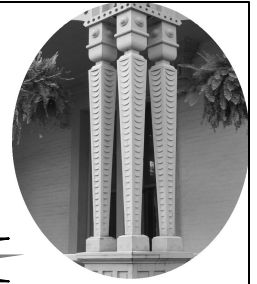


# The Benninghofen Post

A Publication of the Butler County Historical Society



1934

Celebrating

75

Years

2009

October/November 2009

Issue No. 2009-8

## The Butler County Historical Society

327 North Second St.  
Hamilton, Ohio 45011  
Phone: (513) 896-9930  
Fax: (513) 896-9936

To help us prepare for your visit, please call ahead.

[bchistoryalsociety.com](http://bchistoryalsociety.com)

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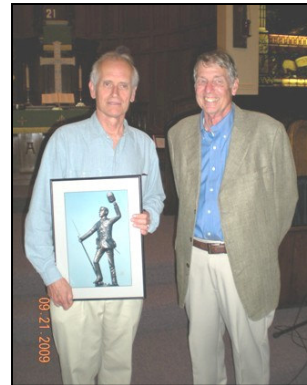
Butler Co. Historical Society  
Newsletter (ISSN383367-13)

## PERSONNEL, PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES

The resignation of Michael Riesenberg effective September 11 was received and accepted with great regret. Mike started work at the Society during September 2007 as an assistant to the director and within four months was promoted to executive director. He came to the Society with many talents and added others in his too-short stay. Mike will continue to be associated with the Society as Communications Coordinator.

On September 21, Dr. Jon Thiem, the great-grandson of sculptor Rudolph Thiem, presented an illustrated program to about 140 people at First-St. John's Church. Proclamations were read by Butler County Commissioner Greg Jolivet and Hamilton Councilwoman Carla Fiehrer. A pre-program tour and supper at Pyramid Hill was attended by BCHS board members, volunteers and members of the extended Thiem family.

The Butler County Historical Society's annual dinner meeting, our 75th, will take place on Thursday, November 19 at the Fitton Center's Carruthers Signature



Above: September speaker, Dr. Jon Thiem, with BCHS President, Jim Schwartz and a photo of Bill Yank.

Ballroom. Dr. Daniel Pierce, Chair of History at the University of North Carolina-Asheville, will give the keynote speech, "A Fairy Dream on a Goat Hill: One Historian's Journey into the History of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park." America's and Butler County's most popular national park is also celebrating its 75th birthday this year and there is a strong connection between the two. Much of the park land was acquired from Hamilton-based Champion Paper & Fibre Company.

Much of the park land was acquired from Hamilton-based Champion Paper & Fibre Company.

Continued on Pg. 2

## OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY APPEAL DONORS... THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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**Continued from Pg. 1...** A special guest at the annual meeting will be Mr. Alexander "Sandy" Thomson III, the great-grandson of Champion founder Peter G. Thomson. He will extend greetings and comment on the relationship between the National Park and the Company his family headed for many years.

For 75 years the BCHS has performed an important role in preserving and researching the County's past. It has aided in the establishment and growth of many of the historical organizations throughout Butler County.

While we celebrate the Society's past during its diamond anniversary year, we continue to carefully weigh our priorities and goals. The first relates to personnel. This depressing economy has witnessed many organizations curtailing days and hours of operation in order to reduce operational and personnel expenses. It is extremely important to recognize that the operation of the BCHS requires full-time direction regardless of how many hours the Society is open to the public.

Our second obligation is to see that the Benninghofen House Museum continues to be appropriately maintained. This is often costly. The electrical system in a Civil War era house is costly to update. But the destruction caused by an electrical fire would be incalculable. Replacing a dining room carpet should be a simple task. It is not so simple when one needs to move a massive



Above: the large Mitchell-Ramelsbuerg cabinet in the dining room sits above worn carpet.

Mitchell-Ramelsberg china cabinet weighing hundreds of pounds and local installers decline to bid.

Finally, and looking ahead, we have run out of space to house and display our archives and artifacts. The generous gift to build a research center will do much to provide a proper and secure area to house our library. We look forward to beginning this new development.

Sincerely,

Jim Schwartz  
BCHS President

However, it would be irresponsible to move ahead on a new facility without having funds committed for its staffing and operation. Any new operations can not be undertaken at the expense of our current obligations. That is our challenge as we move ahead.

### ELEANOR (BENNINGHOFEN) SKYLLINGSTAD REMEMBERED



The Butler County Historical Society lost one of its most devoted friends on September 8, 2009, when Eleanor L. Skyllingstad passed away at Berkeley Square Retirement Community. A daughter of Paul and Freda Benninghofen, she was the great-niece of Caroline and Pauline Benninghofen, the last two residents of the Society's Benninghofen House Museum. Her father had been a president of the Historical Society.

A generous contributor to many organizations, Elea-

nor's philanthropy was responsible for the redecoration of the Benninghofen House's dining room, the forthcoming publication of a book on the Benninghofen House, the family businesses and genealogy.

