



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)

November 2021

**The Belgian Heritage Center Will Be Open by Appointment Only Until Spring 2022**

## 2021 Events

26-27  
NOV

### Thanksgiving Friday Merchandise Sale

As BHC winds down the 2021 season, we would like to thank everyone who joined us this year to visit our exhibits and attend our events. It was a great season and we look forward to an even better year in 2022. Our event schedule for next year is being developed now and details will be posted as they are finalized. We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2022!

2022 events will be announced in the coming months. Remember to check out and "Like" our Facebook page to learn about events and other BHC info.

### Special Thanksgiving Weekend Hours

BHC will be open to visitors on Friday November 26 & Saturday November 27 from 9:00am- 3:00pm. We will be featuring a special St. Nicholas display of a historic costume worn by a local St. Nick. This is a great opportunity to bring your family to experience Belgian history and culture. You can also get a start on Christmas shopping with special merchandise and discounts on our most popular items. See the article on page six for more information.

### BHC Awarded Wisconsin Humanities Grant

BHC is a recipient of a \$10,000 Wisconsin Humanities Recovery Grant, funded in part by a grant from Wisconsin Humanities, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The grant supports Wisconsin Humanities' mission to strengthen the roots of community life through educational and cultural programs that inspire civic participation and individual imagination. The funds will be used for operating expenses and for the purchase of a new, high resolution scanner to improve the quality of digital documents and photos we collect for historical purposes.

## 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](mailto:events@belgianheritagecenter.org)



# 10-Year Recap



BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER

In August 2010, a small group of citizens recognized the importance, and the opportunity, of rescuing St. Mary of the Snows church from demolition and creating a center for telling the unique story of our Belgian communities.

BHC is celebrating the conclusion of our 10<sup>th</sup> “normal” year in 2021 (2020 was anything but normal). We’ve come a long way thanks to many generous donors and tireless volunteers. These are some of the projects undertaken:

Feasibility Study	St. Roch Improvements	School Windows*
Kitchen Conversion	Site Master Plan	Great Fire Video
Tuck Point Church Exterior	Walloon Language Preservation*	School Convent Restoration phase 1
New Church Roof	Audio/Visual Equipment	Photo Collection and Identification*
Stained Glass Window Repairs	Heating System Upgrade	Prayer Card Collection*
History Exhibits	Air Conditioning System	Genealogy Collection*
Oral History Videos & Kiosk*	Fire and Security System	Great Fire Historical Record Project*
Photo Gallery Kiosk*	Front Entrance Door Replacement	Lambeau Exhibit
Accessibility Lift	Electronic Sign	Plaster and Paint Repairs
Donor Boards	Commemorative Picnic Tables	*Ongoing Project

BHC also expanded our community outreach through:

- Enhanced online presence on BelgianHeritageCenter.org and Facebook
- Regular newsletters featuring Belgian history and other topics of interest
- New public events such as concerts and hosting authors
- Partnership with Peninsula Belgian American Club to host speakers open to the public
- Expanded merchandise offerings to include more books, Belgian themed items and custom art glass by Gary Chaudoir, including online ordering option
- In person and virtual presentations about BHC, Belgian history and genealogy
- Collaboration to update information about roadside chapels in the area

In addition to building our campus, BHC’s Board of Directors has focused on establishing a strong financial foundation for our operations and continued progress. The financial feasibility study completed in 2012 included the goal of building a cash reserve of \$50,000 within 10 years. At that time, that seemed like a lofty goal considering all that needed to be done. Because of the tremendous community response through grants, donations, event participation and volunteer effort we more than exceeded that goal. We will end 2021 with over \$225,000 in cash and investments to advance our mission.

Much has been accomplished, but there is much more to be done. A site master plan has been completed and an updated exhibit plan is in the works to guide investment of the funds entrusted to us for the development of our campus. We will report on our future priorities in an upcoming newsletter.

None of this would be possible without amazing volunteers and generous sponsors supporting BHC in so many ways! Thank you to everyone who made the Belgian Heritage Center such a wonderful success!

