



BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER

www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

contact@belgianheritagecenter.org

920-825-7319

MARCH 2026

BHC 2026 Event Calendar - Save the Dates!

26 APR	Bread & Booyah Lunch Cooyah Tournament
2 MAY	Renee Vaughan, Nyckelharpa player
3 MAY	Cemetery Blessing and Display Dedication
22 MAY	BHC opens on weekends (Fri thru Sun, 10-3)
18 JUN	Door County History Days
28 JUN	Waffle Breakfast
11 JUL	Belgian Days Bus Tours and Presentations
16 AUG	Kermis
12 SEPT	Grandparents Day/Luke's Lost Arts Wooden Shoe Carving
3 OCT	Great Fire Remembrance
8 OCT	Great Fire Remembrance at Chapel
9 OCT	Hunters Raffle
20-21 NOV	Kewaunee Christkindlmarkt
27 NOV	Thanksgiving Sale / Family Glass Workshop
5 DEC	Christmas Spirits Adult Glass Workshop

Land Gift Expands BHC Campus

The Jack Chaudoir Family Trust recently gifted approximately one acre of adjacent property to expand the BHC campus, providing additional space for events and parking. This donation is the latest in a 165 year history of the Evrard/Chaudoir family supporting St. Mary of the Snows Parish. In 1860, Alexandre Evrard donated land to start the church and cemetery. The family supported the parish, the priests living at the rectory and Belgian Heritage Center across five generations. We sincerely thank Christine Chaudoir and Kelly Chaudoir for making this gift possible.

Booyah and Bread Lunch at BHC April 26 — 11:00 to 1:00

You can enjoy delicious BHC Booyah along with artisan bread and homemade desserts on Sunday, April 26 at the Belgian Heritage Center. Cost is \$12 for adults and \$8 for children 4-12 and includes a beverage. Full meal will be served from 11:00 to 1:00 with booyah to go available for \$12 a quart while it lasts. Preorders for booyah can be requested at contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

Cooyah Tournament at BHC April 26 — 2:00pm



BHC will host a cooyah tournament on Sunday, April 26 starting at 2:00. Cooyah (or cuyoo) is a traditional Belgian card game dating back to the 16th century. It is played in teams of two. All skill levels are welcome, including beginners! Beer, cocktails and other refreshments will be available for purchase. The top three teams will win cash prizes. Entry fee is \$20 per team. Sign up at contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or call Joe Alexander at 920-343-6149.

For a refresher on how to play cooyah, see the events page at belgianheritagecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Snows Historic Cemetery Display Dedication - May 3

BHC, together with St. Francis and St. Mary Parish, will host a dedication of the new display honoring those buried at the historic cemetery adjacent to BHC. The new display area features an exhibit explaining the cemetery's history, a listing of almost 200 people buried between 1860 and 1911 and a contemplative patio area featuring four memorial benches. This special event will begin with mass with Fr. Antonio Rex Palaya at St. Francis and St. Mary Church in Brussels at 8:00, followed by a blessing by Fr. Anthony Birdsall at the cemetery at 9:15. BHC will host an open house with refreshments and a brief talk about the history of the cemetery and the extensive research to identify those with no surviving grave marker. A photo display of the people buried in the old cemetery will also be featured.

Please join us to honor and remember some of the earliest settlers in the area. If you would like to know if your ancestors are buried at Our Lady of the Snows, a full list of the known burials can be obtained by emailing contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

Canonization of Adele Brise and Her Legacy in the Belgian Settlements

The Green Bay Catholic Diocese recently announced its plans to pursue canonization of Adele Brise, the Belgian immigrant believed to have been visited by the Blessed Virgin in 1859 near what is now Champion. Adele accepted a mission to teach the children what they needed for salvation. The spot of the Apparition, at what is now the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, has held special meaning to many Belgians ever since.

To fully appreciate Adele's mission, it is essential to understand what teaching the children involved in her day. It was not nearly as easy as we might think of such a task today.

Adele's family arrived in 1855 from Dion-le-Val in Brabant Walloon and settled near what is now Champion when she was 24 years old. At the time Adele first embarked on her mission, the Belgian settlements were still in their early stages of development. The land was virgin forest. There were no schools and the closest church was in Bay Settlement, about 10 miles away. Like many in her community, Adele was uneducated and did not speak English. An accident in her youth blinded her in one eye. Belgian settlers spent their days on back-breaking work just to survive, on top of clearing the land and building homes and farms with nothing more than hand tools. Children worked too, performing whatever tasks they could. There was little time for anything else in those days. To reach the children, Adele walked to homes within a 50 mile radius, following trails through the woods when wolves and bears were a threat. Adele helped children with their chores to make time for instruction. When they were prepared



for communion, Adele walked with the children to Fr. Daems at Holy Cross Church in Bay Settlement. Imagine the time, effort and persistence this required.

