



The Benninghofen NEWSLETTER

327 NORTH SECOND STREET HAMILTON, OHIO 45011 513.896.9930

Spring 2026
Issue No. 2026-2

"Tuned Into History" Series Continues

Here's a little bit of trivia for you:

Q: What is Dustin Hoffman's favorite radio station?

A: "97X... BAM! The Future of Rock and Roll."

Okay, that might not be completely true, but in his 1988 film "Rain Man", Hoffman's character, Raymond Babbitt, is mesmerized by the station's tag line, recorded by 97X's own, Steve Baker, a resident of Oxford, Ohio.

The Butler County Historical Society (BCHS) is looking forward to presenting our next installment of the 2026 "**Tuned Into History**" series coming up on Saturday, June 27 and located at the Fairfield Freshman School Performing Arts Center at 8790 N. Gilmore Road in Fairfield, Ohio. The **Back to the Future of Rock and Roll: 97X Retro Rock Reunion** runs from 7:00 to 9:00 pm with doors opening at 6:30 pm. The evening includes a panel discussion by former DJs and staffers followed by an audience Q&A session. Tickets are currently on sale at the BCHS website www.bchistoryalsociety.com or you can call (513) 896-9930 during regular business hours and Diane will be happy to assist you. General admission tickets are \$20 for BCHS members and \$30 for non-members.



The second installment of the "Tuned Into History" series hits the Fairfield Freshman School Performing Arts Center on June 27th

Want to meet the WOXY personalities up close and personal? Exclusive VIP ticket packages are available for \$60 and include reserve seating and a 30-minute pre-show meet and greet with special opportunities including chatting up the 97X gang, posing for some photos, asking some probing (or embarrassing) questions, and having them sign any WOXY or alt rock swag or merch you provide. The VIP package also includes some exclusive primo edibles (no, not those kind) and a limited edition gift.

Don't miss this opportunity to rock down memory lane!

The Butler County Historical Society Hours
Tuesday - Friday: 9:00am - 4:00pm Saturday: 9:00am - 2:00pm

General Inquiries: info@bchistoryalsociety.com
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Facebook: Butler County Historical Society

Membership Vote

Earlier this year, the BCHS Board of Trustees approved changes to the society's Code of Regulations, the document detailing the conditions and responsibilities of which the society operates. All changes must ultimately be approved by a vote of the membership present at an announced meeting. This meeting will be held on June, 18 at 5:30 pm at the BCHS offices, 327 N. 2nd Street, Hamilton, Ohio. Proposed changes will be implemented based on a simple majority "yes" vote of membership present at said meeting.

Proposed changes can be viewed at the BCHS offices during the regular business hours Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Requests for the document to be sent electronically can be made by emailing info@bchistoricalociety.com or by calling (513) 896-9930.

Travel the Trail



The Butler County Historical Society is honored to be included in Butler County's America250 "Time Travel Trail". This initiative, spearheaded by Travel Butler County in partnership with the Butler County

Commissioners, is designed

to provide citizens with an exciting and innovative method to learning more about the historical resources right here in Butler County during America's Semiquincentennial year of 2026.

A free mobile pass, with no apps to download, allows travelers to journey through time to the county's historic sites, landmarks, and districts. Participants can earn an exclusive plush eagle for visiting ten (10) sites, the perfect keepsake to commemorate this milestone year. So if you're planning a family adventure, satisfying local historical curiosities, or just love exploring historical sites in your area, the Time Travel Trail has you covered!

Visit the Travel Butler County Time Travel Trail landing page at www.travelbutlercounty.com/america250/time-travel-trail to get the free mobile pass and to learn more about this amazing historical quest. The trail is active all year and expires on January 8, 2027. We hope to see you throughout the year!

We Need You!

The BCHS is seeking enthusiastic volunteers who share a passion for local history and community engagement. Are you interested in:

- Assisting with events
- Helping archive historical materials
- Conducting local history research
- Compiling genealogy information
- Guiding visitor tours
- Supporting behind-the-scenes operations
- Delivering public outreach programming

If so, there are opportunities for a wide range of interests and schedules.

