

Director's Comments

Dear Friends,

With the pitter-patter of rain and our wide range of temperatures I keep repeating the old adage, "April showers bring May flowers." I suppose that rings true for both rain and snow; at least I hope it does!

I want to thank each of you who attended the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 23. During this meeting we: reported on the various events and activities that occurred over the course of 2018; Bob Myers received the Frank J. Ward History Memorial Award for his many years of service and countless ways he contributed to Berrien County history; Liz Muhlenbeck, President of the Board of Directors, presented our new Strategic Directives; and we all enjoyed a presentation by Dr. Gregory Sumner on Michigan POW Camps in WWII followed by delicious refreshments.



May marks the beginning of our Summer Hours and Summer programming. Our first two summer programs are a free afternoon concert by the Lansing Ladies on Sunday, May 5, at 2:30 pm, and a presentation about local nurse involvement during World War I by Sandy Sager on Wednesday, May 8, at 7 p.m.

I am also very proud to announce that the long-awaited World War I exhibition in the Sheriff's Residence is officially open! The exhibition features objects from BCHA collections, an informative booklet, and engaging panels all about the history of World War I (globally and nationally) as well as our local involvement. I hope you visit the exhibition on your own or, even better, with friends and family.

If you're looking for ways to get involved we have three upcoming events planned for spring and summer. See the section "Wanted: Volunteers" listing the opportunities to lend a hand.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events.

Sincerely,
Kathy A. Cyr
Executive Director

When the United States declared war on the Central Powers on April 6, 1917, Michigan Governor Albert Sleeper had already asked the state attorney general to draft legislation to put the state on a war footing. The legislation called for a state militia to act as a home defense force when the National Guard was called up and set up a War Preparedness Board, which administered a five million dollar fund to pay for war-related expenditures.



On June 5, 1917, Michigan men began to register for the draft. A total of 380,000 men aged twenty-one to thirty registered, and when the age range was changed to eighteen to forty-five in 1918, the total soared to over 873,000. The draft called up over 115,000 men, but the public was shocked to learn that about forty percent of these men could not pass their physical examinations. Public schools soon adopted physical education requirements for Michigan children in part to ensure military preparedness, a measure which continues in effect to the present time.

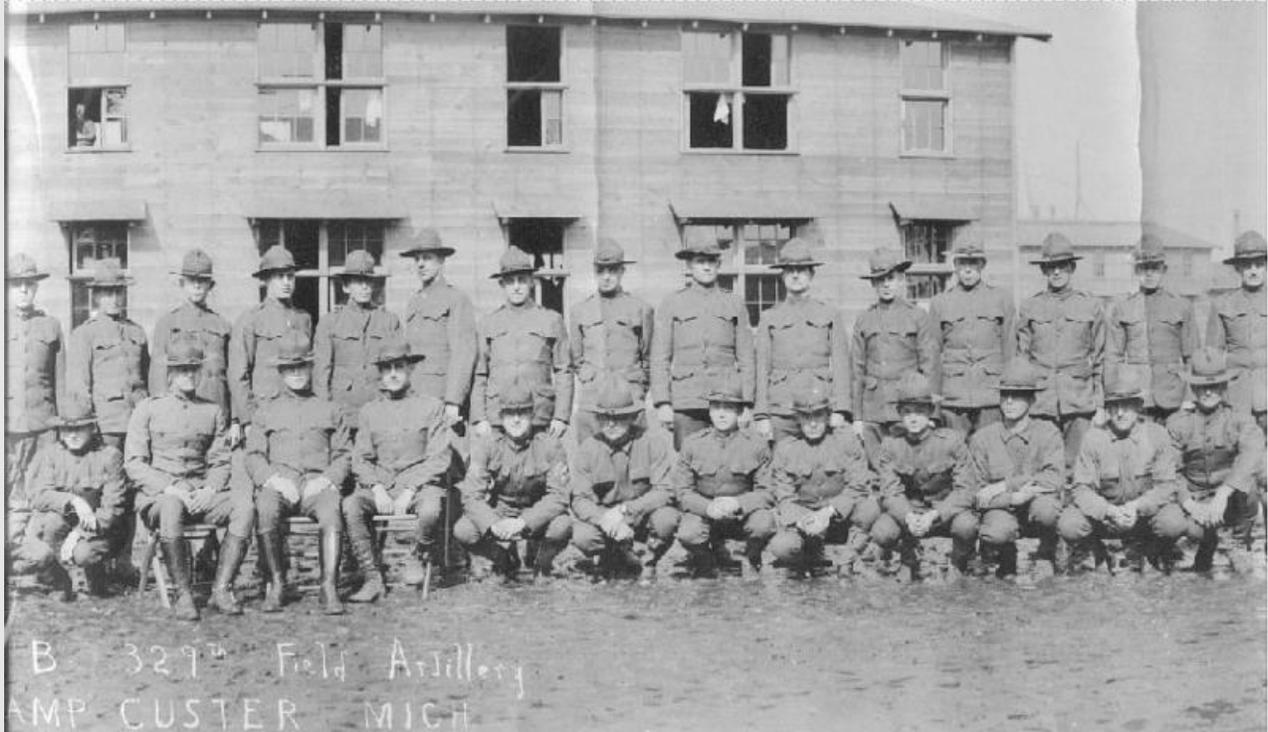
Although Michiganians supported the war effort, their patriotism often led to shameful excesses. Many places banned German music from public performances and schools replaced German language classes in their curricula with French or Spanish. Housewives who went to market discovered that hamburger had become "liberty sausage" or "salisbury steak", and frankfurters were "hot dogs," all because Hamburg and Frankfurt were German cities. Some people who failed to buy Liberty Bonds, whether they could afford them or not, had their homes smeared with yellow paint.

