

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Our Historical Landmark Becomes A Dazzling Winter Scene



This winter picture-postcard scene of the Letourneau Home/Museum was captured by our Board of Directors Chair Daron Kinzinger at dusk on January 30th after he shoveled the boardwalk. All through February, anyone who passed by could enjoy this delightful view. Now, thanks to Daron, it is part of our history. We all thank you.

Testimonials Convey Concern and Appreciation

I received several emails about the demolition of the Herbert Messier House (at 208 W. River Street, Bourbonnais) and the walking tours of historic Bourbonnais.

- Rich Piggush on January 26 wrote: “I am still dismayed about the destruction of 208 River Street. I have attached a photo of some of the pipe pieces that were found, mostly, in my father’s garden at 194 River. A lot of pipes! Gathering area? I had often hoped to search the garden at 208. Wonder if that would be feasible?”
- Amy Ciaccio Jarvis on January 28 wrote: “Thanks for all the hard work to you and the association. Too bad about the Messier house. My mother was a Benoit so this history is so close to my heart. In other news, the association for the preservation of St. Rose Chapel is doing well and we thank you for your past support.”
- Jean Legris Pekoc and Roy Pekoc (great great granddaughter and husband) of George and Elodie Letourneau on January 29 wrote: “Thank you James for the update. I was amazed with the Four Walking Tours you created for Bourbonnais. I was so thrilled to download it and read it. It was so informative and comprehensive. We appreciate all you

do and the history you help keep alive. We wish this COVID would disappear so we could come back to visit.” [If you missed it, here is the link for *Four Walking Tours of Historic Bourbonnais, Illinois* [68cfaa40fd131fc5237b93f37260ff90 \(wsimg.com\)](https://www.wsimg.com/68cfaa40fd131fc5237b93f37260ff90).]

A Franco-German Bond Created a Unique Heritage at Ste. Genevieve

The legacy of the French colonial and post-colonial Midwest river valley corridor from Ste. Genevieve (Missouri) in the south to Lake Michigan in the north is often forgotten. Even under the French colonial façade, there are, in the words of BGHS Board Member Dr. Charles Balesi, “some gems of the human adventure”—stories-within-stories. Dr. Balesi, continues his work of reminding us not to forget the details of the French corridor legacy. He recently wrote an article about an historical bond, perhaps overlooked, “Franco-German Friendship Day Went Under Press’ Radar” which was published in the *Ste. Genevieve Herald* on February 17th. Dr. Balesi stated:

Why would this date [January 22] be of any interest to Ste. Genevieve? Because Ste. Genevieve is not only a town founded by the French in the 1740s but also was the destination of a large German immigration starting in the 1800s originating essentially from Offenburg, in the Baden-Wurtemberg, near the Rhine River. Descendants from the French founders were still prominent when the Germans began to arrive. Both populations being Catholic over the nineteenth century, a symbiosis of a sort would be achieved. . . Ste. Genevieve’s own salute to the German roots of many of its families is symbolized by a sister city connection with Bohlsbach, a town near Freiburg which, as it could be expected, is well within the original land of the German settlers. This duality of links makes Ste. Genevieve even richer in heritage.

Like Charles, I believe that our challenge is to learn and publicize more about the many stories-within-stories in the “unbroken chain of the French Heritage Corridor,” from *Isle a la Cache* to Ste. Genevieve (Balesi, email 2/17/17). Our local Northeastern Illinois French-Canadian Heritage Corridor—marked by two signs on Interstate 57 (Manteno and Ashkum exits)—indicates the north-south geographical boundaries of the 1830-60s French-Canadian pioneer settlements with Bourbonnais Grove as the focal point. However, we must remember that this French-Canadian Heritage Corridor is an “*overlay*” on the earlier French colonial and post-colonial Midwest river valley corridor. From French colonial to post-colonial times, ethnic diversity has made *both layers* of the corridor “even richer in heritage.” *We (no matter our ethnicity or national background) who work to publicize and preserve this rich “corridor” heritage, fuse ourselves into its legacy.*

Next Zoom Membership Meeting on Thursday March 4

I invite you to please join our Zoom membership meeting at **7:00 pm on Thursday March 4** by emailing Laurel Soper at laurel.soper@gmail.com. She will then email you a link to the meeting at 6:50 pm on March 4. The agenda for the meeting includes:

- approval of February 4, 2021 membership meeting minutes (attached);
- discussion of plan for July 4 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair; and
- discussion of acquisition policy revisions (see below).

BGHS Website to be Upgraded

At the February 4 membership meeting, an upgrade to the bourbonnaishistory.org website was approved. With more disk space and unlimited pages, the website may eventually include in addition to existing pages: BGHS mission statement, bylaws, minutes, webinars with narration, BGHS News Eletters, and BGHS related newspaper clippings. As our webmaster and creator of our Facebook posts, Corresponding Secretary Laurel Soper is opening up these new avenues for us.

Proposed Amendments to Bylaws Unanimously Approved

With February 15, 2021, as the voting deadline, all ten of ten BGHS board of directors and society officers unanimously voted by email to approve the amendments to the bylaws which were already approved at the February 4, 2021 membership meeting (see BGHS News—January/February 2021).