Volunteering is a rewarding way to connect with others, learn more about Butler County's rich heritage, and play a direct role in preserving the past for future generations. No prior experience is necessary - just a willingness to contribute time and curiosity.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer or would like more information, please contact us at (513) 896-9930 and ask for Diane or Brian, or send an email to info@bchistoricalociety.com.

We'd love to have you join our team!

McCloskey Wonder Works

The McCloskey Wonder Works Museum (MWWM), in partnership with Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park and the Lane Libraries welcomed over 500 local students this past April to the "Season of Wonder" exhibit located in the park's Gallery Museum. Funded through a grant from Artswave, students learned, created, and saw Hamilton afresh through the eyes of a hometown hero.

Join us for the official exhibit opening on May 15th and hear from McCloskey picture book author, Angela Burke Kunkle. Free tickets are available through Pyramid Hill at www.pyramidhill.org



BCHS Unveils America 250th Commemorative Tee

In celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States of America, the Butler County Historical Society is excited to make our limited edition America 250 T-shirt available to membership and to the public. The all-white shirt features the BCBS America 250 logo across the back, as designed by BCBS board member Amelia Riedel, and Butler County Historical Society in text on the left front chest. The shirts, proudly printed locally by Unsung Salvage Design Co., are 100% cotton and are available in sizes S to 2XL.

The shirts are available for purchase at the BCBS located at 327 N. 2nd Street in Hamilton during regular business hours, Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The cost of this awesome special edition swag is only \$20 with all proceeds benefiting the BCBS. The first batch we had printed disappeared quickly and more have arrived. Celebrate America and the BCBS! Be sure to get yours before it's too late!



New Business History Initiative Introduced

The Butler County Historical Society is proud to announce the rollout of **From Ledger to Legacy: Building Organizational Memory, Identity, and Impact**, a new initiative designed to help organizations preserve, understand, and activate their history. This program provides practical guidance for large and small businesses, nonprofits, and social/civic groups to identify important records, safeguard institutional memory, and transform everyday items and documents into meaningful legacy assets.

From Ledger to Legacy goes beyond archiving - it helps organizations strengthen identity, build pride across generations, and share their stories with the broader Butler County community. Through clear steps, tools, and professional support, participants gain a structured approach to preserving records,

photographs, and narratives that define who they are and why their work matters.

BCBS Executive Director Brian Smith said the initiative grew out of a conversation with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and the society's desire to support organizations while strengthening the county's shared historical record. "Every organization in Butler County is creating history every day, but much of it is at risk of being lost," Smith said. "**From Ledger to Legacy** helps organizations protect their own stories while also ensuring that the BCBS can better document the people, businesses, and institutions that shape our community. It's a partnership where everyone benefits."

For participating organizations, the program supports stronger identity, employee and member engagement, and new opportunities for storytelling, marketing, and long-term planning. For the BCBS, it helps ensure that Butler County's economic, social, and civic history is preserved in a more complete and collaborative way.

Organizations interested in learning more are encouraged to contact the BCBS at (513) 896-9930 or via email at info@bchistoryalsociety.com for details.

On-site public or private presentations detailing the new program can also be scheduled upon request.

See You At The Fair!

With summer fast approaching, the 176th annual Butler County Fair is just around the corner. This year the fair runs from Sunday, July 26 through Saturday, August 1, 2026.

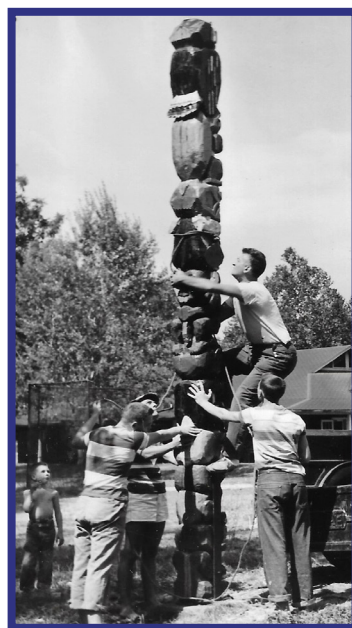
Stop by and see us in our usual spot in the fully air-conditioned Art Building. We'll have plenty of history-related information, displays, and activities for all ages, and we'll have several new local history book titles available for purchase. We hope to see you there!

