

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Restoration of historic landmark begins



BGHS member and Village of Bourbonnais Assistant Administrator Laurie Cyr shows the staked corners for the soon-to-be-restored log schoolhouse.

On October 27, the surveyor staked where the first Bourbonnais Grove log schoolhouse (1837-48) will be restored. As Village of Bourbonnais Assistant Administrator Laurie Cyr supervised the staking, she insured that no existing trees will be removed. I hope you have been following the breaking news about the log schoolhouse restoration. If you missed Jeff Bonty’s October 19 article in the *Daily Journal* “A long time coming: work to begin this fall on 1837 schoolhouse restoration,” here is the online link: https://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/bourbonnais-1837-schoolhouse-restoration-set-to-start/article_b3dda91a-3073-11ec-961e-4763e802617c.html. A few days later on October 25, more breaking news appeared.

The *Daily Journal* reported “French Heritage Society donates \$16,000 to log schoolhouse. Here is the online link for that article: https://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/french-heritage-society-donates-16k-to-log-schoolhouse/article_9e967506-3293-11ec-8fdf-cb3a38b5becc.html. The \$16,000 grant from the French Heritage Society may have been the catalyst for the Village of Bourbonnais to approve the log schoolhouse restoration.

The French Heritage Society has ten chapters in the U.S. and one in France. A major new initiative of the society is the “French Heritage Corridor” comprising seven states in the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin). The French Heritage Corridor is dedicated to developing synergy and raising the collective awareness about the rich French history and heritage that has, since the 17th century, melded with the vibrant multicultural landscape in what is today the Midwestern United States. Bourbonnais Grove’s log

schoolhouse—which served as a school and Methodist meeting center from 1837-48 and was then used as a home solely by French-Canadian descendant families from 1848-2011—is an important part of that French heritage. The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society and the Village of Bourbonnais is very appreciative for this FHS support and recognition. One correction to the *Daily Journal* article: the Chicago Chapter of the French Heritage Society’s pledge of \$5000 made by Lisa Kahn at the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner on September 17 is not in addition to the \$16,000 grant award, but an integral part of the award.

Graveline store stone moved to Letourneau gardens



On Sunday October 10, John Curby (third from right) delivered the Graveline Meat Market store name stone to the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve. He was helped in moving the stones by (from left to right) Laurel Soper, ONU history student Hayden Souza, Benjamin Soper, and Owen Whittington.

The Graveline Sanitary Meat Market name sign has returned home to Bourbonnais from Michigan City, Indiana. The Bourbonnais market was once located at 300 Main Street (near current Larson Center parking lot) before it burned down in 1916. Celestin Gravelin then built the most modern brick building in all Kankakee County (above right photograph—note name-stone in white at top center above entrance). The market was later owned by Daniel Graveline (son of Celestin) who sold the building to Olivet Nazarene College in the 1950s. ONU later gave the name stone to Daniel’s nephew Eddie Graveline (son of Daniel’s brother Ernest) after the store’s demolition in the 1980s. John Curby, who delivered the stone to the BGHS, is the son of Karen Curby, a first cousin of Eddie Graveline.

Who am I?

I left with George Letourneau and several others for the California gold rush in 1850. Upon returning to Bourbonnais Grove, I married Cleophil Sylvester, built a small log cabin (the present-day home is for sale and its kitchen is my original log dwelling), and opened two banks. Do you know my name?

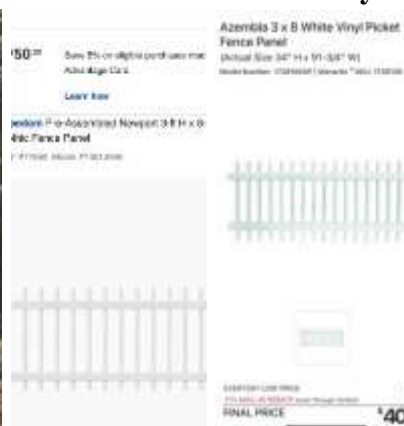
Would you commit a felony to help hide runaway slaves?



In this 2019 graphic design by Christina M. Bradley, Thomas and Margaret Durham are depicted as they arrive in Bourbonnais Grove in 1835 with their nine children. The Durhams were Quaker abolitionists.

On Friday November 5 you can become involved in this intense decision-making issue. You will be transported to Thomas Durham's home in 1853 when he (portrayed by yours truly) will ask you: "Will you help me and my family hide runaway slaves?" If you would like to become immersed in how individuals in the Kankakee River Valley personally addressed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, you can still enroll in Kankakee Community College's Lifelong Learning Institute course "Antebellum Abolitionists: In-Person or Live Online" on Friday November 5 from 10:00-11:30 am. The cost is \$10. You may enroll by clicking this link: [Antebellum Abolitionists - KCC Enrole](#). The class will be recorded and added to the BGHS YouTube Channel as "Episode 2: Antebellum Abolitionists (1838-60)." "Episode 1: Potawatomi Peril (to 1838)" is already on the BGHS YouTube Channel which can be found at www.bourbonnaishistory.org, then click For Members, and then click Resources. The companion PDF "Potawatomi Peril Narrative" can also be found in Resources under Local History Series. The companion PDF "Antebellum Abolitionists" will be added to that same website page.