In 1861, the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Help (as it was first known) replaced the small wooden structure built by Adele's father on the spot of the Apparition. A convent and school with boarding rooms was eventually built so children could come to Adele. Community members helped build the facilities and support its operations despite having little themselves. Adele's efforts came at a time when women were rarely afforded leadership opportunities outside the home. It would be 60 years before women even had the right to vote in the United States.

"The Chapel", as it was (and still is) known locally, has been a source of hope and healing since 1859. Even as parish churches were built in each of the Belgian communities and roadside chapels dotted the landscape, Belgians turned to The Chapel when things were at their worst – during times of war,

serious illness and even during the Great Fire. The Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on August 15 was a major celebration for local Belgians, considered by many to be even more important than Christmas.

Whatever one's religious beliefs, Adele and her legacy at "The Chapel" played a huge role in the development, resilience and cohesiveness of the Belgian settlements. You can hear recollections of its importance in English and Walloon in the video "The Chapel" on BHC's YouTube channel. Much more can be learned about Adele and her mission by visiting the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion or adelebrice.org.

The Green Bay Diocese is collecting testimonies to support Adele's cause for canonization including personal experiences, documents or accounts of intercessions. For more information, visit connect.gbdioc.org/s3/ adelestories or contact the Diocese of Green Bay, Office of the Chancellor at 920 437-7531.

BHC 2025 History Contest Winners

BHC is pleased to announce the winners of the 2025 history contest.

Mary Clabots created an extensive display of World War I memorabilia collected by her husband Ed's grandfather, Private William "Bill" Clabots. Bill was from Humboldt and served from 1917-1919 with the 13th Engineers (Railway) Regiment under the command of the French Army. Mary compiled the story of Bill's experiences and a display including his military uniform, photos, souvenirs and other mementos. Mary has made several additional submissions of Belgian history in the Humboldt area. She received a \$100 gift certificate from BHC for her submission.



Myla, Emory and Theresa

The winners of the youth contests are sisters Myla and Emory Stutzman.

Myla's winning submission is an audio recording describing her family, spoken in Walloon learned from her great-grandmother, Theresa Alexander. Emory submitted an interview with Theresa about her childhood. Both submissions have been turned into videos you can watch on BHC's YouTube channel. These are excellent examples of how parents and grandparents can teach children about their Belgian heritage at an early age. Myla and Emory each won a \$100 cash prize sponsored by an anonymous donor.



Renee Vaughan, Nyckelharpa Artist and Walloon/Swedish Singer — May 2

Join us on May 2 at 10:00 for a unique musical performance. Renee Vaughan is a nyckelharpa player whose great-great-grandparents were Walloon and immigrated from Hachy, Belgium, to Wisconsin in 1856. Renee will share this history alongside traditional tunes from both Sweden and Walloon areas in Belgium. A nyckelharpa ("keyed fiddle") is a traditional Swedish string instrument.

In the 17th century, thousands of skilled Walloon ironworkers immigrated from Belgium to Sweden, profoundly shaping the country's industrial and cultural landscape. Among their descendants was the legendary Swedish nyckelharpa player Byss-Kalle Bössä—born Boussard—whose Walloon roots reveal a rich legacy of cross-cultural influence. This musical presentation will explore how the Walloon presence not only advanced Sweden's ironworks but also left lasting imprints on its folk music traditions.

As a recent musician-in-residence at UW–Madison, Renee researched the music of first-generation Nordic immigrant musicians. She has performed at venues including the American Swedish Institute, Norsk Høstfest, and the Minnesota Orchestra's Nordic Soundscapes Festival, and currently serves as a Minnesota Public Radio Class Notes Teaching Artist.



Custom Guided Tour of Belgium — Fall 2027

Sue Donarski, a travel coordinator for Go Ahead Tours, is looking to organize a custom guided tour of Belgium for October of 2027. If there is sufficient interest, Sue Donarski would be more than happy to start working with Go Ahead Tours to pull together an itinerary, timeframe and costs. To give you a feel for potential cost, the cost for a similar tour in 2025 was \$4,764/person (double occupancy) plus airfare. Please contact suedonarski@icloud.com with your level of interest and any questions. She is also available to chat in person at 920-676-5429.