June BCHS Speakers Series Event

On Thursday, June 25 at 7:00 pm and again on Saturday, June 27 at 10:00 am in the Emma Ritchie Auditorium, the BCHS will present its June monthly Speakers Series event entitled, **“A Century of Memories: The Enduring Legacy of YMCA Camp Campbell Gard - Creating Friendships, Belonging, and Changing Lives.”**

In 1926, Hamilton newspaper publisher Homer Gard and his wife Lutie, donated land and oversaw the creation of the camp in memory of their son, Charles Campbell Gard, who died in 1921 at the age of 26. Tens of thousands of local residents experienced what the camp offered over its 100 years of operation. Join Great Miami Valley YMCA board member, Dr. Jeff Leipzig for a look at the camp's history and how it still upholds the values and ideals put forth at its founding a century ago. **This program is held alongside our collaborative summer exhibit, held in partnership with the Great Miami Valley YMCA.**

The event is located at 327 N. Second Street, Hamilton, Ohio. Visit the BCHS website at www.bchistorysociety.com to reserve your seats. Admission is free for BCHS members and \$5.00 for nonmembers, payable at the door. On and off-street parking is available. The first floor of the Benninghofen Museum and the Emma Ritchie Auditorium are wheelchair accessible.



Installation of Camp Campbell Gard totem pole carved by famed Hamilton illustrator, children's author, and former camp counselor, Robert McCloskey.

Humble Request(s)

Our BCHS Monthly Speakers Series has explosively grown in popularity. Registration for the May program filled 120 seats in less than ten hours. The fact that four out of the first five presentations this year have sold out two dates is extremely satisfying, however we would like to address two issues, one continuing and one new. Though reservation numbers indicate an event to be “sold out”, actual attendance can be less, by as many as 15 or more. We humbly ask that if you cannot attend a series event for which you have reserved seating, PLEASE contact us at 513-896-9930 or via email at info@bchistorysociety.com to cancel your reservation so others on the wait list can attend.

Secondly, unless a presenter is a member of the BCHS staff, the decision to add an additional presentation rests entirely with the presenter. We are happy to appeal for additional opportunities, but we can not guarantee they will occur. We understand how disappointing it can be when an event fills quickly, however, we ask for your understanding that these decisions are outside of our control and remain at the discretion of the presenter.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING!

Save the Date

The BCHS invites you to mark your calendars for our upcoming 2026 Annual Membership Dinner. The event will be held at the Fairfield Community Arts Center located at 411 Wessel Drive, Fairfield, Ohio on Thursday, November 12, 2026. Our featured speaker for the evening is Dr. Jon Thiem, Professor Emeritus of Colorado State University. As the great grandson of “Billy Yank” sculptor Rudolph Thiem, he will discuss how Rudolph's life experiences strongly influenced and mirrored the sculptor's artistic career.

Additional information and invitations will be forthcoming as we get closer to the event but save that date today!



Recent Acquisitions

The following items were recently gifted to the BCHS:

