The Berrien County Historical Association is proud to announce the Signature Event will take place on Thursday, October 26, 2017, at 6:30 pm, at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center. The past couple years have been focused on the Roosevelts (Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 2015 and Eleanor Roosevelt in 2016); this year we will be joined by Amelia Earhart, portrayed by actress, Pat Jordan.

Amelia Earhart continues to fascinate and to inspire. The charismatic, athletic, risk-taking tomboy could charm you with her sparkling eyes, motivate you with her passion, could convince you with her skill. Although she was born in Kansas, Ms. Earhart had solid Philadelphia connections: Amelia attended the Ogontz School, now part of Penn State University, flew a piper cub from Coatesville and spoke about aviation in Germantown. Ms. Earhart was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as the first aviatrix to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to actually flying, she wrote aviation books, helped form the Ninety-Nines to support other female pilots, and taught classes at Purdue University’s aviation department. Earhart was active in the political arena as a member of the National Woman’s Party and as a strong supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment. A friend to Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, Ms. Earhart took Eleanor flying after FDR told her he didn’t want Eleanor piloting a plane.

The evening will begin at 6 pm and will include a social hour, dinner, door prizes, a silent auction, and the portrayal of Amelia Earhart. Tickets are $75 per person (includes $25 tax deductible donation) or $500 for a table of eight (includes $100 tax deductible donation). For more information or to make reservations, please call the History Center at 269-471-1202, we would love to have you there.

Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace.
The soul that knows it not
Knows no release from little things:
Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,
Nor mountain heights where bitter joy can hear the sound of wings.
Nor can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare
The soul’s dominion.
Each time we make a choice, we pay
With courage to behold the restless day,
And count it fair.

-Amelia Earhart
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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

Hard to believe that we are in August already! It has been an extremely busy eight months since Bob Myers left for his new position at the Historical Society of Michigan. Kelsey Curnutt, Museum Services Coordinator, and I have tried to take over many of Bob’s former responsibilities to keep the programming and promotions ongoing. We are most thankful for hourly staffers Yarleth Gomez (continuing) and Renee Kurtzweil (departed end of May) and the many volunteers that have helped with the programming and day to day operations at the site.

I wish to express my appreciation to the staff and volunteers who participated in making Pioneer Days and Sunday & Saturday events so successful. They are as follows: Pioneer Day - Tim Langlois, Monica Langlois, John Frambach, Dave Francis, Jim Chellman, Sam Kurtzweil, Karen Campbell, Maryann Chellman, Carol Noid, Renee Kurtzweil, Eli Kurtzweil, Luc Kurtzweil, and Kelsey Curnutt; Sunday & Saturday events - Dick Schinkel (organizer for most Sunday events), Tom Kimmel, Phil Potter, Dave Francis, August Zielke, Rob Collins, and the upcoming August presenters Mary Adams and Jan Burda; daily operations - Bob Cooley, Tom Nelson, Barbara Pence and staffers Yarleth Gomez and Kelsey Curnutt. We just could not have accomplished all that we did in May, June and July without your contributions of time, contacts and expertise! THANK YOU!

The final heritage tour for 2017 will be held September 9-17 to Ottawa, Quebec City, Montreal, and Niagra Falls, Canada. Kelsey Curnutt and I will serve as tour guides on this special trip. Since there are only two full-time salaried staff (and both of us are needed to conduct the tour), we are looking for volunteers to help Yarleth staff the museum while we are away. If interested please call us at 471-1202.

We hope you are having a great summer and that you can join us as a participant or volunteer in meeting our programming obligations for several of the remaining events scheduled for August through December (see back page).

Sincerely,

Kathy A. Cyr

The Docket

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Editorial Staff
Kathy A. Cyr, Executive Director
Kelsey A. Curnutt, 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.

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School Activities and Programs at Courthouse Square

May in Michigan can go either way. It’s spring and we are all anxious for winter to finally be over, yet it often is still cool enough that you need a jacket. Friday, May 12, dawned bright and sunny with a promise of temps right around 70 degrees, a perfect day to welcome school groups for the annual Pioneer Day.

There was certainly a buzz in the air as students filed through full of expectations. There were seven stations to go through: corn shelling, log cutting, blacksmith, stenciling, log cabin life, musket firing, and courtroom dancing. Each station was led by volunteers or a staff member and gave students a chance to learn about life as a pioneer with hands on experience.

