

BUTLER COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

# The Benninghofen NEWSLETTER

327 NORTH SECOND STREET • HAMILTON, OHIO 45011 • 513.896.9930

Spring 2022  
Issue No. 2022-2

## Quilts on Display at the Historical Society

Quilts tell stories. They are documents in fabric and tell of industrial and technological advances; fashion and social trends; economics and politics; and women's contributions to our cultural heritage. A selection of quilts that reveal this history is on display at the historical society in the exhibit "Quilted Treasures: Stories in the Stitches". Quilts are more than warm and cozy coverings and these quilts show women's connection to family and friends; their resourcefulness and needlework expertise; their efforts to raise funds for causes; and that they were a vehicle for self-expression and personal accomplishment.

Period fashions are paired with quilts to demonstrate that the sources of quilting fabric were textiles manufactured for clothing and household furnishings.

Three fundraiser quilts in redwork attest to women's dedication to raise funds for valued causes. The Zion Lutheran Church was the beneficiary of a fundraiser quilt that included several Benninghofens who donated.

Quilts are on exhibit throughout the Benninghofen House from May 1 through September 10, 2022. Regular hours are: Monday-Friday, 10-3; summer hours are June-September, Tuesday-Friday 10-3 and Saturday 9-2.

The lecture that accompanies the exhibit will be delivered again at a date this summer. Watch for an announcement.



Pauline Benninghofen's graduation dress, 1883

The Butler County Historical Society Summer Hours

Tuesday - Friday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Saturday: 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

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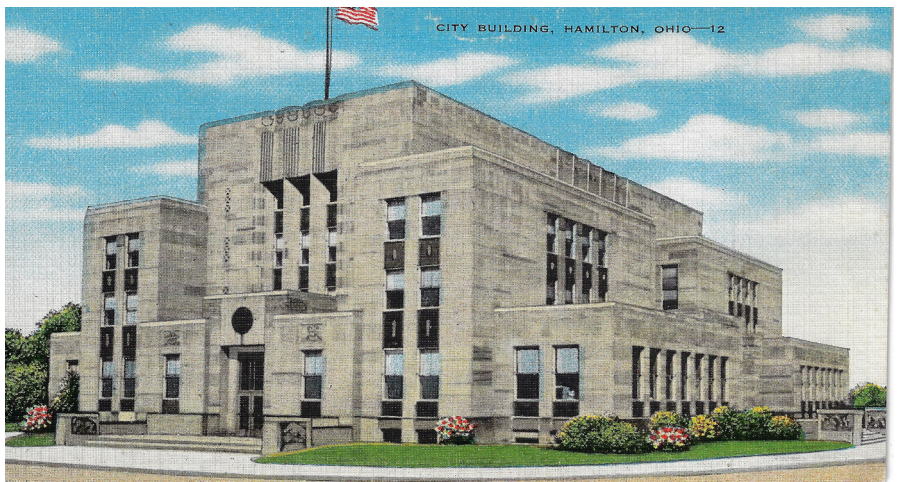
## “What Butler County Residents Did For Entertainment 100 Years Ago”



Rich Piland will be the featured speaker for the BCCHS "Member's Only" program on May 26. He will describe many of the activities county residents had available to them for entertainment 100 years ago in 1922. Activities in the resident's homes, churches and organizations played an important part in entertaining people. Outside the home, however, were opportunities to see a world class circus; performances of a dozen Grand Operas; attending speeches given by nationally known orators including William Jennings Bryan, three-time candidate for President of the United States, during the Hamilton Chautauqua; and taking in some or all the events of the 72nd annual Butler County Fair. Piland will also highlight some of the wonderful silent movies that starred the finest film stars of the day including Rudolph Valentino, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Will Rogers, Tom Mix, Harry Carey, William S. Hart, and Brownie, the Wonder Dog. The program will be held in the Emma Ritchie Auditorium and start at 7:00 p.m.

## Heritage Hall: A Golden Opportunity

This museum, housed in the art deco former municipal building, has so much to say about the greatness of Hamilton and its people. There are three excellent “must see” exhibits --Frederick Mueller—early renowned Hamilton architect and designer of the building; Robert McCloskey—home grown author of Caldicot award winning children's books as well as artist/sculptor of the stunning bas reliefs of the building; and a special display on the 1913 flood—the greatest natural disaster in Ohio history. The latter speaks to the resilience and fortitude of Hamiltonians. After surveying the devastation and moments of despair Homer Gard declared, “We will build back bigger and better”. The amazing speed that Hamilton recovered should make us proud. We are not whiners; we are winners.

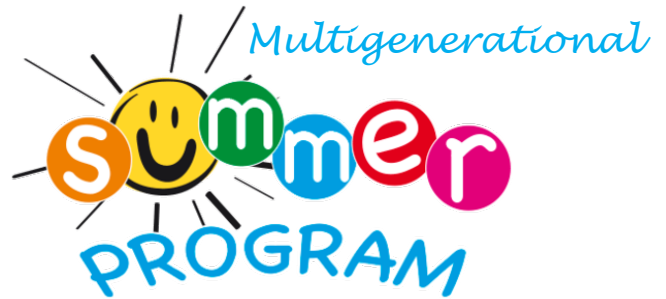


Location: 20 High St. Hamilton, OH 45011  
Hours: Fri. & Sat. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm



# Summer Programs

The BCHS will be hosting our Multigenerational Summer Programs starting in June. Each event will feature a unique topic, with hands on experiences, and an item to take home!