Bylaw and Acquisition Policy Amendments are Proposed

BGHS Executive Vice-President Marcia Rabideau has drafted the following amendments related to the BGHS bylaws and acquisition policy. She will soon draft the second part, Removal of Artifacts Policy. In order to be consistent, we will use Article IX of the bylaws to guide us through the ratification process of the acquisition policy. Article IX of the bylaws states that the “board of directors and officers may amend these bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present at any regular meeting, after such amendment has been deliberated upon and recorded in the minutes of any regular meeting. Notice of the proposed amendment shall accompany notice of the meeting prior to the meeting at which a vote shall be taken.” The proposed changes and additions are in red below. This News Eletter will serve as notice of the proposed amendments which can now be addressed at the Thursday March 4 meeting and then voted on at the April 1 meeting. The board of directors and officers can then ratify the membership approved bylaws.

BYLAW proposed amendments:

Article II - **Mission Statement** -Purpose

- A. to perpetuate the heritage of the Village of Bourbonnais, IL and its residents.
- B. to collect and preserve data touching the history of Bourbonnais, IL and it's residents.
- C. to perpetuate the memory of those who contributed to making the history of Bourbonnais,IL.
- D. **to receive, purchase, sell, hold and maintain items and artifacts that meet the criteria listed in Acquisition Policy.**

Article VI - Officers and Committees

Section 6.4.4 Curator and **Collection Committee** shall be the guardians of all

artifacts and historical records owned by (remove loan) the Society for exhibit of preservation. The Curator and the Collection Committee shall also act as managers and custodians of the museum contents.

BGHS ACQUISITION POLICY (Ratified on August 5, 1993) proposed amendments:

Acquisition Definitions and Guidelines

PERMANENT MUSEUM COLLECTION

1. Found: Articles or artifacts found originally in the Letourneau home or on the original site. The artifacts found during the restoration or moving of the George Letourneau house; and or in the archeological excavation of the original site are the property of the Society. Their care and display are the responsibility of the Curator.

2. Gifts: Anything given to the society for use or display in and about the Letourneau House.
Gifts of furniture, clothing, photos, artifacts, etc. should be received by the Curator and /or the Collection Committee.

Items offered to officers and/or general membership should be brought to the Collection Committee BEFORE being accepted.

(New section: Educational Collection)

EDUCATIONAL COLLECTION -Items in the Educational Collections are not accessioned into the Permanent Collection (newspapers, genealogies, scrapbooks, book folders, and files from other museums that the public could access) and are held to a different standard of care. Removal of items from the Educational Collection may occur without formal deaccessioning process.

- a. Definition: photos, scrapbooks, ephemera, manuscripts, history books, etc..
- b. Uses: these objects may be handled by the public for research.
- c. Access to Educational items will be made to visitors by request and will be studied under supervision of staff or volunteers.
- d. The Curator and/or the Collection Committee will determine items to be placed in the Educational Collection.

3. Loans: (this section is to be deleted—see below for more on loans)

3. Purchased items: any item or artifacts bought by the Society for the use or display in the Letourneau Home Museum.
The purchase of any item or artifact by the Society must be approved by the Curator and the Board of Directors at a regular monthly meeting.

4. Donated items or Artifacts: the Collection Committee will determine acceptance of donated items. A completed BGHS Accession form must be submitted to the Collection Committee and approved before accepting the item or artifact.

The policy for buying articles in Section 3 or accepting donated items in Section 4 are guided by:

- i. Need: Does the item fill a determined need for the Society?
- ii. Authenticity: Is it an authentic historical item? (verbal okay acceptable)
- iii. Appropriateness: Is item or artifact suitable for or in context of the scope of the Society's interest?
- iv. Benefit to Society: Where and when will the item/artifact be displayed & how will it benefit the Society?
- v. Funding: Money used to buy items/artifacts is to be allocated for the purposes in the Society's budget (\$100.00 per year). Allowances can be made for special purchases.
- vi. Space: does the museum have display or storage space for the item?
- vii. Condition: Is the item/artifact in reasonable condition to be displayed or stored?

(All references to loans in the August 5, 1993 are to be deleted and replaced with the following):

5. Loans: *The Board of Directors has unanimously agreed that artifacts in the possession of the Society are not to be loaned to any person or organization [Jim—source?]*
Due to minimum volunteers and staff, the Society can no longer accept loans.

6. Disposition (Accessioning) The formal act of legally gaining ownership of an object . After being accessed, the items shall be held in public trust.

- a. All artifacts will be logged in and given an acquisition number and cataloged by the Collection Committee and/or the Curator. The Curator and/or the Collection Committee will issue the donator a certificate of transfer and receive a signed release.
- b. Proper storage and display of the items is the responsibility of the Collection Committee and/or the Curator and staff.

Remove-Each year the Board or Directors will set goals on acquisitions [Jim--source?]

Kudos to Our Volunteers

Special notes of gratitude go to Steve Monts for so thoroughly auditing our books; to Marcia Rabideau for diligently working on the draft amendment proposals to bylaws and acquisition policy; to Laurel Soper for organizing our new web pages; to Daron Kinzinger for picking up our the mail; and to Gary Seiner for keeping the house clean and tidy this winter. Best wishes.

Jim Paul, BGHS President

