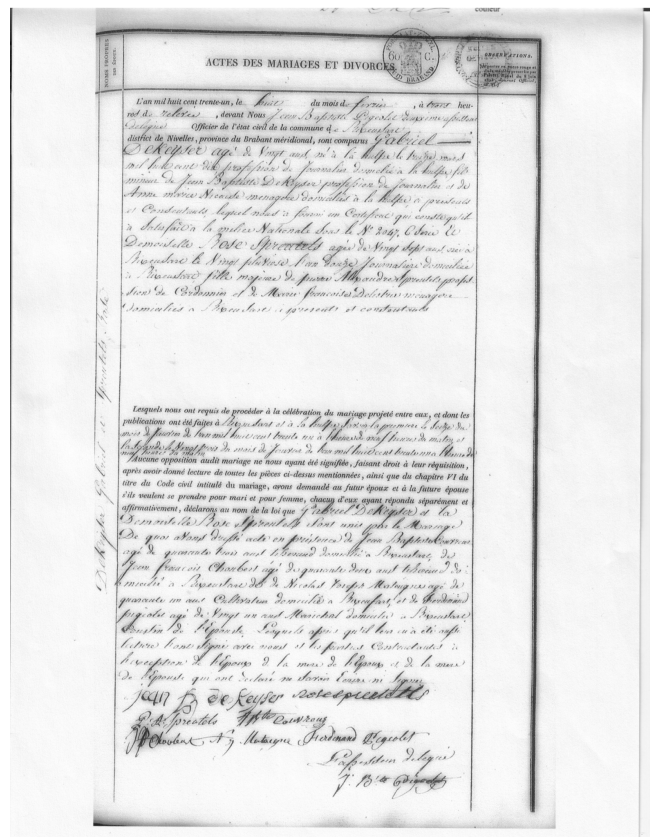
Please contact us at contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or call 920-825-7319 if you have photos to contribute or if you would like to help us with the collection and identification of historic photos. We are interested in pictures representing all of the Belgian communities and both Walloon and Flemish families. We would especially like to expand our collection of photos from Brussels, Champion, Tonet, Walhain and Humboldt areas.

Belgian Marriage Certificates



BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER

Belgian marriage certificates contain a wealth of information about our ancestors. Unlike today's certificates in the US, they document details about the bride and groom, their parents and witnesses. This is an image of the marriage certificate of Gabriel DeKeyser and Rose Spreutels dated February 8, 1831. Thanks to Alexander Schirk and the French graduate program at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, it has been translated to English. Here is a portion of the translation:



In the year one thousand eight hundred thirty-one, on the eighth of the month of February, at three o'clock in the afternoon Jean Baptiste Pigeolet second appellant Public Records Office delegate for the town of Rixensart, Nivelles district, Brabant Méridional province Gabriel...DeKeyser twenty years of age, born in La Hulpe on the thirteenth of March one thousand eight hundred ten, day laborer by profession, residing in La Hulpe, minor son of Jean Baptiste DeKeyser, day laborer by profession and of Anne Marie Nicaude, housewife residing in La Hulpe, appeared before us, present here and Consenting who have provided us with a Certificate that certifies that he completed his Belgian military service under Number 2047. [illegible] Miss Rose Spreutels twenty-seven years of age, born in Rixensart on the twentieth of Pluviose in the year twelve, day laborer residing in Rixensart, adult daughter of Pierre Alexandre Spreutels, cobbler by profession and of Marie Françoise Delestries housewife residing in Rixensart present here and consenting... we drew up this certificate in the presence of Jean Baptiste Courreur forty-three years of age, residing in Rixensart, of Jean François Choubert, forty-one years of age, [illegible] residing in Rixensart, of Nicolas Joseph Maten[illegible] forty one years of age, farmer, residing in Rixensart, and of Ferdinand Piquolet, twenty-one years of age Marichal, residing in Rixensart, cousin of the wife. Who, after having it read aloud to them as well, signed it with me and the contracting parties except for the husband of the groom's mother and the bride's mother who stated that they do not know how to write or sign.

If you are wondering about the date given for Rose's birth, Pluviose is the fifth month of the French Republican calendar used from 1793-1805. Belgian marriage certificates can be found on FamilySearch.org, a free genealogy website.

Our Belgian Forefathers

Last Mother's Day, BHC featured short articles from readers on the topic of "Our Belgian Foremothers." It was a great success! We are developing a similar feature for Father's Day this year to be available on the BHC website, Facebook and our newsletter. If you would like to contribute a short history and photo about your male ancestor, please email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org. You can see the 2021 "Our Belgian Foremothers" feature at belgianheritagecenter.org - go to the Featured page and scroll down to Featured Families.



Belgian Heritage Center
PO Box 173
Brussels, WI 54204

BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER DONATION/PLEDGE FORM

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- ☐ Annually: \$ _____/year, for _____ years, beginning _____/_____/20_____

Checks may be made payable to the Namur Belgian Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 173, Brussels, WI 54204.
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.

Signature _____ **Date** _____