Our Nation at 250

In recognition of the 250th anniversary of the US, BHC will feature a series of articles looking at the state of the Belgian settlements at 100 year intervals, starting with 1776.

The Belgian Settlement Area in 1776

This year we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation's birth in 1776, its Semi-Quincentennial. We are reminded of our heroes who were instrumental in creating the first constitutional republic of the people, by the people, and for the people.

What was this area of northeast Wisconsin like in 1776? What did its inhabitants know and think about the colonial rebellion begun over 1000 miles away, a couple weeks' journey by boat in those days. Let's first take a quick, historic look at what led up to the Revolutionary War of the British colonies.

In the 1600s, the British controlled the land of its eventual 13 colonies along the Atlantic seaboard. At the same time, what is currently Northeast Wisconsin was called New France. It was populated by Native people and by French explorers who'd claimed the land for France. A small trading post named La Baye and a Fort St. Francis were established at the site of the current city of Green Bay. Fur trading entrenched Europeans into relationships with Native people who were to "harvest, process, and transport furs, and to serve as guides and trade brokers. ... By the 1660s, Europeans were trading with the Potawatomi on the Door Peninsula. Beaver, whitetail deer, bear, woodchuck, muskrat, and raccoon were all regularly traded pelts. In exchange for furs, the Potawatomi received pots, knives, colored cloth, thread, hatchets, gunpowder, and firearms. The fur trade represented far more than a simple exchange of

commodities. It fostered the interchange of knowledge and culture, and it created powerful military alliances."

Often fur traders married Native women. One such family was French Canadian Augustine Mores de Langlade whose wife, "was probably Ottawa Indian, because her brother was an Ottawa Chief". The family lived in Mackinac and were trading in La Baye by 1745 and moved there about 1760. Their son, Charles Michel de Langlade, showed outstanding leadership skills. Being half Native and half French he understood and was very influential with several tribes. In 1755, he stopped Ohio tribes from trading with British traders in favor of the French.

At this same time from 1756-1763, Britain and France fought the Seven Years War, also referred to as the French and Indian War. Recall from grade school history that the French and Indians fought side-by-side against Britain during the war. Charles de Langlade fought with the French in the battle of Monongahela, but Britain was the war's victor and expanded its empire worldwide. It took from the French this very land where the Belgian Heritage Center today calls home. British changed the name of New France to British Indian Reserve which later became the Province of Quebec. See map. And Fort St. Francis became Fort Edward Augustus on Oct. 12, 1761.

La Baye would also change its name. Besides La Baye, it was often referred to as Baye Verte, which is French for Green Bay. The term Green Bay was first noted in writings by Peter Pond, a British trader in 1773. He said that "Green Bay had inhabitants raising corn and gardens and wild rice. Some of the French inhabitants also raised cattle, pigs, and horses. The Menominee Indians who resided on the north part of the bay, lived on game."

Those Europeans who'd settled in the Green Bay area were unhappy with the English takeover. But the Native tribes "accepted the new management". Because Britain was a poorer country than France, the British government was not as generous with gifts to the Native people as the French had been. Province of Quebec northern tribes who were friendly to the British included Ottawa, Saki, Ho-Chunk, Outagamie,

and Menominee. The Chippewa tribes lead by Chief Pontiac were hostile to the British. In 1763, Charles de Langlade assisted in keeping the peace in Baye Verte area from a potential Chippewa uprising.

The Seven Year War put Britain into huge debt and Britain began demanding more funds from its colonists to pay its obligations. Wanting to get back to the way it was when Britain left the colonists alone and didn't require excessive taxes from them, some colonists began to revolt in 1775. By 1776, the insurrections had become a war for independence. In fact, it was a civil war because the colonists split as to whether independence should be sought or not.

At the time of the revolutionary war until 1830, no newspapers existed in Wisconsin. Even Chicago didn't have a newspaper until 1833, so no editorial comments on the revolution from NE Wisconsin were located. We are fortunate that Deborah Beaumont Martin wrote a two volume "The History of Brown County" in 1913. She gives us the following information.

Charles de Langlade was living in Green Bay on the east side waterfront in the Crooks to Stuart Streets area. In 1776, he "was induced to enter the British service." And because he was so respected by settlers and Native tribes alike, "all western tribes" agreed with him and sided with the British.