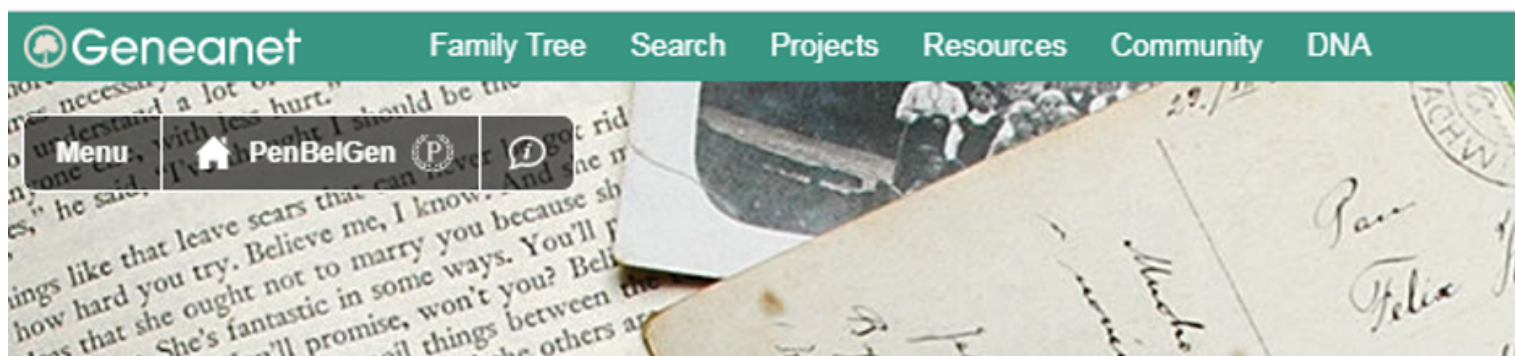
Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!

# Exploring Your Belgian Heritage through the PenBelGen Family Tree



BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER

Are you curious about where and when your Belgian ancestors immigrated from in Belgium? Are you about to embark on a genealogy project to create your family tree? Do you wish you had listened closer to what great grandma had to say about who is related to whom? If so, there is a genealogy resource that can help in your research. PenBelGen is a family tree within the Geneanet website (<https://en.geneanet.org/profil/penbelgen>) that represents a composite directory of Belgian-Americans who immigrated to the Belgian Settlement areas of Brown, Kewaunee and Door counties of Wisconsin during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.



The family tree was created by Ron Flemal as a result of his own genealogical work. The BHC recently posed a few questions to Ron to better understand the origins of PenBelGen and to highlight his amazing work that has been so valuable to assisting visitors to the Center in better understanding their own Belgian Heritage.

## **1. How did the PenBelGen project come about? What was the impetus for the effort? How did you become involved?**

*PenBelGen came about more by accident than by design. I am a long-time history buff, but I had not engaged in any concerted effort with my own family history until the 1990s. Up to that time family members with knowledge of our history, first-hand or by generation-to-generation transmission, had a day-to-day presence in our family. As more and more of them departed and I approached my own senior years, my personal taking up of the family history torch seemed to be advisable.*

*My first efforts, as is often the case, were to interview the surviving family elders. The next step was to add documents, newspapers accounts, photos, and the like. Much of this research at that time had to be done by person-to-person communication, in libraries, and in government and church offices; most of this was laborious. Fortunately, it was also the infancy of online genealogy, a time when researchers had just begun sharing their research on the Internet. I learned much from these pioneers. Partly to pay forward, and partly because it looked intriguing, I joined in.*

*PenBelGen grew out of this effort. As I gathered various documents I encountered information not only on my own family members, but also on their neighbors and friends. I didn't know what to do with this. After hit and miss efforts of putting it online, I discovered that some researchers in Belgium had been gathering documents from a single community or locale into a group "family tree", irrespective to whether all of the individuals in this "tree" were related or not. I had such a community. It was the Belgian-American community of the Door Peninsula. The idea of PenBelGen as a group family tree was born.*

Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!



## 2. How did you approach the project to ensure coverage of the Belgian immigrants?

*Almost from the start it was apparent that some limits had to be placed on the geographic and chronologic bounds of PenBelGen. There is some artificiality to both bounds. But limiting it to pre-20th century residents of the Door Peninsula community had some practical rationale. As it is, PenBelGen lists almost 20,000 individuals and with almost 2/3rd of a million source citations. And both of these numbers continue to grow, particularly the source citations.*

## 3. How long did the effort take? What challenges did you run into?

*I am passed the 25-year mark working on PenBelGen. The growing online availability of a huge trove of documents has kept me busy trying to keep up. Lately I've focused on documents from the Belgian State archives, which has involved learning French sufficient to read the documents.*

## 4. Any tips to share with users on how to best use the application when searching out a family history?

*PenBelGen provides an opportunity to acquaint yourself with the individuals and families that constituted the pioneers of our Belgian-American community. PenBelGen contains specific information on where in Belgium they originated, when and how they came to Wisconsin, and where they resided after arrival. There is also information on the work they engaged in, the persons they married, and the families they raised. And importantly, PenBelGen provides the sources in which information like this can be found.*

*These tidbits at PenBelGen are just a start of what we can learn about our family histories, and it is our hope that they energize you to engage in your personal explorations of your history.*



A note about Ron Flemal...

