



BUTLER COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

The Benninghofen NEWSLETTER

327 NORTH SECOND STREET • HAMILTON, OHIO 45011 • 513.896.9930

Spring 2023
Issue No. 2023-2

New BCHS Wedding Dress Exhibit Opens

The BCHS is pleased to announce the opening of our latest exhibit, "I Do: 140 Years of Butler County Weddings." The exhibit opened on May 1 and will run through September. The exhibit will cover two floors of the Benninghofen House and include twenty wedding dresses ranging from simple dresses to formal gowns dated 1839 to 1973. Also included in the display are three groom suits, wedding accessories, and various wedding photographs all from Butler County.

This is a new and updated version of the wedding exhibit that was conducted in 2015. Conceived and administrated by Dr. Sara Butler, Professor Emerita at Miami University, the exhibit is organized into three components: the artifacts (dresses), the stories of the Butler County families associated with the artifacts, and the broader historical context. Large display panels placed throughout the exhibit guide the visitor through the historical context. Sara explains, "The historical context is an important aspect of telling the wedding dress story. In the 19th century, women were expected to be delicate and modest. Dress was a visible symbol of a woman's role. The 19th century dresses in the exhibit have a lot of fabric and tiny waists, reflecting role expectations for women."

Family stories that accompany the dresses will also be shared. "Perhaps more interesting to me than the dresses themselves are the stories of the families associated with the dresses," said Sara, "For example, Kitty Symmes was in mourning for her first husband when she married Henry Magie in a black dress. A black wedding dress would be very unusual today."

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The wedding dress worn by Mary Woods Falconer in 1839. The veil for this dress was worn by seven descendants, the last in 1990.

The Butler County Historical Society Hours
Monday - Friday: 10:00am - 4:00pm

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Wedding Dress Exhibit (continued)

Thanks to a generous grant from the Smith Family Trust, visitors to the exhibit will be provided with an exhibit guide containing the historical context, photos of each dress or suit, a written description of each dress, and the family story.

On Thursday, May 25 at 7:00 pm in the Emma Richie auditorium, Dr. Butler will make a presentation in conjunction the exhibit. Using examples from the BCHS exhibit, the changing styles of the wedding dresses and the societal factors that influenced those changes will be the focus of the talk. The family stories that accompany the dresses will also be shared.

Wedding dress worn by Jacqueline Steigerwalt Blount when she married Jim Blount, long-time Journal News columnist, in 1958



Heritage Hall News

HELP NEEDED! Heritage Hall is currently looking for one or two motivated individuals to serve as docents at the facility. The paid position includes the following responsibilities:

- Work Saturdays from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Lead tours of the museum exhibits
- Provide gift shop customer service
- Perform light house keeping duties

The position(s) will be needed from May to November. If you have any questions, or require more information, please contact BCHS Executive Director Kathy Creighton at (513) 896-9930 or via email at Kathy@bchistoryalsociety.com

EXCITING NEWS! We now have additional space on the first floor of the Mueller Building located very close to the Robert McCloskey Museum. This new area gives us the opportunity to host programming for children to learn about our favorite author. We can also use this space for special displays.

On April 15, an excited group of kids and parents had a wonderful afternoon at the *Make Way For Ducklings* program. Carrie Halim led the program by reading the same-titled McCloskey book and shared live ducklings provided by the Hopeful Pastures Therapeutic Farm. Each child got to pet the ducklings, watch them swim, and use them as models for artwork. Thanks to Jenn Acus Smith and Stephen Smith who helped provide paper, modeling clay, water colors and colored pencils. They demonstrated to the children how to use the various mediums to make their own artwork. McCloskey books were available for purchase and a fun day was had by all in the Heritage Hall side yard!

Join us in August for our next program, *Fun With McCloskey!* Additional information will be coming soon.

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

Marcus Garvey



2023 Summer Programs

BCHS is pleased to announce this year's Summer Multi-Generational programs. Designed for the entire family to enjoy, these programs run from June through September and are held on the second Saturday of the month from at 10:00 am until 2:00 pm.

