

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

**BGHS collage of 2021 memories expresses warm wishes for *Bonne Annee***



Among the BGHS highlights of 2021 were the:

- reopening of the Letourneau Home/Museum in August for tours,
- beautifying the grounds of our historic landmark (with the volunteer help from our members, Camp MOSH, ONU students, and Daughters of the American Revolution),
- presenting Carl Moran's family his *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence and announcing the restoration schedule of Bourbonnais Grove's first log schoolhouse at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner,
- completing the log schoolhouse foundation in November,
- launching a revamped BGHS website,
- resuming the July and December *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Shows, and
- organizing the museum's artifact inventory.

To review BGHS activities for up to ten years, take a look at our Facebook pages and the newsletters on our website [www.bourbonnaishistory.org](http://www.bourbonnaishistory.org).

## Great granddaughter of George and Elodie Letourneau, Marguerite “Peg” Paschke, dies at age 100

If you missed Peg Paschke’s obituary in the December 23 issue of the *Daily Journal*, I have linked it here for you to read [https://www.daily-journal.com/obituaries/marguerite-peg-paschke/article\\_a9280a52-634e-11ec-8fc7-833428f59331.html](https://www.daily-journal.com/obituaries/marguerite-peg-paschke/article_a9280a52-634e-11ec-8fc7-833428f59331.html). Peg was the daughter of Eugenie (Marcotte) Messier (1894-1971) and Viateur Messier. Peg’s mother was the fifth-born child of Eugenie (Letourneau) Marcotte (1858-94)—who was Elodie and George Letourneau’s fourth-born child—and Dr. Frederic Marcotte (1856-1903). They lived in Concordia, Kansas. Shortly after giving birth to baby Eugenie, mother Eugenie (Letourneau) Marcotte died. Soon afterwards, Agnes (Letourneau) St. Louis—Eugenie (Letourneau) Marcotte’s older sister—and her husband Joseph, took in and raised baby Eugenie Marcotte. [Genealogist Norma Meier’s unpublished notes].

### December 4 craft show raises funds for BGHS



Our *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show organizer Ellen Stringer (on left with her sister Amy Delmore) and volunteer Christine Michels (on right) witnessed a successful fund raiser for the BGHS on Saturday December 4 at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds exhibition center.

According to the final report of *Les Artisan* Arts and Craft Show organizer, Ellen Stringer, the funds raised for the BGHS at the December 4 craft show amounted to \$2326.56 plus \$165 in the donation box for a total of \$2491.56. This will greatly assist us with our mission. Thank you again, Ellen—and Steve Monts our treasurer—for handling the expenses and income of the craft show.

### Mark your calendars for these BGHS 2022 events

- Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee Zoom meeting—3:30 pm January 20;
- Next BGHS membership Zoom meeting—7:00 pm February 3 (see December 2 membership meeting minutes attached);
- First open house at Letourneau Home/Museum—Sunday March 6;
- April 29-30—MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration;
- TBD Saturday June 25 or Sunday June 26, 2022—Inauguration of Bourbonnais Grove’s first log schoolhouse at the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival;

- July 4—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair;
- August 20-21—MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration with tours of church grounds and St. Viator/ONU campus;
- Friday September 16—Fifth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner; and
- Saturday December 3—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair.

### **French Heritage Corridor upcoming events**

- December 31, 2021—*Guignolee*, Ste. Genevieve, Missouri;
- January 23—“Exploring Joseph Courselle’s French-Dakota Connections in his 1855-56 Sioux Affidavit”—2-5 pm, Dupuis House, Mendota, Minnesota (contact French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota);
- February 19—*Fete de Voyageur*, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin ([www.prarieduchien.org](http://www.prarieduchien.org));
- April 22—25th Canal Boat Captain’s Luncheon, 11:30 am ([iandmcanal.org](http://iandmcanal.org)); and
- May 12-13—2<sup>nd</sup> Annual FHC Conference, Tippecanoe County Historical Society, Lafayette, Indiana.

### **French Heritage Corridor interactive map expands**

I have attached an updated interactive map of the French Heritage Corridor for you to review. Please note recent additions, in particular the gold star to right under "Illinois Country": a brief YouTube documentary on the Illinois Country (you may have to skip an ad) which Daron introduced me to last month. I recommend that you open the map on your computer or tablet before clicking the links. Trying to open the links on your smart phone will be challenging. If you want to use your smart phone to open the links, I recommend that you first send the map to your phone's Dropbox. Then you will have more success.