Also in May two more school groups came to the museum for Mock Trials. A Mock Trial lets the visiting students act out a case that actually happened and was tried in the 1839 courthouse. In this case a man is accused of creating counterfeit coins. Each student has a role to play: judge, defending attorney, prosecuting attorney, witnesses, jury members, sheriff, jailor, defendant, etc. They’re guided through the court proceedings and prompted, if necessary, when to speak, while teachers and parents watch with interest.

After the witnesses have given testimony and the attorneys have presented their final arguments, the jurors have a chance to decide whether the defendant is innocent or guilty and whether or not he has a punishment. (In both instances the defendant was found guilty and sentenced a massive fine and lots of jail time.)

Both Pioneer Day and the Mock Trials are excellent ways to make history real for our students in a fun, hands-on approach. A special thank you to all of our volunteers who helped make these days run smoothly; we could not do it without you!

Cindy Young Receives Frank J. Ward Memorial Award

On Tuesday, April 25, 60 people gathered in the Courtroom at Courthouse Square for the Berrien County Historical Association Annual Meeting. Kathy Cyr, Executive Director, reported on all that occurred over the past year and Bob Myers was our keynote speaker. The event served as a double celebration of 50 years since Berrien County Historical Association was founded and a farewell to our curator, Bob Myers, who after 35 years of preserving and presenting the history of Berrien County, joined the staff at the Historical Society of Michigan. The Berrien Springs Civic League presented him with a bench (currently sitting outside the entrance of the Courthouse) and a certificate. Additionally, the Annual Meeting is when we present the Frank J. Ward Memorial Award.

Cindy Young was the 2016 recipient of the Frank J. Ward Memorial Award, presented to her by Ron Taylor. For thirty years, Ms. Young has worked tirelessly to bring attention to local history. In particular she was instrumental in the successful recreation of the North Berrien Museum in Coloma, Michigan. She served on the boards of both North Berrien Historical Association (1988-present) and Berrien County Historical Association (Secretary, 1996-1998; President, 1998-2000). During her time on the board of BCHA she was key in the successful curation of the “Millennial Visions” exhibit at Orchards Mall in 1997 which celebrated the House of David in Benton Harbor. In 2009, Ms. Young was awarded the Peach-Glad Festival Community Service Award. Thank you, Cindy, for your work in preserving and celebrating our local history.
Yes! You still have time to visit the “Wisdom Seekers” exhibit on display in the Sheriff’s Residence through October. This exhibit explores the history of Andrews University, which used Courthouse Square when it first moved from Battle Creek to Berrien Springs.

New Team Member

Meet Yarleth Gomez! Yarleth began regularly volunteering at the History Center in January while she completed her senior year at Andrews University. During that time she has helped us clean the buildings, clean and photograph Bennett Forge and tools, and help with mailing newsletters and trip booklets to all of you! Over the course of the summer Yarleth began assisting with collections management. She is reviewing and organizing our collection in a way that ensures we have everything documented and is easily found.

Yarleth graduated in May from Andrews University with a BA in Behavioral Sciences with an emphasis in anthropology and a minor in art history. She plans to begin her Masters in Archaeology at Andrews this fall while working part-time for the History Center. Please join us in welcoming her to the team!

Summer Events

We have been enjoying the warmer weather that comes with summer in Michigan! This summer we had lots of fun family friendly events here at Courthouse Square. We have enjoyed blacksmith demonstrations from two of our favorite local blacksmiths: Phil Potter and Dave Francis. We have partnered with the Berrien Community Public Library and co-hosted the summer reading program that focuses on local Michigan history—what better place to do that than at the Courthouse?

Our popular Thursdays at Courthouse Square began on June 22 and continued through July 27 (see page six for more details). In addition to our Thursday programs we had some Sunday lectures from local enthusiasts about antique firearms, the history of the banjo and the underground railroad, and even oxen!

Rob Collins with his Oxen

Phil Potter demonstrates some blacksmith skills on the lawn outside the Bennett Forge.

Yarleth Gomez began volunteering in January. Here she is cleaning and photographing objects in Bennett’s Forge.
Join the History Center Today!

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Please charge my credit card: (circle one)
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Mail or fax to: BCHA, PO Box 261
Berrien Springs, MI 49103
Phone: (269) 471-1202    Fax: (269) 471-7412

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The Heyday of Hinchman  ($18.95)  Quantity: _______ Total: $ _______
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Hard to believe that our popular summer series, Thursdays at Courthouse Square, has already finished. Is this a sign that summer too is coming to a close? We certainly hope not!

The series began on June 22 and continued every Thursday through July 27. All programs were free of charge thanks to grants from Indiana-Michigan Power Company and the Berrien Springs/Eau Claire Rotary Club.

