

Germantown Historical Society **Newsletter**



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Thank You Jeff Dhein

In March 2021, Jeff Dhein announced his decision to retire as President of the Germantown Historical Society. Jeff and his wife Leza have moved up north to enjoy their time relaxing away from the stressful life they had been living these past few years.

For the last 10 years Jeff has dedicated his time and efforts into serving as the leader of our organization. He also devoted himself to serving and participating in many community events throughout the Germantown area. In 2018, the Germantown Chamber of Commerce recognized Jeff's contributions by awarding him the honor of Germantown's Citizen of the Year award.

For 26 years Jeff poured himself into ensuring the GHS annual Oktoberfest event was a successful and fun-filled event for the entire community. Jeff could often be found serving behind the bar area inside the big tent, and last year inside the new Muehl Family Festhalle. Jeff's largest legacy may be the very existence of our new Festhalle, because it was his dream come true. He passionately worked for years to make that dream become a reality.

Thank you, Jeff, for your years of devotion serving the GHS, and certainly all of Germantown will never forget you. So, here is to you. EIN PROSIT !!!



From the GHS President

The year 2020 will be marked in history as the year of the Coronavirus pandemic. Almost all of life's normal activities came to a halt as the whole world shut down travel, schools, and economic activity. Social organizations cancelled most gatherings, and people became isolated as they remained in lockdown inside their own homes.

Now, the year 2021 will be marked in history as the year of transition, as we reopen our lives to get back to a "new normal".

The GHS will certainly be transitioning in an additional sense. With Jeff's departure, his persona will be missed, but life at the GHS must go on during this period of transition. In April



2021, the GHS board voted to elect me as your new President. My name is Jim Dix, and I have been spending quite a bit of time around Dheinsville since 1996. That is when the GHS provided me the resources to discover my ancestor's history back to the 1600's. It was Carol Barkow who handed me the Dix Family History Book which documented my ancestor's 400-year story.

Since then, I have become addicted to learning about genealogy and the history surrounding the lives of not only my direct ancestors, but also the history of all those who settled and formed the Germantown that we know today.

In 2014, Carol Barkow passed away and left a huge void in the genealogy department at the Wolf Haus. While no one could replace her, I did begin to regularly volunteer at the Wolf Haus where I enjoyed helping others learn about their own ancestors. As time went on, I have become the primary genealogist for the GHS and give tours of our three museums, and respond to anyone's request for assistance in learning about the history of Germantown, or their ancestor's contribution in creating that history.

I also enjoyed volunteering to help at the last 25 Oktoberfest events by grilling bratwurst, setting up electrical power and lighting, and telling people the story of Germantown inside our museums.

Now, I have stepped into the role as President, but the GHS can only survive this transition period if all members step up their support and consider offering their assistance in time or monetary donations. If we join together as a team, then I am confident our "new normal" can be bright and enjoyable.

During the last few months, I have already seen many green shoots sprouting up as the life of the GHS is renewed and even thrives. For instance, our Oktoberfest Committee is a group of a dozen or more young people who currently are eagerly planning every detail of this year's event, and we believe it may be the biggest and best Germantown Oktoberfest ever.

I look forward to meeting most all of you soon, as we all transition through this coming year together. Anyone's contribution to help the GHS in any way will be truly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Jim Dix

Board of Directors:

Jim Dix - President	(2021-2024)	Judy Bast	(2021-2024)
Peggy Bast - Secretary	(2021-2024)	Sue Dix – Treasurer	(2021-2024)
Oliver Schowalter – Vice Pres.	(2021-2024)	Barb Lutz	(2021-2024)
Sandi Dhein	(2019-2022)	Fritz Gierach	(2019-2022)
Marge Miller	(2019-2022)		

Germantown history and genealogy.....

