2013 Signature Event:

**Robert E. Lee: Duty and Honor**

General Robert E. Lee will be the featured guest at our 2013 Signature Event on Thursday, October 24, at Lake Michigan College’s Mendel Center. The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. with a social hour featuring live music and a silent auction. Larry Nielsen will serve as master of ceremonies for the evening.

David Palmer of Virginia will take the stage for the evening’s program. A professional interpreter with American Historical Theater, Palmer has portrayed General Lee since 1999 and continues to add to his program with ongoing research.

**Robert E. Lee: Duty and Honor**

Support the History Center and enjoy an inspiring evening with General Robert E. Lee as portrayed by David Palmer, nationally known historical interpreter.

Thursday, October 24, 2013

6:00 p.m. Reception (Cash Bar)

Dinner
(Choice of Sliced Beef Tenderloin, Champagne Chicken or Eggplant Parmesan)

Dessert

Live Music, Door Prizes & Silent Auction

Mendel Center, Grand Upton Hall, Lake Michigan College
2755 E. Napier Avenue, Benton Harbor, Michigan

Advance reservations only at (269) 471-1202. Tickets are $75 each, or a table for eight for $500. Attire is business casual. The ticket price includes a tax-deductible contribution to the History Center at Courthouse Square.
Berrien County Historical Association Board and Staff

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Kathy Cyr, Executive Director
Robert Myers, Curator
Kristen Patzer Umphrey, Museum Services Coordinator

BCHA Mission Statement

The mission of the BCHA is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Berrien County through exhibits, tours, publications, and educational and community outreach programs for public benefit.

Learn more about the BCHA by visiting www.berrienhistory.org

Director’s Comments

By Kathy Cyr

Dear Friends,

As the last days of summer are upon us and fall is just around the corner, let us recap the summer activities and look ahead to the upcoming fall activities at the History Center.

On June 26 we celebrated the 1839 Courthouse’s designation as the 38th Legal Milestone by the Michigan State Bar Association with a lunch and presentation ceremony at the Howard Performing Arts Center at Andrews University. The State Bar Association arranged the event and I was pleased to see several current board members in attendance. The commemorative plaque will be installed at the Courthouse Square site soon.

The 2013 Thursdays at Courthouse Square kicked off on June 20 with 90 in attendance on a hot, humid evening for “Thus Fell Tecumseh.” Five more presentations followed in June and July on a variety of Michigan history topics. We are already starting plans for next year’s series. Stay tuned!

The Berrien County Youth Fair was August 12-17 and, yes, the History Center again had a booth staffed by our loyal volunteers. My gratitude goes to all those who worked at the booth: Carol Bronicki, Barbara Pence, Bob Cooley, Margaret Schmieding, Joyce Daniels, Jill Foster, Bob Norris, Sandy Garland, Karen Campbell, Emily Foster and Carol Noid. Special thanks goes to Bob Cooley who worked four shifts and transported the “goods” to and from the fair, helped set up the booth and then repacked everything on his own and delivered it back to us. Thanks also to staff member Kristen Patzer Umphrey for scheduling the volunteers, selecting the merchandise that was offered for sale, preparing the literature distributed, and orientating the volunteers at the beginning of each shift. We could not have done it without everyone’s help.

Our “Pennsylvania Amish Country” bus tour ran September 14-21, for which Bob and I served as tour guides for 38 BCHA members. This was my first excursion and I had great fun touring sites and getting to know all of the individuals who traveled with us! I hope many of you can join us in 2014 for our spring Frank Lloyd Wright Tour or our fall Hudson River Valley Tour.

Save the date of Wednesday, October 9, 6:30 p.m. for Curator Bob Myers’ presentation, “Autotram: Clark Equipment Company’s Aluminum Railcar.” The 68-page booklet is now for sale in the Museum Store. If you would like an autographed copy, come to the free PowerPoint presentation.

