An Evening with Dolley Madison

Our Signature Event welcomes America’s first First Lady on October 23

How on earth did Dolley Payne Todd become Mrs. James Madison?

The match seemed unlikely. When they married in 1794, James was 43 years old and Dolley was just 26. The future President was shy, sickly, short (only 5’6” while Dolley stood nearly two inches taller) and reputedly fond of dirty jokes. Dolley was a Quaker while James had no known religious convictions; the Society of Friends expelled Dolley for marrying outside their faith. Dolley may not have been enthused about her marriage: on her wedding day she signed a letter: “Now Mrs. Madison, alas.”

But James Madison was a towering intellect, a congressman, recognized as the Father of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and (with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay) author of the Federalist Papers. He was also a wealthy Virginia planter. In October 1793, Dolley had lost her husband and an infant son in a yellow fever epidemic that also carried away her parents-in-law, leaving her a widow with a young son to support and no family.

In May 1794, the bashful Madison summoned the courage to ask their mutual friend Aaron Burr to arrange a formal meeting with Dolley. By August, she had accepted his proposal of marriage. Whether she loved her new husband at the time of their wedding is unknown, but the marriage definitely became a happy one.

Dolley Madison put her social gifts to use when the couple lived in Washington, beginning when James served as Secretary of State under President Thomas Jefferson. With the White House still under construction, she advised as to its furnishings and sometimes served as First Lady for ceremonial functions for the widowed Jefferson.

When James Madison became the President in 1809, Dolley created the role of First Lady. She used her considerable social talents to advance his programs and helped add to his popularity in office.

Continued on page 3
Berrien County Historical Association Board and Staff

Board of Directors

Robert Sykora, President
Gary Campbell, Vice President
Sara Bell, Treasurer
Rebecca May, Secretary
Al Butzbaugh
John Kamer
Robert Feldman
Robert Norris
Adam Fenner
Margaret Poole

Staff

Kathy A. 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

The Docket
Fall 2014, Vol. 30, No. 3

The Docket is published quarterly by the Berrien County Historical Association, 313 N. Cass Street, PO Box 261, Berrien Springs, MI 49103. (269) 471-1202

Editorial Staff
Kathy A. Cyr, Executive Director
Robert C. Myers, Curator
Kristen Patzer Umphrey, Museum Services Coordinator

The Docket is a benefit of membership in the BCHA. Annual membership dues to the BCHA are: $20 for individuals, $30 for families, and $40 for institutions. Supporting memberships are: $40 Contributing, $50 Sustaining, $100 Patron, and $500 Benefactor.

© Berrien County Historical Association, 2014.

Director’s Comments
By Kathy Cyr

Dear Friends,

Fall officially starts on September 23! Where did the summer go? Hopefully, you spent some of those lovely summer days and evenings here at the History Center attending Thursdays at Courthouse Square and bringing friends, family members and out-of-town guests to visit the site and museum and shop the museum store.

Thanks and appreciation is bestowed upon: the underwriters for Thursdays at Courthouse Square – Berrien Springs/Eau Claire Rotary Club and AEP Indiana Michigan Power and a collaboration with the Berrien Springs Community Library; the ten volunteers who staffed the History Center Booth at the Berrien County Youth Fair – Bob Norris, Gary and Karen Campbell, Bob Cooley, Carol Bronicki, Abigail Joyce, Joyce Daniels, Margaret Schmieding, Jill Foster, and Carol Noid; and the 42 participants who traveled with us September 6 – 13, on the Hudson River Valley bus tour.

Bob Myers did an outstanding job planning the Hudson River Valley trip! Join us in 2015 for one, or two or even all three of the trips being planned.

Mark your calendars for these 2014 fall events:
October 15 – In commemoration of the 175th Anniversary of the 1839 Courthouse a real trial will be held in the courthouse.
October 23 – Dolley Madison is coming to town! Join us for social hour, dinner, silent auction and program at the Mendel Center, Grand Upton Hall, Lake Michigan College. Invitations were mailed on September 17. Call Kristen at 269-471-1202 to make your reservations;
October 25 – Haunted St. Joseph, Tours will begin at 5 p.m. Reservations can be made through the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center;
December 4 – Kindle the Christmas Spirit.

The five-year strategic plan for the Berrien County Historical Association is ready to be shared with the public for your input. Please watch for the announcement of the meeting that will be held in early October.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the fall programs offered by the Berrien County Historical Association – The History Center at Courthouse Square – and your participation in the strategic planning session.

Regards,

Kathy A. Cyr
Executive Director
We're looking forward to our visit from First Lady Dolley Madison. Actress Cynthia Janzen of Philadelphia will portray Dolley Payne Todd Madison on October 23 at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center.