Saturday June 11th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

## All in a Day's Work

Doing laundry, gathering eggs, cleaning rugs, and making butter were all chores typical of daily life in the 1800's. Enjoy hands on experience of these types of chores, as well as a craft to take home!



Saturday July 9th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

## Quilted Treasures

Experience the BCHS summer exhibit of quilts throughout the Benninghofen House. Learn to card and spin wool, have a sewing lesson and gather clues for our scavenger hunt.

Saturday August 13th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

## Autographs

Famous or not, signatures and words of wisdom were collected by many. Learn while making your very own autograph book. Collect signatures from famous Butler Countians throughout the day!



Saturday September 10th 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

## Ice Cream Social

End of the Summer Celebration! Enjoy some delicious ice cream and play outdoor games of days gone by.



Weather permitting, all programs will be held in the front yard of the BCHS Benninghofen House at 327 North Second St. Hamilton, OH 45011

All events are free and open to the public thanks to a grant from the W.E. Smith Family Trust of Oxford.

# Mother and Me Tea Pictures

Our Mother and Me Tea was held on Saturday April 30th. All tickets were sold out! Those who attended had a fabulous time using china from our collection and enjoyed various types of tea and tea foods. A lesson on the language of the fan was also given. A special thank you to Joanne Williamson, Kelsey Stryffe, and Karen Schwartz in making this program a success.



## BCCHS Summer Hours

Memorial Day - Labor Day

Tuesday - Friday  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Saturday  
9:00 am - 2:00 pm



If you know a teenager who needs NHS or other volunteer hours, the BCCHS offers several opportunities this summer.

Please contact Kathy at  
513-896-9930 or  
[kathy@bchistoryalsociety.com](mailto:kathy@bchistoryalsociety.com)  
for more information.



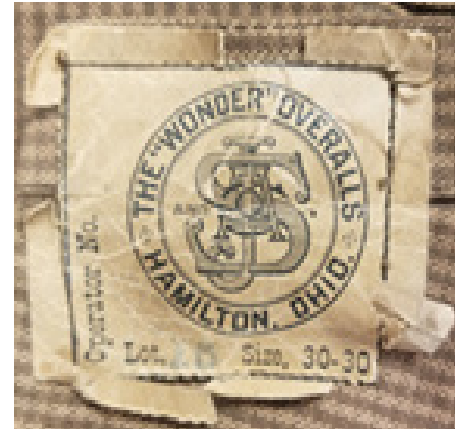
## Made in Hamilton

A pair of men's work overalls was recently discovered in the historical society's collection. The pants had never been used and the original tag was still neatly sewn in place. They were bought at auction when the Whitcomb General Store went out of business, and donated to the historical society.

This tag helped uncover the history of the pants. Researchers\* traced The 'Wonder' Overalls to the J. A. Sommers Mfg. Co. of Hamilton, Ohio.

J.A. Sommers, president of the company, was born at Collinsville in 1851. He came to Hamilton in 1886 and started a small overall factory on Main Street. The company was incorporated in 1889 with capital stock of \$50,000. In 1890, the U.S. Patent Office granted a trademark for the word 'Wonder'. Operations moved to a large four-story building at Seventh and Walnut Streets in 1891. Mr. Sommers was described by the Hamilton Evening Journal in 1893 as "... an energetic business man, very careful in his dealings."

Advertisements in 1899 urged customers to... "Ask for the Wonder Overalls, Shirts, Pantaloons and Duck Coats. They are Warranted not to Rip. They are sold by all the Leading Dealers". Quite an endorsement!



By this time, the company was making American flags, also much in demand.

Mr. Sommers retired in 1901 after building the company into a large manufacturing concern. The Journal News reported that "...the products known as 'Wonder Goods' enjoyed a national reputation, having been sold in nearly every state and territory in the union."

The company was going strong and was noted for giving employment to a large force of employees.

\*Researchers Kathy Creighton, Judy Brewer and Sandy Rice. Submitted by Mary Royer

## Gutters Updated

The Benninghofen House is currently surrounded by scaffolding. This is to allow workers safe, easy access to update the box gutters. This necessary construction is expected to begin the second week of May and last about 6 weeks. BCHS will remain open for tours and research during this time!

We apologize for any inconvenience.



The Butler County Fair will be held July 24th - 30th. Make sure to stop by the BCHS booth in the art barn. We will have our famous "mystery items" on display as well as books for sale!

Butler County Historical  
Society  
327 North Second Street  
Hamilton, OH 45011

## Upcoming Events

May 26th: Members Only Event - 100 years ago entertainment in Butler County

June 11th: All in a Days Work Summer Program

July 9th: Quilted Treasures Summer Program

August 13th: Autographs Summer Program

August 25th: Members Only Event - Topic TBA

September 22nd: Members Only Event - Topic TBA

October 27th: Members Only Event - Topic TBA

MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR!