



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

[www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org](http://www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org)

September 2020

## Coming Events

### Great Fire of 1871 Remembrance

Barb (Englebert) Chisholm's popular talk on the Great Fire will be broadcast on **Facebook Live** on Saturday, October 3, at 1:00 p.m. This will be an opportunity for all to hear her tell the story of her great grandmother, Emmerence (Gaspard) Englebert as she experienced the tragedy that changed the Belgian settlement forever. Barb also gives many facts surrounding the deadliest fire in United States history.

### Booyah-to-Go

Watch for another booyah drive-thru in early October.

### 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. For more information call Sue Havel at 920-493-2789 or email: [events@belgianheritagecenter.org](mailto:events@belgianheritagecenter.org)

Greetings friends,

The drive-thru Kermis was a big success. We thank everyone who bought food and merchandise, donated their time or made an in-kind donation. There was no band or beer, but it sure was great to see everyone at the drive-thru. We greatly appreciate the tremendous support of the community which allows us to preserve our Belgian heritage for future generations. We hope you enjoyed the "virtual Kermis" offerings on Facebook and the website too.



RENDERING OF THE NEW SIGN

The BHC will continue to be open for small group tours, by appointment, throughout the Fall. If you would like to visit the center, please call Barb Chisholm at 920-493-5969 or email [tourinfo@belgianheritagecenter.org](mailto:tourinfo@belgianheritagecenter.org) to set up a time.

Since last month, the security system in the BHC has been upgraded and we look forward to a brand new lit sign that should be arriving any day. Many thanks to the volunteers who worked to prepare the site and those who have offered to help with the installation.

# Chapel of St. Roch - Patron Saint in times of Pandemics

## Located on the Belgian Heritage Center Campus

The little roadside chapel on the east side of the convent/schoolhouse on the BHC campus is dedicated to St. Roch (pronounced Saint Rock), known as the patron saint of contagious diseases. This chapel was built on the northern outskirts of Brussels on County C by Mr. and Mrs. Philip (Gerondale) Jadin. It was later the property of Mr. and Mrs. Ed (Bosman) Wautier and then to Mr. and Mrs. Gary (Neinas) Fontaine. At the time the property was sold to Mr. and Mrs. David Marchant the chapel and its furnishings were donated to the Peninsula Belgian American Club. Mary Ann Englebert related that many of the women of Brussels would gather and kneel around the chapel to recite the rosary.

St. Roch was born in Montpellier, France in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. He was born with a red cross on his chest. His parents died when he was twenty and he gave his fortune to the poor. During a great pestilence in Italy, St. Roch cared for the sick. It is said there were many miraculous cures. When he, himself was stricken with the plague and while he lay sick in a deserted forest, he was discovered by a dog which licked his sores. (There is always a dog shown beside him in pictures and statues). Later he made a pilgrimage to Rome and upon returning to his homeland was arrested as a spy and spent the last five years of his life in prison. Only upon his death was his true identity revealed when they discovered the red cross birthmark on his chest. He is believed to be a powerful intercessor, especially in cases of contagious diseases. The little chapel has received more visitors this year during the pandemic. Many stop and pray to St. Roch, whose feast day was August 16.



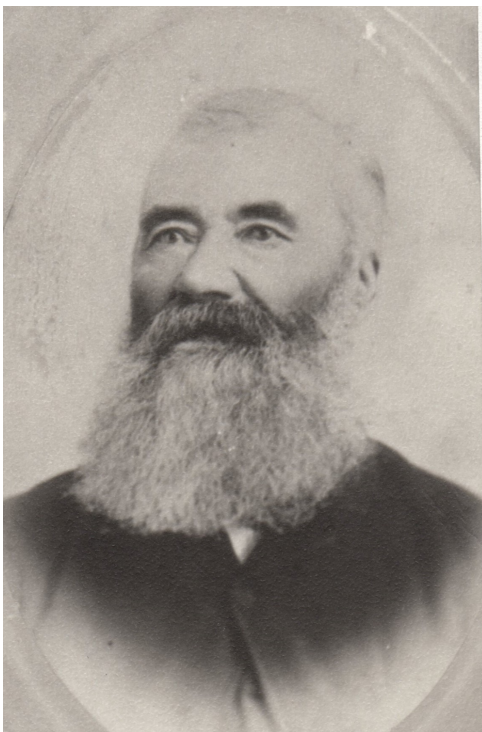
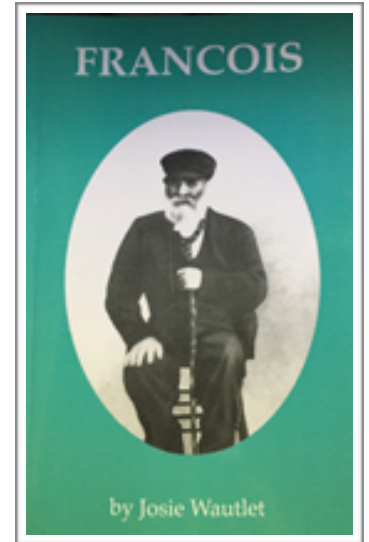
Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!

