

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

### **Letourneau Urges French-Canadians to Celebrate U.S. Independence Day**



In 1889, George Letourneau (1831-1906) expressed his patriotism for his non-native country in a manifesto. There were 38 stars on the United States flag (1877-1890) at that time.

A few years ago, BGHS Past President Vic Johnson emailed me a manifesto that he presumed was written by George Letourneau in 1889. It was part of a text that Vic offered Jim Carlson to read in a speech as he portrayed George Letourneau at the Letourneau Home/Museum on July 4, 1989. In the manifesto, Letourneau urged the local French-Canadians to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July as their national holiday instead of the Quebec national holiday of St. John the Baptist on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Vic mentioned also that Letourneau translated the Declaration of Independence into French for the local French-Canadians who could probably not read English. In his email, Vic concluded “I don’t believe many people realize Letourneau was not only a very esteemed and practical politician but also a great American patriot” (Johnson, 11/15/11 email).

### **BGHS New Membership Year Begins with Free 1-Year New Memberships and 4 Free *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinners**

If you missed my article in the June 24 edition of the *Daily Journal*, here is the link: [https://www.daily-journal.com/life/bghs-honors-quebecs-national-holiday/article\\_a506f544-d368-11eb-ab40-bf6412d5fc0d.html](https://www.daily-journal.com/life/bghs-honors-quebecs-national-holiday/article_a506f544-d368-11eb-ab40-bf6412d5fc0d.html). In celebrating Quebec’s national holiday of June 24, the BGHS is offering one-year free dues for new members and four free *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinners for both new and returning members. The *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner is on September 17 at the Kankakee County Club—see announcement attached. To qualify for the one-year free membership dues for new members and the four free celebration dinners for new and returning members, individuals must write a review of the BGHS website ([www.bourbonnaishistory.org](http://www.bourbonnaishistory.org))—at least 35 words—by July 31, 2021. The review must be posted by clicking “Drop Us a Line” on the website homepage. Please take advantage of this membership promotion and help spread the word to your family and friends. The BGHS annual membership dues year begins on July 1. Please see <https://bourbonnaishistory.org/pay-dues> for more information.

## July 4<sup>th</sup> *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show Returns

Our craft show organizer, Ellen Stringer, has successfully navigated the CDC guidelines in preparing for this year's arts and craft fair from 9 am to 3 pm at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds on July 4<sup>th</sup>. As you plan your activities for the holiday, you might want to start the day by bringing your family and friends out to the fair grounds to peruse the crafters' artistic products and tasty food treats. The *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair serves as a BGHS fundraiser.

### Kudos to Our Volunteers



The West Boundary Garden was started by (from left to right in left photograph) Gary Seiner, Bonnie Bergeron, and Steve Monts on Saturday June 5. The garden was planted with native plants on June 12 by (left to right in right photograph) Gary Seiner, Steve Monts, myself, and Mary Ann Lambert (who took the photograph).

On behalf of the BGHS, I thank all the volunteers for their work last month: gardeners—Pam and Russ Perkins, Sandi Sandeno, Mary Ann Lambert, Bonnie Bergeron, Marcia Rabideau, Steve Monts, Judy Smead, Ellen Liehr, Holly Froning, Debra Koch; cement modification for front boardwalk—Ken Ponton; Collection Committee archival work—Marcia Rabideau, Laurel Soper, Roberta Renville, Ken Ponton, Mary Ann Lambert, and Gary Seiner; mail pickup—Daron Kinzinger; publications for the good of the society—Charles Bales; and maintaining our financial well-being—Steve Monts. In the weeks before the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival, Gary continued putting final touches on the gardens so that their beauty has become apparent to all visitors.

### July 1 Membership Meeting will be In-Person

When the pandemic began, the BGHS monthly membership meetings switched from in-person to Zoom in April 2020. Conditions are now agreeable for us to meet in-person this Thursday July 1 at 7:00 pm at the Letourneau Home/Museum. Please arrive early to view the gardens and socialize with beverages and cookies. The meeting will also be open on Zoom. The agenda for the meeting is:

- Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on June/July news eletter item “Who am I?”
- Approval of June 3, 2021 membership minutes (attached);
- Treasurer’s Report;
- Membership Report;
- Collection Committee/Curation Report;
- Ways and Means:
  - *Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair—volunteers for BGHS table;
  - Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley “pass through” fund;
  - Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley grant award;
  - *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner (see announcement attached); and
  - French Heritage Corridor draft interactive map for visitors (see attached—open it and click the red stars)—next meeting August 3.
- Building and Grounds
  - Roof treatment and chimney update;
  - Purchase 2 *Fleur-de-Lis* garden benches; and
  - Camp MOSH cleaning of home/museum and mulching day lily bed during week of July 19-23.
- Old Business
  - Calendar of events—always posted in monthly news eletters; and
  - Reopening the Letourneau Home/Museum—volunteers needed.
- New Business
  - Participation in MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2022;
  - Participation in KCHS Bastille Day celebration on July 17<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 pm at French Heritage Museum.

### **Save the Dates for 2021 BGHS Events**

Please mark your calendars for these important BGHS sponsored upcoming events:

- July 1—first in-person (and Zoom) membership meeting 7 pm at Letourneau Home/Museum;
- July 4<sup>th</sup> *Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair from 9 am to 3 pm at Kankakee County Fairgrounds;
- July 17 from 1-4 pm—Bastille Day celebration at French Heritage Museum;
- Camp MOSH work days for Letourneau Home/Museum and gardens—July 18 to July 24;
- July 31—BGHS website review deadline to qualify for free 1-year new memberships and 4 free *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinners (all members eligible);
- August 5<sup>th</sup>—deadline for nomination for 2021 *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence (nomination form is at bottom of BGHS webpage [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration | Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](https://www.bourbonnaishistory.org));

- **Friday September 17, 2021—the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner at the Kankakee Country Club** (see announcement attached); and
- December 4 Les Artisans Arts and Crafts Fair.

### **Who is this Person from Our Local History?**

Although I am not as well-known as my sister who has a town nearby named after her, I was also married to Noel LeVasseur. Who am I (sources: George Godfrey and *Potawatomi Peril Narrative* in [www.bourbonnaishistory.org](http://www.bourbonnaishistory.org))?

Have a wonderful 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday weekend! Best wishes,  
Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society