On Thursday, October 24, the Board of Directors invites you to attend our 6th annual Signature Event at Lake Michigan College’s Grand Upton Hall. This year’s historical guest is Gen. Robert E. Lee, portrayed by David Palmer. In addition to a reception, dinner and appearance by General Lee, there is live music, door prizes and a silent auction. “Save the Date” post cards went out in August and the invitations were mailed in mid-September. Please contact us at (269) 471-1202 to register.

The final event of the year is the annual “Kindle the Christmas Spirit” on December 5. We look forward to seeing you there!

Kathy Cyr
New Booklet Relates History of the Clark Autotram

Clark Equipment built a product ahead of its time: the Autotram railcar.

The History Center will introduce a new 68-page illustrated history of the Autotram with a program and signing on Wednesday, October 9, at 6:30 p.m. Museum curator and author Robert Myers will present a new PowerPoint program to introduce the booklet.

In 1932, during the darkest hours of the Great Depression, the Clark Equipment Company rolled a revolutionary new product out of its Battle Creek factory. The Autotram, an aluminum railcar with a Cadillac V-16 engine up front, raced along the tracks at 80 miles per hour. Company president Eugene B. Clark hoped that the railcar would restore Clark’s fortunes and save American rail road passenger service.

The latest publication from the History Center at Courthouse Square describes the design, production and testing of the Autotram. The narrative relies on research from unpublished sources in the History Center’s Clark Equipment Collection including company reports and oral history interviews with the people involved in the project.

The booklet also includes dozens of photographs of the Autotram, ranging from the beginning of construction to the first day’s test runs, along with patent drawings of its unique features.
Curator’s Corner

Recent Donations to the Museum Collections

Jane Lindenfeld Ainley . . . . . . . Parlor table, mirror, book, scrapbook, service bell
Jan Gorham . . . . . . . . . . . . . Berrien Springs High School year books, photograph, newspaper
Jackie Hammond . . . . . . . . . . . Wedding dress
Suzanne Levy . . . . . . . . . . . . . Postcards
Craig Miller . . . . . . . . . . . . . Postcard, campaign novelties
Dan Reprogle . . . . . . . . . . . . . Niles Gas Co. receipts
Daryl T. Schlender . . . . . . . Nelson W. Napier memorial panel
Mary Jane Scott . . . . . . . . . . . Vaseline glass bud vase & candlestick

Daryl Schlender of St. Joseph recently donated this memento of one of Lake Michigan’s worst maritime disasters. Capt. Nelson W. Napier of St. Joseph commanded the steamer *Alpena* when she went down with all hands in a storm. A gravestone in St. Joseph’s City Cemetery commemorates Napier’s life, but his body was never recovered.

Thursdays at Courthouse Square

Almost 400 people attended this summer’s annual program series, *Thursdays at Courthouse Square*. We enjoyed learning about the Shawnee leader Tecumseh; African-American soldiers in the Civil War; Michigan’s native animals; Michigan women in the Civil War; and life aboard a 19th century Great Lakes schooner.

Our thanks go to the Indiana-Michigan Power Company and the Berrien Springs/Eau Claire Rotary Club for underwriting the program series. We’re already starting to plan next year’s programs!

Michael Deren (above) returned this year in the role of a Great Lakes schooner captain from 1875. Always one of our most popular presenters, Michael involves his audiences in plenty of “class participation.” Some of our intrepid guests volunteered to portray beavers in a most convincing manner (right).

Michael visited the History Center last year in the guise of the skipper of a canal boat on the Erie Canal. We had a great time on both occasions being entertained and educated.
Join the History Center Today!

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City: __________________ State: _____ Zip: __________
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Email: __________________

Membership categories:
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[ ] Individual $20
[ ] Family $30
[ ] Institutional $40
Supporting
[ ] Contributing $40
[ ] Sustaining $50
[ ] Patron $100
[ ] Benefactor $500

Additional donation: $ ______
Amount enclosed: $ ______

Please make checks payable to the Berrien County Historical Assn. or please charge my credit card: (circle one)
Mastercard Visa Discover

Card Number: ____________________________ Exp. Date: ______

Mail or fax to: BCHA, PO Box 261,
Berrien Springs, MI  49103
Phone: (269) 471-1202 Fax: (269) 471-7412

Enjoy Our Local History!