*Ron's paternal ancestors were among the pioneer Belgian settlers of Door and Kewaunee Counties, and Ron spent much of his youth among the descendants who continued to reside there. The professions of his adult life -- first as a college professor and later as a judge -- provided him with a life in other places, but his memories of his Belgian roots and the Belgian Settlement have never been far removed and remain today the basis of a life-long interest in family history.*

As Ron continues his work within the PenBelGen tree, he asks that as you use and become more familiar with the tree and the content, if you have questions or have information that can enhance the accuracy of the tree, use the Contact button at the bottom of each page to reach out to Ron directly.



Family Tree owner : **Ronald FLEMAL** (penbelgen👤)

Contact

PenBelGen (Peninsula Belgian Genealogy)

PenBelGen (Peninsula Belgian Genealogy) is a composite directory of Belgian-Americans (and their spouses) who immigrated to and resided in the Door Peninsula of Wisconsin USA during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!

# Getting Started with the PenBelGen Family tree



Open the website by googling “PenBelGen”. (The website is free but you will be asked to create an account after a few introductory searches). Using the search features in the upper right hand corner, you can embark on a search of all entries within the family tree. Note that when you hover over the Last Name field you are presented with options to see a list of all individuals within the tree as well as lists of entries by Last Name. Note that the list of last names may be an excellent starting point if your Belgian heritage surname is spelled several different ways, even within the same family! (e.g. DeJardin, DuJardin, DesJardins)

For each entry within the tree, information is provided for family relationships and events, including births, marriages, immigrations, children, siblings, census information, occupations, deaths and burials to the extent that there is source documentation. The advanced search features also allow for searching by date ranges and/or events.

Go ahead, give it a try. Get started in finding information about your own Belgian heritage. There is a trove of information available at your fingertips thanks to the dedication and efforts of Ron Flemal!

The screenshot shows the PenBelGen website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with fields for 'Last Name' and 'First name'. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs: 'Family Tree', 'Profile', and 'Timeline'. The 'Profile' tab is selected, showing the profile for Jean Baptiste Dujardin. The profile includes a 'Print Family Tree' button and a list of events. The events list includes:

- about 1819** : Birth - Rixensart, Brabant, Belgium  
Sources: Passenger List of the ship "Washington", May 1856.
- 1856** : Immigration - Aboard the ship "Washington", arriving at New York 2 May 1856  
Sources: Passenger List of the ship "Washington", May 1856.
- 18 June 1856** : Declaration of Intention - Filed at County Court House, Brown County, Wisconsin  
Sources: Declaration of Intention - From lists compiled by Mary Ann Defnet and published in Belgian Laces in a series from 1995 to 2006; Originals on file at Archives of the Area Research Center, University of Wisconsin/Green Bay - - Official Document
- 5 February 1859** : Land Patent - 40 Acres Consisting of SESE of Section 22, T25N R22E, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin  
Sources: Land Patent Records, State of Wisconsin, Menasha District - U.S. Bureau of Land Management website, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/>; also available at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) - - Official Document
- 1860** : Occupation - Farmer, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin  
Sources: U.S. Census, 1860, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin; Dwelling 1882.
- 1870** : Occupation - Farmer, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin  
Sources: U.S. Census, 1870, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin; Dwelling 28.
- 1880** : Occupation - Farmer, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin  
Sources: U.S. Census, 1880, Green Bay Township, Brown County, Wisconsin; Dwelling 147.
- September 1888** : Death  
Sources: Church Records - - Church Record - St. Martin Catholic Church, Tonet, Luxemburg Township, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin



## Thanksgiving Weekend Merchandise Sale

BHC will be open for a Thanksgiving sale on our Belgian themed merchandise on **Friday, November 26 and Saturday, November 27 from 9:00am until 3:00pm**. We are featuring a special chocolate treat in honor of St. Nicholas Day. Visit [BelgianHeritageCenter.org](http://BelgianHeritageCenter.org) or Facebook to see all available merchandise and specials.