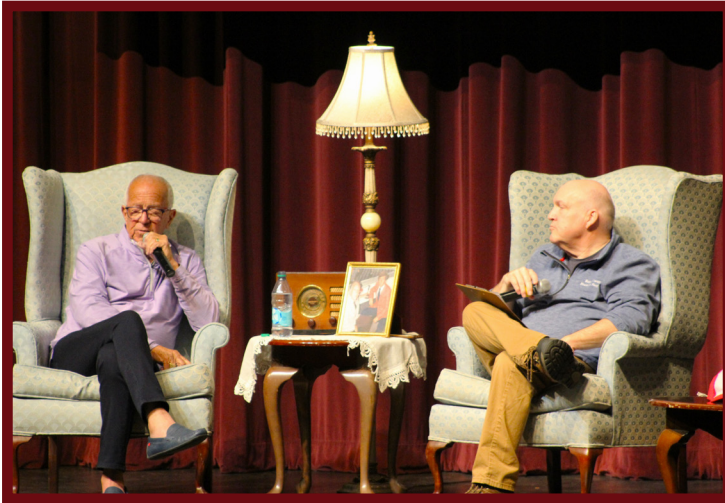
- John W. Ewell, Hamilton school principal written memoirs and scrapbook of retirement party, 1955
- Ross High School yearbooks, 1950 and 1951
- Butler County Travel Bureau commemorative items for America 250
- Fairfield, Ohio residents directory, 1955
- C. Hossfeld & Son Quality Wines and Liquors advertising tape measure, 1900s
- Bentel & Margedant manufactured wood scraping tool, late 1800s
- Sears Department Store collection of framed photos and snapshots, S. 2nd Street, Hamilton
- Hooven, Owens & Rentschler collection of mechanical blueprints and design documents, 1870s to 1950s
- The Hamilton Club set of (3) framed stock certificates, 1910s
- Herring-Hall-Marvin Safe Co. photos including aerial view of factory and annual sales department dinner at the Anthony Wayne Hotel, 1940s
- Williamsdale School (Overpeck) class photos and Van Buren Elementary School class photo, 1920s
- Pierce Elementary School 16mm film on proper health activities, 1949
- Roosevelt Jr. High yearbook, 1951
- Book of county court houses in Ohio
- Garfield High School yearbooks, 1981-1983 and Roosevelt Jr. High yearbooks, 1977-1979
- Garfield and Taft High School memorabilia including buttons, and (4) Taft football programs, 1970s
- Miami University yearbooks 1970-1972 and MU student created satirical coloring book
- St. Joseph Catholic School class photo, 1889
- Champion Paper Annual Reports, 1965-1999
- Champion Paper "Chips" Newsletters, 1993
- Louis Sohngen painting, late 1800s and Charles Sohngen large framed photo, 1920s and various photographs of the Sohngen family, 1880s-1920s
- Archaic culture stone tool artifacts
- WWI framed photo of Robert Rice and misc. Champion Paper memorabilia, 1960s
- Marty Brennaman signed MLB baseball and BCHS event poster, 2026

- Hueston Woods - Acton Lake set of construction slides, 1950s
- Misc. Hamilton business matchbooks, 1940s-1970s
- Paul Benninghofen family silver mirror, hair brush and comb, and powder containers, clothes brush, 78 rpm records, children's books, and ceramic floral decorative keepsakes
- Hamilton High School Class of 1944, 35th Reunion book
- John Reily Chapter DAR 130th anniversary commemorative mug
- (2) Charles Line grocery store ledger books, 1880s
- Fantasy Farm metal ruler, 1960s
- L.H. Flum grocery store graphic letterhead/invoice, Lindenwald, 1890s
- Scrapbook of misc. Hamilton business ephemera, 1910s-1950s

The BCHS would like to thank the individuals who donated these items as well as to everyone who has gifted items to the society in the past. We appreciate your support and efforts in allowing us to carry out our mission of preserving and promoting the history of Butler County. We value this partnership and we could not do it without you!



Brennaman on Baseball



BCHS Executive Director Brian Smith listens to Marty Brennaman reminisce on his days of broadcasting with local baseball legend, Joe Nuxhall.