The evening starts at 6:00 p.m., and will include dinner, door prizes, a silent auction, musical entertainment, and of course Cynthia Janzen's portrayal of Dolley Madison. Tickets (by advance reservation only) are $75 each or a table for eight for $500. To make reservations, call the History Center at (269) 471-1202 to pay with a Visa, Mastercard or Discover Card; or mail a check to the History Center at Courthouse Square, PO Box 261, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

Historians credit Dolley with many “firsts.” She sponsored a dinner and dance in preparation for President Madison's inauguration, thereby originating the presidential “inaugural ball.” She was the first First Lady depicted on the cover of a magazine, the Port Folio, published in Philadelphia.

Dolley Madison was also the first First Lady to formally associate herself with a specific public project: as a fundraiser, supporter and board member, she helped to found a Washington, D.C., home for young orphaned girls. She also befriended nuns from a local Catholic school and began a lifelong association with the organization.

Legend has it that Dolley sponsored an egg-rolling contest for children on or near the lawn of the incomplete Capitol Building, a practice that continues as the Easter Egg Roll on the White House grounds. Another legend credits her with convincing the President to permit Francis Scott Key to board a truce ship in Baltimore during the War of 1812 to seek the freedom of a captured friend; Key then witnessed the firing on Fort McHenry and wrote the poem which became the Star Spangled Banner. Still another legend claims that she popularized a new dessert - ice cream - when she served it at a White House function.

Dolley Madison's ebullient personality and social skills had many political advantages for her husband. His wife made their guests, regardless of political views, feel at ease. She exercised political influence through correspondence, entertaining and cultivating personal alliances with the spouses of important political figures, and often worked to place supporters, friends and family members into official government positions.

James Madison died at their home, Montpelier, in 1836. Dolley organized and copied her husband's papers. Congress authorized $55,000 as payment for editing and publishing seven volumes of the Madison papers, including his unique notes on the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

How does Dolley’s reputation fare today? Polls consistently rank her near the top of America’s First Ladies, behind only Eleanor Roosevelt, Abigail Adams and Jacqueline Kennedy.

How to Meet Dolley Madison ~

We're looking forward to our visit from First Lady Dolley Madison. Actress Cynthia Janzen of Philadelphia will portray Dolley Payne Todd Madison on October 23 at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center.

The evening starts at 6:00 p.m., and will include dinner, door prizes, a silent auction, musical entertainment, and of course Cynthia Janzen's portrayal of Dolley Madison. Tickets (by advance reservation only) are $75 each or a table for eight for $500. To make reservations, call the History Center at (269) 471-1202 to pay with a Visa, Mastercard or Discover Card; or mail a check to the History Center at Courthouse Square, PO Box 261, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.
Curator’s Corner

Recent Donations to the Museum Collections

Niles Community Library ......................... Photographs
Robert & Erich Norris .............. Framed letter from John Tucker
Buchanan District Library ... Niles High School yearbook, 1930
Lisa McCoy ........ WW II army blanket, fruit farm pickers’ cards
Julia LaSata ... Book, History of Berrien & Cass Counties, 1893
Bernice Martz ....................... Berrien Springs memorabilia
Joy Rogers .......................... Postcard collection
Suzanne Irion .......... St. Joseph & Benton Harbor memorabilia
Susan Case ......................... Match safe

Celebrating Berrien County’s Courthouses

Visitors touring the historic 1839 Courthouse are surprised to learn that the building still occasionally functions in its original role as a county courthouse. This October, the Hon. Thomas Nelson will preside over a trial in commemoration of the courthouse’s 175th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the current county courthouse in St. Joseph.

In 1974, the Michigan legislature passed an act to reestablish the original Berrien County courthouse as an official courthouse for ceremonial purposes. Judge Chester Byrns conducted naturalization ceremonies in the courtroom for many years, and in the early 1980s Judge John Fields began a practice of holding District Court trials in the courthouse. Judge Nelson will convene court on Wednesday morning, October 15.

History Center curator Robert Myers is also editing a booklet with reminiscences of the county’s legal system prepared by long-time members of the Berrien County Bar Association. The booklet will include a brief history of the county’s three courthouses and the Bar Association members’ recollections. Contributors include Donald F. Ryman, Bruce C. Conybeare, Ronald J. Taylor, John T. Hammond and David Vander Ploeg.

The booklet will be available after October 22 - for more information, contact the History Center at (269) 471-1202 or bcha@berrienhistory.org.
Join the History Center Today!