## BHC offering the book *Francois* by Josie Wautlet

The Belgian Heritage Center is proud to announce the re-printing of the book *Francois*. Written by the late Josie (LeGrave) Wautlet, this book telling the rich stories of her Belgian ancestors has been out of print for many years. *Francois*, so titled for her grandfather, shares pioneer stories that are both charming and heartbreaking. Wautlet covers topics from the ocean passage to clearing the land, surviving the Great Fire, celebrating the Kermis, and much more, but always the fortitude and faith of our Belgian ancestors.

Though author Josie Wautlet passed away at the age of 92 in 2007, her stories and love of her heritage live on forever in her work. Through the generosity of her family, it is an honor for the Belgian Heritage Center to have been gifted the rights to re-publish this wonderful piece of our Belgian-American history. We thank the Wautlet & LeGrave families for their dedication to helping preserve our history and supporting the mission of the Belgian Heritage Center.

The book *Francois* is available now for purchase through the Belgian Heritage Center website at <http://www.belgianheritagecenter.org>. Click on the "Merchandise" tab to find the catalog.



**CONSTANT THIRY**

## Check Out The Website Features

- On the **Featured Family** page you will find the story of Constant Thiry who immigrated to the US from Wavre, Belgium in 1856 and played a prominent role in his community of Thiry Daems, located in the township of Red River in Kewaunee County.
- On the **Featured Video** you will hear stories about what it was like to start school without speaking English.
- On the **Featured Gallery** you will see more photos featuring work on the farm in the in the Belgian Settlement area.

Can You Help Us? Does your family have a story to tell? Now you can share photos and documents about the Belgian way of life. Who knows, maybe a little-known relative may find the profile! Capturing these stories now helps keep our heritage alive. For more information please email [contact@belgianheritagecenter.org](mailto:contact@belgianheritagecenter.org)/ with a brief summary about the story and the documents to be shared.

## Opportunity to Participate in a Research Project

You are invited to participate in a research project about the Wisconsin-based descendants of Belgian immigrants and how they relate to their Belgian ancestry and identity. François Romijn has already conducted some interviews during a visit to our area in August. He will be returning in October and looks forward to more opportunities to meet with people of Belgian ancestry.



If you decide to participate in this research you will have a discussion with him about: How you relate to your Belgian ancestry; The social bonds among the community of Wisconsin-based descendants of Belgians; What are for you the defining elements that form the content of the Wisconsin-based Belgian ethnic group today; Your active and more distant involvements in practices that you consider related to the Belgian community.

He will interview you wherever you feel comfortable. This could be in your office, your home, or another site of your choosing as long as the setting is relatively quiet. If the weather permits, the interviews can be conducted outside. All safety precautions will be honored. The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes. Audio-tapes will be made of your participation. The information will be transcribed with pseudonyms.

You are welcomed and encouraged to ask any questions about the research at any time. If you are interested in participating or have questions about the research please contact François Romijn, using the phone number or email listed hereafter:

**Co-Principal Investigator:** François C. Romijn (phone: 608-556-4201) (email: [Romijn@wisc.edu](mailto:Romijn@wisc.edu))

*Few words about me: I am a French-speaking Belgian from Brussels (the other Brussels). I am currently a visiting sociologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where I am hosted to carry out this research about the WI-based descendants of*

*Belgian Immigrants. I will be really happy meeting you and to hear how you relate to your Belgian heritage. I will be staying in the Green Bay area in October and will be available whenever it suits you the best.*

# Harvest Time



**THRESHING**  
- PHOTO COURTESY OF MONICA THIRY



**ARTHUR AND BILL PIERRE BUNDLING WHEAT**  
- PHOTO COURTESY OF YVONNE STUKENBERG



**STEVE HOLUB ON THE WAGON**  
- PHOTO COURTESY OF HARVEY LEFEVRE



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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](http://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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