Back in March, at the debut installment of our 2026 “Tuned Into History” series, the BCHS was honored to host Cincinnati Reds broadcasting legend Marty Brennaman and his wife, Amanda. The evening was filled with talk of the current Reds team, past stories involving former Reds players and managers including the Big Red Machine, the Nasty Boys, the wire to wire 1990 World Series team, and Ken Griffey, Jr. to list a few. Marty also shared his personal thoughts and reflections on baseball in general and on a few non-baseball discussion items as well. Of course, the evening would not have been complete without hitting upon the hall-of-famer’s 46-year career and his time with Hamilton local legend, Joe Nuxhall. Marty relayed Joe’s infamous Chicago steak house dinner story and he got a little choked up when speaking of his long-time booth partner and dear friend. The evening also included Brennaman’s thoughts on local Butler County and former Miami University players. Some of those discussed were Mark Lewis, Kyle Schwarber, Jim Tracy, Kent Tekulve, Billy Doran, Chris Sabo, Walter Alston, and Charlie Liebrandt. It was a wonderful evening, with some folks driving as far away as Lexington, KY to experience the event. Thanks to all who attended... we appreciate the support!

The “Tuned Into History” series has two more installments yet to come. For more details, check out this issue’s cover story as well as the information to the right. We hope to see you there!

Traveling Event Series

“Hit the Record Button: A Live ‘Crimes of the Centuries’ Podcast Experience with Amber Hunt & Amanda Rossmann”

**Saturday, September 12: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Ross High School Performing Arts Center**



Photo courtesy Cincinnati.com

Amber Hunt and Amanda Rossmann are Pulitzer Prize winning journalists and one of the most compelling duos in true crime podcasting today. While working for the Cincinnati Enquirer, their efforts on the podcast “The Accused” garnered them national recognition. Experience a behind the scenes look at the production and live recording of their current true crime podcast “Crimes of the Centuries”. This event is a must see for those who love true crime, are fans of Hunt and Rossmann, or are hooked on listening to well-produced and riveting podcasts.

We Need Used Books

Do you have boxes of old books lying around your basement, attic, or garage? Every time you see them do you think to yourself, “I really need to do something with those” and then the thoughts of “I’ll do that later” enter your mind. Well, guess what... later is NOW! The BCHS is looking for gently used books for our 4th Annual Used Book Sale to be held on Saturday, December 7 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and Sunday, December 8 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm in conjunction with the German Village Association’s “Christmas in the Village” event.

We are looking for all books historical including nonfiction; rare and vintage books; local, regional, and Ohio history; and US and world history. We absolutely love books on military history; sports; historical fiction; cookbooks; biographies; children’s books; and old atlases. Please no novels or paperback fiction.

Feel free to drop off books during regular business hours: 9-4 Tuesday thru Friday and 9-2 on Saturday.

Upcoming 2026 Speakers Series Events

Thursday, May 28: 7:00 pm and Saturday, May 30: 10:00 am

“The Miami and Erie Canal in Butler County”

In 2026, the Miami and Erie Canal celebrates its 200th anniversary. Middletown Historical Society president Sam Ashworth explains the rise and fall of this area's most amazing engineering marvel of its time. The “ditch” stretching from Toledo to Cincinnati began its construction right here in Butler County when New York governor Dewitt Clinton turned the first spade of dirt in Middletown. For decades the canal was the heart of local commerce, travel, and leisure until it was unceremoniously discarded upon the arrival of the ‘Iron Horse’.

Thursday, June 25: 7:00 pm and Saturday, June 27: 10:00 am

**“A Century of Memories: The Enduring Legacy of YMCA Camp Campbell Gard –
Creating Friendships, Belonging, and Changing Lives”**

Tens of thousands of Butler County residents have experienced what the YMCA's Camp Campbell Gard has to offer throughout its 100 years of operation. Great Miami Valley YMCA board member, Dr. Jeff Leipzig, will lead the audience on a tour through the history of the camp from its beginnings in 1926 when newspaper publisher Homer Gard dedicated the park in memory of his late son Charles Campbell Gard, to the era of famed author/illustrator Robert McCloskey as a camp counselor, to present day where the camp still stands upon the values of which it was founded a century ago. Held in partnership with the Great Miami Valley YMCA.

Tuesday, July 14: 7:00 pm

“Let's Call It Butler County: Heroes, Villains, and the Politics of Place Names.”