### St. Nicholas figure

In dark or milk chocolate....\$9

Hollow figure with chocolate coin is handmade with Callebaut Belgian chocolate by BE Chocolat. Benoit is a master chocolatier from Ceria Culinary Institute in Belgium.

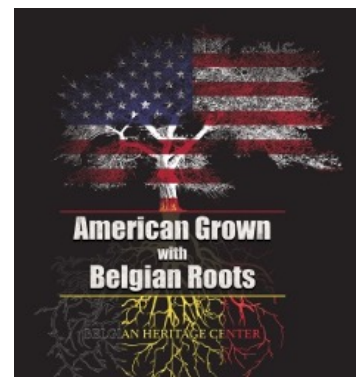
Available for purchase at BHC; sorry we are unable to ship this chocolate.



Coffee Mug....\$8

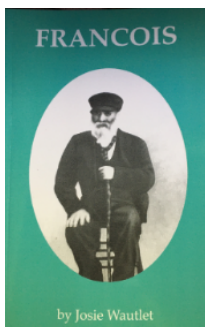
### Holiday Inspiration

BHC has a variety of Belgian themed books, DVD's, glassware, Christmas ornaments, flags, art glass by Gary Chaudoir and much more. We also have new book releases about the Great Fire of 1871 from the Brown County Historical Society and Virginia Feld Johnson. Purchase the perfect Christmas gift for your favorite Belgians and support BHC at the same time! Most items are also available online by visiting the Merchandise page at [belgianheritagecenter.org](http://belgianheritagecenter.org).



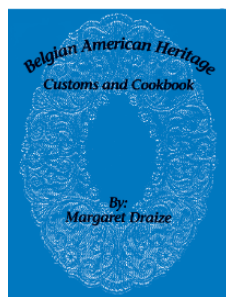
T-Shirts....\$12

### \$5 off - Save on Books about Belgian History and Culture



**Francois**

Josie Wautlet.....\$15- **\$10**



**Belgian American Heritage Customs and Cookbook**

Margaret Draize \$20 **\$15**



**The Walloons in Wisconsin**

Lempereur/Istasse **\$30 \$25**

# Christmas Program at Fairland



*(1952-1953)*

*Judy Chaudoir 5th, Donna Mae Chaudoir 6th, Barb Le Grave 7th, Bonnie Gerondale 8th*

## Hunter's Raffle Results

Thank you to everyone who supported the Hunters Raffle on October 16! Congratulations to the winners of our top prizes:

1. Henry Repeating Arms Big Boy .44 Mag – Bill Lohrey (sponsored by Belgian Heritage Center)
2. Browning BPS Hunter Camo 12-gauge – Jerry Reince (sponsored by Bruce, Pam and Kristin Alberts)
3. Mossberg Patriot 6.5 Creedmoor – Nicholas Moore (sponsored by Joe Alexander and Kevin Moore)
4. Weatherby PA-08 Camo 12-Gauge – Duke Peters (sponsored by Tim Buhr/Buhr Construction)
5. Ruger Wrangler Bronze .22 LR – Greg Strayor (sponsored by Joe Pagel/Drainage USA and Larry Renier)
6. Yeti Tundra Extreme Cooler – Jerry Hnotynka (sponsored by John and Polly Alberts)
7. Ruger Yukon Magnum .22 Caliber Scoped Air Rifle - Tim Baudhuin (sponsored by Hanmann Milling and Tisch Mills Farm Center)
8. River's Edge Two-Plex Ladder Tree Stand – Becky Reince (sponsored by River's Edge/Ardisam)
9. Vortex Crossfire Red Dot Optic – Mark Vandermissen (sponsored by Vortex Optics)
10. \$200 Gift Certificate for Ice Fishing – Dan Gilson (sponsored by JJ Malvitz/JJ's Guide Service)

A complete list of winners and sponsors can be found on the Events page of [belgianheritagecenter.org](http://belgianheritagecenter.org)



Belgian Heritage Center  
PO Box 173  
Brussels, WI 54204

---

## BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER DONATION/PLEDGE FORM

*//We are pleased to support your efforts with a gift of: \$* \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- Paid in Full
- 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](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.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_