### **Kudos to our volunteers**

The BGHS expresses gratitude to our December volunteers: Laurel Soper and Ken Ponton for serving on the Nomination Committee; Laurel for posting items on our website and Face Book; Gary Seiner for decorating the Letourneau Home/Museum for *Joyeux Noel*; Gary, Christine Michels, and Steve Monts for hosting the BGHS table at the December 4 craft show; Ellen Stringer for organizing and supervising the craft show; and Charles Balesi for assisting in the field trip fence decision.

### **Officers elected for 2022**

BGHS officers for 2022 elected at the December 2 membership meeting are: President: Jim Paul, Vice-President: Gary Seiner, Executive Vice-President: Ken Ponton, Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_, Corresponding Secretary: Christine Michels, and board of trustees: Daron Kinzinger, Malette Trudeau-Stevenson, Jim Paul, Gary Seiner, and Josue Savoie.

## Fencing chosen for west boundary



Notice the white picket fence in the front of the Letourneau Home in this 1883 sketch. Now imagine the white vinyl fence at center forming a right angle at the west border boundary of the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve, to hide the apartment's carbage cans and driveway.

A donor has given \$1000 to the BGHS for garden projects in 2021. There is still \$730 left in that 2021 donation. The donor wants that remaining money to go toward a NW corner boundary fence. Consider this: after the log schoolhouse is rebuilt, a property survey for the NW boundary is completed, and village ordinances are reviewed, the fencing pictured above could nicely define our historic landmark campus. It would extend 32' along the East Stratford Drive sidewalk from the NW corner of our campus and 72' south (to shield the trash cans and driveway of the west apartments). What is needed: nine 8' fence lengths (along apartment driveway and trash cans) and four 8' fence lengths along the sidewalk plus 13 posts and labor to install. The cost would be about the same amount as the remaining donation mentioned above. This matter will be discussed further next spring.

### **As a Bourbonnais Grove resident in the 1850s, would you hide runaway slaves?**

Episode 2 "Antebellum Abolitionists (1838-60)" on the BGHS website's YouTube Channel addresses this question. The *Daily Journal* December 2 front page article presented an excellent account of the BGHS's newest attempt to publicize local history. Click here to read the article [https://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/bourbonnais-historians-take-to-youtube-to-bring-past-to-life/article\\_a0151dee-521c-11ec-9777-537c54f73c62.html](https://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/bourbonnais-historians-take-to-youtube-to-bring-past-to-life/article_a0151dee-521c-11ec-9777-537c54f73c62.html). Question: can we revive the BGHS Scholarships and connect it to student engagement with our "Local History 101: Making life-changing decisions in the Kankakee River Valley" YouTube series?

### **Bourbonnais Grove's first log schoolhouse featured in Center for French Colonial Studies *Le Journal***

Through our collaborative work on the French Heritage Corridor, I have become acquainted with Dr. Michael Nassaney, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Western Michigan University. He is the Michigan Ambassador to the corridor. He is also the editor of the Center for French Colonial Studies *Le Journal*. Over the past few months, we worked

together on the article “History of Bourbonnais Grove’s First Log Schoolhouse: The French Connection”. Michael has gifted us with a copy of the Winter 2022 *Le Journal* edition which includes the article. I have attached it for you to read. I will make a copy for our Lending Library and ask Laurel to post it on our website.

**Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration  
includes interviews and tours**

The MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration dates are listed under the calendar of events above. One activity for the anniversary celebration coincides with the BGHS goal of interviewing more French-Canadian descendants. All BGHS members can help conduct the interviews of MBVM parishioners, possibly their own family members. For example, Ellen Stringer and siblings could interview Mom, Dad, and Aunt—Mary Ann Kirsch, Dan Kirsch, and Celeste Regnier. Father Jason is really interested in bolstering the parish’s history after 1947. Parishioners of all ages can be interviewed. I have attached a template to use for the interviews of your loved ones. Before conducting the interviews, you should go the parish’s website [www.mbvchurch.org](http://www.mbvchurch.org), find the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary pages, and contact Maria Pallassard at [mpallissard@mbvm.org](mailto:mpallissard@mbvm.org) who will assist you with the interviews, photographs, videos, etc. Once the interviews are digitally complete, the BGHS could retain a copy. The BGHS will also help organize tours of the church grounds and St. Viator/ONU campus buildings on Sunday August 21, 2022.

I wish you all a happy new year. Best wishes,  
Jim Paul, President of the f Grove Historical Society