New fencing will define west corner boundary



In keeping with the fencing design in this 1883 sketch of the Letourneau Home, which of the two types of fencing at right would match the best? Creating a southwest fence corner with 60 feet of fence along the west sidewalk and another 60 feet extending south (near the apartments) would form a nice visual boundary for our museum and log schoolhouse campus.

Mark your calendars for these 2021-2022 events

- November 5—Local History 101 “Antebellum Abolitionists (1838-60)” webinar (hybrid in-person and Zoom) Lifelong Learning course at KCC from 10:00-11:30 am;
- December 4—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair;
- TBD Saturday June 25 or Sunday June 26, 2022—Inauguration of Bourbonnais Grove’s first log schoolhouse at the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival;
- July 4, 2022—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair; and
- Friday September 16, 2022—Fifth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner.

Fourth great grandson of Francois and Catish Bourbonnais Sr. visits Letourneau Home and French Heritage Society



Miles Frederickson of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, poses at the French Heritage Museum after attending Norma Meier and Andrew Mann’s September 25 presentation on the French-Canadian earliest emigration into the Kankakee River Valley.

I was about to leave the Letourneau Home/Museum on Thursday September 23 when two individuals came to the door and asked if the home/museum was open. I said “no” but that I would give them a brief tour. They introduced themselves as Kim and Miles Frederickson. They had driven from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to see Miles’s ancestral home area. He said that his mother was: Mildred Thompson/Frederickson, the daughter of Lola Bourbonnais and Leonard Thompson, the granddaughter of Aaron F. Bourbonnais and Calista Clabber, the great granddaughter of Antoine Bourbonnais and Mary Ann Bourbonnais, and great great granddaughter of Francois Bourbonnais Sr. and Catish (Catherine Chevalier). I invited Miles and Kim to spend an extra night in the area so that they could visit the French Heritage Museum and attend Norma and Andrew’s presentation. They were very impressed with how the BGHS and Kankakee County Historical Society have preserved their French-Canadian heritage.

DAR grooms herb garden—kudos for them and all our volunteers



During the Saturday October 9 work session in the gardens, the Daughters of the American Revolution groomed *Le Jardin aux Potages* (Garden of the Kitchen). From left to right are: Bonnie Bergeron, Holly Froning, Jane Arends, Barb Nixon, Nancy Sheer, LeeAnn Hollenbeck, and Christine Michels.

The BGHS is so grateful to the Daughters of the American Revolution who volunteered along with Christine Michels to groom the herb garden. On that same morning, Steve Monts, Gary Seiner, Mary Ann Lambert, and Max Michels helped me plant the three Tiger Eye Staghorn sumac trees on the west boundary. Thank you all very much! Other kudos go out this month to Daron Kinzinger, Ken Ponton, Gary Seiner, and Max Michels for pruning and cutting down the dense undergrowth around the perimeter of the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve, and hauling the brush to the curb; to Laurel Soper for posting key BGHS activities on our Face Book page; to Marcia Rabideau, Laurel Soper, Mary Ann Lambert, and Roberta Renville for their hard work on the Collection Committee; to Bonnie Bergeron for investigating how the BGHS can apply for American Rescue Plan funds; to Gary Seiner for chaperoning the Letourneau Home/Museum open houses on October 17 and November 21; and to Laurel Soper for chaperoning the open house on November 7.

November 4 membership meeting will be Zoom only

The Thursday November 4 membership meeting at 7:00 pm will be **Zoom only**. Please click this link to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354458240?pwd=S1p1bm9jeFBXOHB0Nk9HTnViNUprdz09>.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

- Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on October/November news eletter item “Who am I?”
- Approval of October 7, 2021 membership minutes (*attached*);

- Treasurer’s Report;
- Membership Report;
- Collection Committee Report;
- Ways and Means:
 - Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley “pass through” fund;
 - French-Canadian partner website in Michigan: (French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan) www.habitantheritage.org;
 - French Heritage Society hybrid event fundraiser (Saturday November 13 from 5-7 pm) “Wine and War”—\$30 for virtual attendance—listen to dynamic authors Don and Petie Kladstrup as they reveal the juicy details of their widely selling book, *Wine & War* – about wine producers who became war heroes against the Nazi pillage for France’s greatest treasure: [Chicago Chapter: Wine and War Author Talk & Wine Tasting – French Heritage Society](#)[French Heritage Society](#);
 - Collaboration with ONU;
 - Chocolate Tour—contact at BTPD: Cheri Smolkovich cherries@btpd.org;
 - American Recovery Act money for not-for-profit historical sites that rely on events for fund raising—what agency is responsible?
 - Bonnie (state)
 - Jim, Steve, and Ellen (county)
- Building and Grounds
 - Roof treatment and chimney update;
 - Mulch pile renewed; and
 - Fence
- Old Business
- New Business
 - Participation in MBVM 175th anniversary celebration in 2022—next meeting TBA;
 - Volunteers to help plan plantings around village’s new signs;
 - Marcia’s transition; and
 - Continued reopening of Letourneau Home/Museum and Christmas Open House

Enjoy our beautiful fall colors. Best wishes,

Dr. Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society