June - The Art of Paper Making and Printing

On Saturday, June 10 join Jacob Simpson of the Cincinnati Type & Print Museum as he explains how paper is made and how the printing process came about. Youngsters will make their own paper, use early style manual printing presses, learn about the practice of and make their own calling cards, and members of the Butler County Stamp Club will be on hand to explain early postage and stamps.

July - All in a Day's Work

A perennial favorite! On Saturday, July 8, kids experience the daily chores of turn of the century living in a fun way! Tasks that are explained and experienced include butter making, laundry using various old time tools (a fun way to cool off on a hot summer day), watching and operating a sorghum press, and using a hand-powered rotary lawn mower.



August - Fun With McCloskey!

This event will be held at Heritage Hall on Saturday, August 12 and be centered around Butler County's favorite children's author, Robert McCloskey. This program is still in the planning stages, but we can guarantee that fun will be had by all! More information will be forthcoming soon.

September - Ice Cream Social & Antique Games

We will end the 2023 summer season on Saturday, September 9 with ice cream and 19th century games such as hoops and sticks, stilts, graces, eggs and spoons to name a few.

Hold the Dates

Mark your calendars with the following upcoming BCHS events. Additional information such as costs, etc. will be coming soon.

Sunday, August 27 - "Fun on the Lewis/Sample Farm"

The BCHS will be holding a family friendly farm fundraiser at the Lewis/Sample Farm located at 4262 Reily-Millville Road. Activities for the day include a catered fried chicken picnic-style supper, farm animals on display, hay rides, antique farm equipment, croquet, and possibly a sighting of the nearby bald eagles. A cake and pie auction will also be held.

Thursday, November 17 - Annual Membership Dinner

This year's dinner will be held at Berkley Square in the Theobald Room. As always, cocktails begin at 5:15 pm, dinner is served at 6:15 pm and the featured presentation will begin at 7:15. Additional information and details will be coming soon.

This year's featured speaker will be Scott Fowler. Scott will be speaking on the history of LeSourdsville Lake amusement park located on Route 4 near Monroe between Middletown and Hamiton. The park was in operation from 1922 until 2002. He has written two books on the subject.



Office Hours

Beginning June 1, we will be shifting to our Summer Hours.

Monday

Closed

Tuesday - Friday

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Saturday

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Sunday

Closed



**BUTLER COUNTY
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SOCIETY**

**327 N. Second Street
Hamilton, OH 45011**

Upcoming Events at the Butler County Historical Society

Monday May 1: New Exhibit - "I Do: 140 Years of Butler County Weddings"

New exhibit featuring over 20 wedding dresses and 3 groom suits from our collection. Exhibit runs through September.

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

Thursday May 25: 7:00 pm Speakers Series - "I Do: 140 Years of Butler County Weddings"

Dr. Sara Butler will join us as she talks about this year's updated wedding dress exhibit at the BCHS and introduces you to many of the brides themselves.

Thursday June 22: 7:00 pm Speakers Series - "What's In a Name?"

We can probably all guess how Hamilton got its name, but how about Butler County and its 13 townships? BCHS Executive Director Kathy Creighton explores from where and how these names came about.

Tuesday July 18: 7:00 pm Speakers Series - "Hamilton's Summer Chautauqua - 1913-1930"

Rich Piland explains how the Chautauqua movement began, how it brought Hamilton together after the 1913 flood, and what Chautauqua events were held from 1913 to the last event in 1930.

Thursday Sept. 28: 7:00 pm Speakers Series - "Tree Sitting: The Craze That Swept the County"

In July of 1930 teens all over the county took to trees to set the world record for tree sitting. Join Brian Smith as he discusses this little known phenomenon and introduces you to some of the local youths who participated.



Have a new phone number, address, email? Now is the time to update your contact information! Call us at 513-896-9930 or email your new information to: info@bchistoricalociety.com