Greetings from Benton Harbor ($27.95)
Locomotives Along the Lakeshore ($23.95)
Greetings from St. Joseph ($27.95)
Greetings from Berrien Springs ($21.95)
Greetings from Buchanan ($24.95)
The Story of Buchanan ($14.95)
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Pennsylvania Amish Country Tour

We had a wonderful time on our annual motorcoach tour in mid-September visiting historic sites around Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, with day trips to Valley Forge and Philadelphia. History Center Director Kathy Cyr and Curator Bob Myers led the group of 38 passengers on the eight-day trip.

We're already planning next year's tours: a three-day architectural tour of Frank Lloyd Wright sites in Illinois and Wisconsin in the spring; and an eight-day tour to New York's Hudson River Valley. Our tours include motorcoach transportation, lodging, all breakfasts and dinners, and all admission fees. We'll keep you posted with full details on these great trips as we finalize our plans.

“Our gang!”

Mike & Phyllis Petersen at Independence Hall

Visiting the Founding Fathers at the Constitution Canter

President James Buchanan's home, “Wheatland,” in Lancaster

George Washington's headquarters at Valley Forge

Touring Valley Forge with a National Park Service guide

We had a beautiful day for a horse-drawn wagon ride around Landis Valley Village & Farm Museum
Original Berrien County Courthouse Becomes a Michigan Legal Milestone

The historic Berrien County Courthouse in Berrien Springs became the State Bar of Michigan’s 38th Michigan Legal Milestone on June 26, 2013.

In a dedication ceremony at the Howard Performing Arts Center at Andrews University, speakers highlighted the history of the 1839 courthouse, and the important role that such courthouses played in the state’s justice system and communities.

The Michigan Legal Milestones program recognizes significant legal cases and personalities in Michigan’s history and uses bronze plaques, placed at featured sites, to relate the historical significance. A new milestone is dedicated each year. The Legal Milestone plaques are on display across the state. The plaque for the 1839 Courthouse will be placed beside the walkway leading to the building entrance.

The plaque honors the original Berrien County Courthouse as the oldest extant courthouse in the state, noting that it is “architecturally representative of the type of buildings used by Michigan’s earliest judges and lawyers.” Architect Gilbert B. Avery, who lived near present-day Three Oaks, designed the courthouse in the Greek Revival architectural style; local builder James Lewis began the construction in 1838 and finished in early 1839. It served as the Berrien County courthouse until voters moved the county seat to St. Joseph in 1894.

The County of Berrien sold the courthouse to private owners soon after the county seat moved to St. Joseph. It served for a time as a dance hall (called Berrien Court) and as a militia drill hall. It became the first home of Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University when the college moved to Berrien Springs in 1901. The Seventh-day Adventist Village Church leased the courthouse in 1917 and bought it in 1922 and it was used as the Village Church until 1966. The Berrien County Historical Association formed in 1967 to preserve and restore the historic courthouse as a county history museum.

Other Michigan Legal Milestones honor President Gerald R. Ford, civil rights leader Sojourner Truth, the 1914 Baseball Reserve Clause, and a 1913 libel case filed by Theodore Roosevelt against the publisher of the Ishpeming newspaper.
Continuing and Upcoming Events

Ongoing: The Marxochime Colony: Music for the Masses. Exhibit at the History Center. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mondays - Fridays.

October 9: Autotram: Clark Equipment Company's Aluminum Railcar. Program and book signing. Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

October 24: Signature Event. Robert E. Lee: Duty & Honor. At LMC Mendel Center. Thursday, starting at 6:00 p.m. $75 pp., $500 table for eight.

December 5: Kindle the Christmas Spirit. Berrien Springs' annual Christmas program returns! Thursday, 5-9 p.m.