Captain Langlade was required to raise Native force and ordered several times to assist the British against the Americans. Very large bands of Indians rendezvoused at Baye Verte with pow-wows and war dances before leaving for battles. "Those campaigns included, the 1776 campaign to remove the Americans from Montreal, Burgoyne's 1777 New York campaign, and a 1778 campaign that ended up in nothing more than being told to return home because of an American invasion of The Illinois Country. The second half of 1778 through 1780, we see Langlade recruiting Native warriors and Canadian Militia to protect present day Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana against George Rogers Clark and his American forces stationed in present day Illinois and Indiana."

Our Nation at 250

Indeed, most Native people throughout North America sided with the British because the revolutionaries wanted expansion into the Province of Quebec territory and across the American continent. In fact, within a few years of winning independence, the United States government in 1787 named the Northwest Territory, which included Wisconsin, as its first expansion outside of the land of its original 13 colonies.

Without stating the Chief's actions, Beaumont-Martin also noted that "Menominee Chief Chawanon on August 17, 1778 was given the Great Medal by the British government" in consideration of his fidelity, zeal and attachment to the King's government during the war of the Revolution." With this presentation, he became the "Grand Chief of the Folles Avoines". Chief Chawanon lived 1/2 mile south of the fort on the west side of Green Bay. His name is remembered as the name of the county and town of Shawano.

And, as they say, "the rest is history". The sympathy of most people living in what is now northeast Wisconsin was against the American patriots. But those Americans defeated the British and by 1783 established the United States as an independent and sovereign union. This noble nation grew and we stand today celebrating our great nation's 250th birthday, as we continue to pursue a more perfect union.

Many thanks to Heritage Hill, Brown County Historical Society, Door County Historical Society, Door County Maritime Museum, William R Protz, Michaela Kraft, and Deborah Beaumont Martin for their assistance and insight. Footnotes available on request.



1775 Territories

What Was and Wasn't in 1776:

- ◆ Thirteen colonies in America began their revolution from British control toward independence.
- ◆ Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Menominee, & Ho-Chunk lived on the west side of the waters of Green Bay.
- ◆ Future Belgian settlement land was part of the Province of Quebec and would become part of the Northwest Territory in 1787.
- ◆ The fort located at Green Bay would be renamed Fort Howard by the US government in 1816.
- ◆ What is now European Belgium was part of Austrian Netherlands. Belgium would become its own country in 1830.
- ◆ Wisconsin would become the 30th state in the United States of America in 1848.

Our Shared Role to Preserve Belgian Heritage

Belgian heritage persisted in Wisconsin because artifacts, stories and photos from the first immigrants were shared with their descendants, who preserved their history and added to it. Many shared these memories through BHC and the Peninsula Belgian-American Club. This is a rare treasure. Now it's our turn to share our heritage with our children and grandchildren. Bring young people to our campus to learn their history. Encourage them to attend presentations to hear about the incredible fortitude of their ancestors. Share links to BHC's online content. Recommend volunteering at BHC for community service hours needed by students. Learn your family's story and pass it on. Many of us wish we had spent more time learning our ancestors' stories while we had the chance. Don't miss yours.

Belgian Heritage Center Donation Form

Name: _____ Donation: \$ _____
 Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
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Please make checks payable to: **Belgian Heritage Center, PO Box 173, Brussels, WI 54204**. Donations may be made at www.belgianheritagecenter.org (PayPal and major credit cards accepted). BHC is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to cover the cost of newsletter production and delivery (\$10 per year per person) are greatly appreciated. To receive BHC's newsletter via email, send request to contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

2025 Belgian Heritage Center Financial and In Kind Donors

BHC is incredibly thankful for the generosity of all who supported our mission in 2025 through cash and in kind donations. We are blessed to have such wonderful community support!

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BHC has options for your tax and estate planning through general funds and an endowment fund. As a 501(c)(3) organization, BHC is able to accept mandatory 401k/IRA distributions, annuity payments, beneficiary designations and donations of appreciated stock. For more information about these options, please contact Sandy Orsted at 920-493-2850 or Bill Chaudoir at 920-559-3113.

Bronze (up to \$249)

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Please visit the Belgian Heritage Center Facebook page for a full list of our many Event and Raffle supporters.



Belgian Heritage Center
PO Box 173
Brussels, WI 54204

A Place at the Table – Food, Culture and Community in Northeast Wisconsin

On March 24, the Neville Public Museum in Green Bay will open a new exhibit exploring how Indigenous foodways, agricultural heritage, and generations of immigrant influences shaped the region's culinary landscape for generations. BHC is proud to have contributed photos, artifacts and recipes to the exhibit, including the items shown here. For more information about the exhibit, visit