Thousands of local men trained for war at Camp Custer, near Kalamazoo. In most cases, however, the volunteers and draftees were too late to see extended service in France. By the time they had trained, sent to Europe and put in the field, the war was almost over. For example, Charles Herman of Berrien Springs, served with the 329th Field Artillery, but did not reach France until August 13, 1918. The war ended three months later.

Servicemen in the Michigan National Guard were the only Michigan soldiers to see extended service in Europe. When war broke out, the Michigan National Guard was called up and combined with the Wisconsin Guard to form the 32nd Division. After training in Texas, the 32nd sailed for France, arriving during the months of January to March 1918. Four battalions were in the trenches by May and the division was in combat almost constantly until the Armistice. Almost half of the men in the division were either killed or wounded during that time.

Michigan retains a visible reminder of World War I and the men of the 32nd Division. The division was popularly known by the red arrow displayed on its shoulder patch and was called the Red Arrow Division. Red Arrow Highway, following the Lake Michigan Shoreline, was named as a tribute to the 32nd Division.

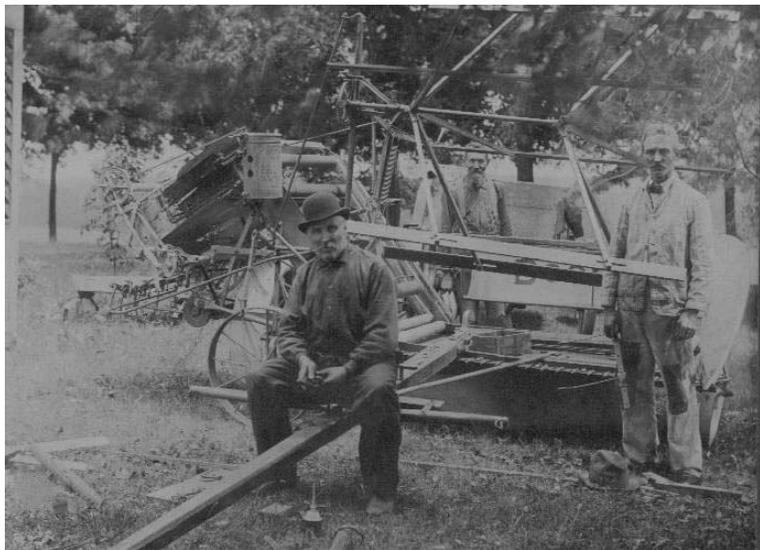
You can learn more about World War I in the current exhibition on display in the Sheriff's Residence.



From the Collection

A large part of life in early Berrien County was farming, this tradition continues today though farms are becoming smaller and smaller with land being sold to developers or other investors. It should then come as no surprise that many objects in the BCHA collection are farm-related. In this month's From the Collection feature, we have a series of photographs donated to the museum in 1986 by Thelma Krause.

These photographs date to the 1890s and show William Joseph Cameron, owner of a farm implement store in Niles. William Joseph and two unidentified men assembling or repairing a horse-drawn grain reaper (right), Cameron standing outside his store below), and the interior of the store (below).. So who was this man? What can we learn about him?