Gordon Olson, Grand Rapids City Historian from 1978 until his retirement just a few years ago, kicked us off with “A Michigan Polar Bear Confronts the Bolsheviks: A War Memorial”. In this program we learned about the United States’ activities in Russia during World War I. Many attendees noted how little they previously knew about the subject matter. If you missed it the book of the same title is available for purchase in the Courthouse Giftshop. (Copies are limited.)

When we think of Berrien Springs and the world of boxing most of us would automatically jump to talking about Muhammad Ali who was a resident of the area from 1975 through 2006. But, as we learned from board member and attorney at Foster Swift Collins and Smith, Stephen Smith, at our second program, this was not the first brush between our county and great boxers. In 1920, the newly declared world champion Jack Dempsey came to Benton Harbor for his first fight defending his title. You can see a quick, silent clip of the Benton Harbor arena day of the match by searching “Billy Miske vs Jack Dempsey” on YouTube.

Robert Myers visited from the Historical Society of Michigan where he is now Assistant Director for Education Programs and Events, to present about local Victorian sisters “Adeline and Julia: Growing Up in Michigan and on the Kansas Frontier”. The sisters were not your typical Victorian girls as proven by their diaries which were either given or loaned to the Berrien County Historical Association and which were later published as a book. We learned about their spunky, independent thoughts and, specifically about Adeline, we were reminded of great literary characters such as Jo from Little Women or Anne from Green Gables. If you missed this fascinating and revealing presentation you can purchase the book of the same title in the Courthouse Giftshop (limited copies) or online through Michigan State University Press.

Loreen Niewenhuis came to recount her walk around Lake Michigan which she completed in 2009, dividing the 1,000 miles into six different segments. Listening to her stories and viewing her pictures and video clips, listeners gained a new appreciation for how fortunate we are to live so close to such a dynamic body of water. If you were unable to join us for this presentation, we do have copies of her books in the giftshop and we plan to have her return next summer to tell of another of her journeys.

“The World Wide Webb Miller”, presented by the Director of the Dowagiac Area History Museum, Steve Arseneau, told the incredible story of how a man from Cass County became a world reknown, award-winning reporter, travelling to countless countries to cover political situations ranging from the trenches of World War I to the beginning acts of World War II. If you missed this program or were here and would like to learn more, we encourage you to visit the Dowagiac Area History Museum where you can see photographs, passports, and other items as part of their permanent collection and display.

The final program of the summer series was by Taras Lyssenko, the “T” of A. and T. Recovery, about his long work recovering World War II Aircraft from Lake Michigan. Items were passed around, videos shown, and pictures of various artefact recovery all made this a unique presentation and a great way to end the series.

Although this is the end of this year’s Thursdays at Courthouse Square, we are already busy planning next year’s series. It promises to be just as fun and informative. In the meantime, join us for other events like the Signature Event with Amelia Earhart, or simply stop in to say hi.
Delaware Bay Excursion

Our tour to Delaware in April and May was truly a fantastic tour full of laughter, sunshine, delicious food, and fantastic friendship. We learned a lot of our Nation's humble beginnings (Delaware is the first state, after all) and the DuPont Family. It was a full tour and the weather was surprisingly perfect! Our last history tour of the year will be to Canada in September.

A behind the scenes tour at the Delaware Natural History Museum where we got to pass around an elephant tooth and go up to where collections are stored and managed.

Learning about the many contributions to our modern-day life from the du Pont family.

A Pilgrim's Feast at Jessup's Tavern. We truly know how to eat!

Another behind the scenes look this time at the Hagley Museum.

The ponies of Chincoteague and Assateague.

Mike and Phyllis Petersen enjoy a walk through the rhododendras on the grounds of Winterthur.

Getting a close look of the Naval Academy in Annapolis.
Continuing and Upcoming Events

December 7: Kindle Your Christmas Spirit, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Bonfire Friendly Center, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the Lake Michigan.

October 26: Signature Event, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Lake Michigan.

October 14: Haunted St. Joseph Walking Tour, 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec City’s Heritage bus tour throughout.

September 9 - 10: "Bonjour Canada" Heritage bus tour throughout.

August 14 - 19: Berrien County Youth Fair.

December 7: Kindle Your Christmas Spirit, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Wisdom Seekers Exhibit in the Sheriff’s House.

Now - October 21: Wisdom Seekers Exhibit in the Sheriff’s House.

CONTINUE AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Post Office Box 261
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