Formed in 1803, Butler County was named after General Richard Butler, 1743-1791. He was killed by native warriors during St. Clair's defeat. From the battle until recently, Butler was widely considered a great hero, but today, he often figures as another colonist, who came to steal Indian land. What are we to make of the shifting images of Butler, and the fundamental judgments of American history? Delivered by retired Miami University history professor, Bob Thurston, this program covers the politics of place names in 1803 and now and seeks a way forward in which all of us can come to terms with the good, bad, and horrible in our past.

Thursday, August 27: 7:00 pm

“Cleaning Up the Bomb Factory” - The Unlikely Movement that Reclaimed Fernald

University of Cincinnati professor, Dr. Casey Huegel, explores the topic of his book, *Cleaning Up the Bomb Factory*. Huegel states, “In 1984, a uranium leak at the Fernald Feed Materials Production Center highlighted the decades of harm inflicted on Cold War communities by negligent radioactive waste disposal.” Learn of the unlikely partnership of grassroots activists, regulators, union workers, and politicians that responded to the event with a new kind of environmental movement.

Want To Know More? Follow Us Online



Interested in knowing more about what the BCHS is doing throughout the community? Are you always looking for unique historical information and images? Want to connect with an eclectic group of local history lovers just like you? Then follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

2026 Monthly Speakers Series Events (cont.)

Thursday, September 24: 7:00 pm

“Chem-Dyne at Fifty” – Hamilton’s Largest Environmental Disaster and it’s Legacy

The worst ecological disaster in the history of Hamilton occurred 50 years ago at Chem-Dyne in the city’s North End. Join Brad Spurlock, Manager of the Smith Library of Regional History and board member of the BCHS and Historic Hamilton Inc., along with Tim McLelland, Ground Water Consortium Manager of the Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium to learn of the circumstances that created the “perfect storm” of mishandling and neglect that led to the devastating inferno, how the disaster unfolded in real time, and the lingering environmental impact of the disaster today. Held in partnership with the Lane Libraries and the Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium.

Thursday, October 22: 7:00 pm

“A Man Completely Devoid of Fear” – The Controversial Life of Local Lawman, John C. Elliott

In an exploration of the life and times of one of Butler County’s most controversial lawmen, retired Miami University professor Bob Wicks investigates John C. Elliott’s complex personality and even more complex life. Part of the gunmen who assassinated Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, and later as a Hamilton lawman and eventual U.S. Marshal, Elliott’s career was intimately connected to the politics of his day. Wicks first became interested in Elliott while co-authoring his book, *Junius and Joseph: Presidential Politics and the Assassination of the First Mormon Prophet*.

Saturday, December 12: 1:00 pm

“Bizarre Butler County 2: The Weirdness Continues”

BCHS Executive Director Brian Smith presents a sequel to his previously twice sold-out program dealing with some of Butler County’s most mysterious and intriguing occurrences, people, legends, and lore. From UFOs and mysterious myths to missing persons and unsolved crimes to the paranormal and other unexplained phenomena, join us on a return trip to the weird and unexplainable side of this area we call home.

Reservations are required. Please reserve your seats via the BCHS website at www.bchistoricalsociety.com. Seating is limited to 100 persons. Admission is free for BCHS members and \$5.00 for nonmembers payable at the door.

Events are held at the Emma Ritchie Auditorium located at 327 N. 2nd Street, Hamilton, Ohio. Off street parking is available, but limited. On street parking is also available. The Emma Ritchie Auditorium and the first floor of the Benninghofen Museum are wheelchair accessible.

Miss a Speakers Series Event? Check it Out Online

Can’t attend one or all of our popular monthly Speakers Series events?

No worries! Events are available on our YouTube channel at

<http://www.youtube.com/@butlercountyhistoricalsoci8414>

Videos are available for viewing 30 days after the date of the original presentation. The best method to ensure up to date information and access is to click the SUBSCRIBE button on our YouTube home page. Enjoy!