Eleanor is survived by her children: Christine Carroll, William Skyllingstad, Paul Skyllingstad and Eric Skyllingstad. Remaining family member include sisters Christine Turnbull and Margaret Suter, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

### COUNTYWIDE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

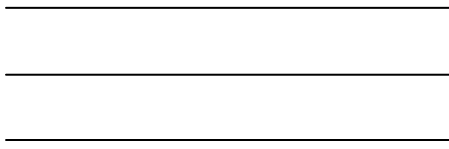
**Chrisholm Open House and 15th Anniversary Celebration - Saturday, November 7th, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm.** Tour the Chrisholm Historic Farmstead, see special history displays, and see what 15 years of preservation efforts have produced! Open house followed by meal at Barn n'Bunk for \$18. For more information call (513) 726-5265.

**The Forgotten War: Stories of Korean Veterans - Thursday, November 12th, 7:30 pm.** Hamilton historian Jim Blount will moderate a discussion with local veterans as they recall the 1950-53 war when they fought under the banner of the United Nations. Program to be held at the Harry T. Wilks Conference Center. For more information call (513) 785-3211.

**200 Years of Miami History - Saturday, November 21st, 10:00 am.** Dr. Curtis Ellison, Miami University professor of History and American Studies, will present historic images of Miami University through 200 years. Program held at the Morgan Township Administration Building. For more information call (513) 738 - 0910.

**Notice: Revised Hours at Smith Library of Regional History.** Effective August 31st, Smith Library hours are: Monday - Wednesday 1:30-5:30 pm, Thursday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm and 2:00 - 5:00 pm, Friday 1:00 - 5:00 pm, and other hours by appointment (513) 523-3035.





**BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
327 NORTH SECOND STREET  
HAMILTON, OH 45011**

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**THE 2009 ANNUAL MEETING AND 75TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

Thursday, November 19th

Featuring Dr. Daniel Pierce speaking about a

***“Journey Into the History of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park”***

**WHAT:** 2009 Annual Meeting and  
75th Anniversary Dinner

**WHO:** Dr. Daniel Pierce, speaking about the  
“History of the Great Smoky Mountain  
National Park”

**WHEN:** Thursday, November 19th at the BCHS  
Annual Dinner Meeting

**WHERE:** Fitton Center for Creative Arts  
101 South Monument Ave.  
Hamilton, OH 45011



Dr. Daniel Pierce is Chair of History at the University of North Carolina - Asheville. His interests in environmentalism and the Southern Appalachian Region have resulted in several publications, including *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park*, 2000. Dr. Pierce has also published several articles about logging in the Smoky Mountains and tourism development. His research interests also include stock car racing/NASCAR history and the history of moonshining. He has been interviewed by *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Chicago Tribune*.

IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY A MEMBER AND WOULD LIKE AN INVITATION TO THE DINNER, PLEASE CALL (513) 896-9930

**PERSONNEL CHANGES**

To all the members and supporters of the BCHS, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks for your support during my time as Executive Director. I resigned as Director effective September 11th for the purpose of finishing a Masters Degree in Community Planning at the University of Cincinnati. I hope to complete my degree by June of 2010. I will continue to be involved with the BCHS on a part-time basis in the position of Communications Coordinator. I appreciate the support of the BCHS Board in attaining my personal goals and look forward to working with our members and supporters in my new role.

Sincerely,

Mike Riesenberg  
Communications Coordinator



In an effort to maintain operations at a time of personnel transition at the BCHS, the Society’s Board has hired Christine Jauch as Curator. Christine will be working at the Society on Saturdays from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Christine is not a stranger to the Benninghofen House as she has worked as a part-time intern since the beginning of the year to fulfill requirements of a Museum Studies Certificate at the University of Cincinnati. Christine received her B.A. from Miami University in 2007 with concentrations in classical humanities and anthropology.

During her internship, Christine has worked in organizing and documenting the Society’s collection that is protected in the vault. Her new duties will also include researching objects and artifacts that come to the Society for accession and advising on their significance.

Although Christine is employed full-time with International Paper in Loveland, where she lives, her career objective has been to work in a museum setting where education and knowledge are priorities. It was a Miami University program in Italy that introduced her to the cultures and art of ancient Rome and Greece and awakened her desire to work in education and preservation.

The BCHS Board welcomes Christine and looks forward to her contributions in those key areas that are vital to the organization’s life.

**BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
327 NORTH SECOND STREET  
HAMILTON, OH 45011**

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Be sure to join the BCHS at Heritage Hall for the opening of the Railroad Exhibit and Program:

## *“Locomotives On Parade”*

Presented by Jack White, retired curator for the Smithsonian Institution

WHO: Jack White.

WHAT: “Locomotives On Parade” and opening of the Railroad Exhibit at Heritage Hall.

WHEN: Friday, October 23rd

WHERE: Heritage Hall  
20 High St.  
Hamilton, OH 45011

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (513) 896-9930 OR VISIT:  
[www.bchistorysociety.com](http://www.bchistorysociety.com)