Name: ____________________________  Phone: ______________
Address: ____________________________________________
City: _______________  State: _______  Zip: ____________
Fax: ________________

Membership categories:
Basic          Supporting
[ ] Individual $20  [ ] Contributing $40
[ ] Family $30  [ ] Sustaining $50
[ ] Institutional $40  [ ] 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 Three Oaks ($25.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Greetings from Benton Harbor ($27.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Greetings from St. Joseph ($27.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Greetings from Berrien Springs ($21.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Greetings from Buchanan ($24.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
The Story of Buchanan ($14.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
The Heyday of Hinchman ($18.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Historical Sketches of Berrien County ($23.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Autotram: Clark’s Aluminum Railcar ($16.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Locomotives Along the Lakeshore ($24.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____
Twin City Trolleys ($8.95)  Quantity: _____  Total: $ _____

SPECIAL: Greetings from Buchanan & Story of Buchanan
Get both for $29.95!

Quantity: Total: $ ______

Subtotal: $ ______
Discounts (Library 20%  BCHA Members 10%)
State sales tax (6% for Michigan orders only)
Shipping ($3.95 for 1st book, $1.00 each additional book

Total: $ ______

Save on shipping and pick up your books from the History Center Store!

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City: ___________  State: _______  Zip: ____________
Telephone: _________  Email: ________________

Make check/money order payable to Berrien County Historical Assn., PO Box 261,
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Credit Card Orders (Visa, MC, Discover)
Card No.: 
Exp. Date: 
Name on Card: 
Signature: 


**Fall Tour ~ Hudson River Valley**

We had a great tour of New York’s Hudson River Valley in September. History Center Director Kathy Cyr and Curator Bob Myers led the trip to New York and Pennsylvania. We visited many historic sites, including the Franklin D. Roosevelt home in Hyde Park; Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pennsylvania; “Olana,” the home of painter Frederic Church; and Historic Huguenot Street in New Paltz, New York.

We’re already in the planning stages for our 2015 tours. We’re reprising our highly popular “Life of Lincoln” tour to Springfield, Illinois, in May (3 day); an Agawa Canyon Rail Tour to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, in July (3 day) and a Charleston, South Carolina tour (8 day) tour in September.

As a History Center member, you’ll receive a special notice for each of these tours, and automatically qualify for the members’ discount.

The view of the Hudson River from Boscobel House.

Frederic Church filled his home, Olana, with paintings he bought in Europe.

We enjoyed a train ride in a beautifully restored 1920s passenger car at Steamtown National Historic Site.

The chapel at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point - one of the tour highlights.

Our gang walking up to the Franklin D. Roosevelt home, Springwood. The staff there gave us a great tour.
Haunted St. Joseph Walking Tour

Join us for a historically haunted walking tour of St. Joseph on Saturday, October 25. Curator Bob Myers, History Center staff and volunteers, and the staff of The Heritage Museum & Cultural Center are teaming up for a Halloween stroll through St. Joseph's historic district and the St. Joseph City Cemetery.

Tours begin at 5:00 p.m., and tickets are $5 each. Groups are limited in number, so to reserve space on the tours call The Heritage Museum at (269) 983-1191.

Houses in the St. Joseph Historic District date from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century and many of them have witnessed tragic events over the last 160 years. For example: ship captain Cornelius McNeil took his wife Persilla and their three children with him aboard the bark Sunshine in 1859; the ship capsized on Lake Erie during a storm and only Persilla survived. Their house from which they left on their ill-fated voyage still stands on State Street. Another State Street house, built in 1892, has a seemingly unremarkable history. Families have lived there happily for over 120 years. Many people, however, claim to have encountered the ghost of a teenaged girl in the house - who she is and what she might want no one knows.

Although not a haunted house, another St. Joseph site - the bronze bust of local poet Ben King in Lake Front Park - recalls an eerie history. St. Joseph usually remembers King for his gentle, humorous poems like The River St. Joe, but he was also a key member of Chicago’s Whitechapel Club. The club, named for London's Whitechapel district, made Jack the Ripper its honorary president; it decorated its meeting rooms with real skulls, murder weapons and hangman’s nooses, and once cremated a suicide's body on the Lake Michigan shore.

The St. Joseph City Cemetery is the final resting place for hundreds of the town's residents. A large monument to Capt. Nelson Napier occupies a prominent place in the cemetery, but the grave beneath it is empty because - well, you’ll have to join the tour to learn the story.
Continuing and Upcoming Events

**Ongoing:** *New From You!* Exhibit at the History Center. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mondays - Fridays.

**October 15:** Court trial in the 1839 Berrien County Courthouse

**October 23:** Signature Event: Dolley Madison. Lake Michigan College Mendel Center, 6:00 p.m.

**October 25:** “Haunted St. Joseph.” A spooky walking tour of St. Joseph, in partnership with The Heritage Museum & Cultural Center. 5:00 p.m. $5.00 pp.

**December 4:** Kindle Your Christmas Spirit.

**April 19-21, 2015:** “Life of Lincoln” bus tour to Springfield, Illinois


**September 12-19, 2015:** Charleston, South Carolina bus tour.