We will begin with Joseph Cameron. Joseph Cameron was born in Lebanon County, PA and he married Mary Burris of Juniata County, PA. In 1854, the Camerons and their five children, decided to head west and set trail for Illinois. Upon arriving in Galena, however, Mary, one of their children and one other relative (either the daughter's husband or Mary's mother, sources conflict on this detail) all died of cholera. In a letter addressed to Sarah Cameron Young (Joseph Cameron's granddaughter who was conducting family research in hopes to gain entrance to the DAR for her daughter) from her cousin Samuel Riegel, Samuel states that there were three funerals in five days. Filled with grief, Joseph and the rest of the children turned around and decided to settle in Berrien County. It seems that it was Joseph who originally opened the farm implement store in Niles.

Henry Nelson Cameron was the eldest of the family, born in 1824, and he must have been the one to pave the way for the family to leave Pennsylvania as he came to Michigan in 1853. This proved to serve him well as one year later he is noted to have wed a Miss Mary R. Williams of Cass County. Henry and Mary rented and owned various farms and at one point Henry served as a Justice of the Peace and Road Commissioner. Hon. Henry Nelson Cameron was said to carry his religious belief into his daily living, "proving by the uprightness and honor of his life the sincerity of his belief. As a citizen, he [was] public-spirited and energetic, always favoring the measures which in his judgment [would] benefit the community."

William Joseph Cameron was born to Henry and Mary in Niles on February 3, 1855. He was the first of their 15 children.

On October 15, 1878, William married Laura A. Nixon of Cassopolis and together they had five children, only two of whom lived into adulthood. His son Carl Frank Cameron was a Niles City Clerk and served in the First World War.

There is not much evidence of William's daily life aside from the fact that he worked with Joseph (his grandfather) in the farm implement store and these photographs of him. One can imagine that his father had an influence in how he dealt business and interacted with his fellow men.

Cameron died on June 25, 1938 and is buried at the Youngs Prairie Cemetery in Cassopolis.





Wanted: Volunteers

At Berrien County Historical Association we host several programs throughout the year that use varying amounts of volunteers. There are three events in the coming months that you can help with. Read below to choose which one(s) you prefer and call 269-471-1202 or email kcyr@berrienhistory.org to sign up!

Pioneer Days, May 10, all day This annual spring event invites area 3rd - 5th grade classrooms (including homeschoolers) to the History Center to learn about life in the 1830s, a favorite being a musket firing demonstration. Volunteers are needed to help lead and teach activities like: stenciling, life in a log cabin, line dancing, cross-cut saws, corn shelling, and blacksmithing.

Mock Trial, May 22, 9:30 am - 12 pm The St. Joseph High School Practical Law Class will return for their mock trial. We need volunteers to serve on the jury to determine whether the defendant is innocent or guilty.

Fourth of July Community Gathering, July 4, 11 am - 5 pm BCHA, the Berrien Springs Community Library, and the Village of Berrien Springs are cooking up a way for everyone to celebrate our nation's birthday and we need lots of volunteers. The day will be broken up into 2-3 hour shifts and tasks will vary in level of physical demands but it is guaranteed to be a good time!

Mark Your Calendar



Gladys Lyon was a local nurse who served during WWI. Learn about her and others like her on Wednesday, May 8

April 23 - WWI Exhibition Opens

Learn about the first modern war its local and global impact located in the Sheriff's Residence. *Closing July 31. Free Admission*

May 1, Summer Hours Begin

Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm
Sunday, 12 pm – 4 pm
Free Admission

May 5, Lansing Ladies, 2:30 p.m.

Join the History Center for a free afternoon concert. The Lansing Ladies Trio will carry you away with their beautiful vocals and violin accompaniment. *Free Admission*

May 8, Service & Sacrifice: The Contributions of Local WWI Nurses with Sandy Sager, 7:00 p.m.

Nurses make invaluable contributions to society everyday – often without receiving the proper accolades. We celebrate nurses with this fascinating program presented by Sandy Sager on local World War I Nurses. *Free Admission*

May 10, Pioneer Day, 9 am – 3 pm

Third through Fifth grade classrooms and homeschool groups are invited to attend the annual Pioneer Day to learn about life on the frontier in the 1830s. Morning and Afternoon sessions available. \$4 per person. *Reservations required.*

May 22 – Mock Trial, 10 am – 12 pm

The St. Joseph High School Practical Law Class will perform a mock trial in the 1839 Courthouse. *We need volunteers to serve on the jury to determine whether the defendant is innocent or guilty. If interested call 269-471-1202. Free Admission*

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BCHA Mission Statement

The Mission of the BCHA is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Berrien County through exhibits, tours, publications, and educational and community outreach programs for public benefit.