By Mary Herrick, Volunteer Genealogist

The Wolf Haus is one of several museum buildings in the Dheinsville Settlement. It is a half timber house built 1854 by Valentine Wolf for his wife and family of twelve children. Valentine and Margaretha Klumb Wolf were born in the Hunsruck region of Germany. They met and were married in New York City in 1847. They arrived in Milwaukee in 1852 with their first two children. Their third child was born in Milwaukee before they traveled on to Dheinsville. There Valentine purchased a 10 acre parcel from Philipp Dhein in section 9 town 9 Germantown. They built their half timber home with infill of clay-loam from the land and rye straw binder from the fields. A partial wall is on display.

Between 1854 and 1880 nine more children were born. Valentine opened his shoemaker shop in his home. A stone addition to expand the house was added in 1862.

In 1896 the congregation of Christ Evangelical Church purchased one half acre of the Wolf property for the new parsonage. The remaining nine and one half acres which is currently owned by the Village of Germantown is known as Historic Dheinsville Park.

Over the last two years we have created or updated displays at the Wolf Haus museum with the history of the early settlers in story boards showing our ancestors' route as they traveled from the Hunsruck Region of Germany to the area now known as Germantown. The boards include pictures of the early buildings of commerce, family homesteads and genealogy of pioneer families.

In the building addition is a shoemaker's shop showing the equipment used in making shoes and boots. The equipment on display is from the same time period that Valentine was a shoemaker. These metal forms and tools were donated to the museum by Al Dobberfuhl. There are also several artifacts that actually belonged to the Valentine Wolf family which include metal forms of shoe making equipment and a dress that was donated in 2020 by the family's great great granddaughter Jane Bielingmaier. Other boards show the Wolf family genealogy in pictures and dates of events in their lives.

In 2020 a tribute to Gladys Muehl was created in the Wolf Haus to thank her for her contribution which made the new permanent structure Muehl Family Festhalle a reality.

In 2020 St Boniface Catholic Church was to celebrate 175 years as a parish but due to covid it has been postponed until 2022. A story board showing the history of St. Boniface in pictures was created to commemorate this occasion. The St. Boniface Catholic Church is the oldest parish in Washington County.

The Wolf Haus Jeffris Genealogy Research Room continues to add family history information and assist people in researching their family history. Please come to enjoy a visit back to Dheinsville's beginnings. Open every Wednesday 1-4, June 1 to October 1.



Volunteers Needed



Are you looking for a new opportunity to volunteer this year? Volunteers are still needed to help arrange/sort items in the museums, as well as to assist with group tours at the museums. We usually have 6-10 group tours during the season which runs June 1st thru November 1st. The groups range from 20 – 60 people, and we need up to 3 volunteers for the larger groups to assist our museum employee with the tours. Responsibilities include guiding the groups between the three museums and sharing with them the history of the area, the settlers and the museums. Tours are booked weekdays usually between 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Each tour lasts approximately 2 hours. If you are interested in providing any assistance, please contact the museum at 262-628-3170, or Jim Dix at ghsjdix@gmail.com.



While we were able to host Oktoberfest in 2020, we missed many of you. While we will miss Jeff and Leza Dhein and all they have done over a number of years, as Jim mentioned in his opening letter, we are busy planning this year's event. We are working on changes to assist in reducing the waiting time to order in the food area, lighting in the parking area, as well as other things. We are looking forward to seeing you again this year!

We are very pleased to announce our Museum Director for the past few seasons, Shane O'Neil, will be staying on with us for 2021. Glad to have you Shane!

2021 Dates to Remember:

June 2—Wolf Haus Opens for the Season

June 4—Bell Museum Opens for the Season

June 6—Christ Church Museum of Local History Opens for the Season

September 25 & 26—Oktoberfest

September 26—Christ Church Museum of Local History Closes for the Season

September 29—Wolf Haus Closes for the Season

October 31—Bell Museum closes for the season

The Wolf Haus & Genealogy Research Center will be open on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm from June 1st thru October 1st.

The Christ Church Museum of Local History is open on Sundays from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm from June 1st thru October 1st.

The Bast Bell Museum is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm from June 1st thru November 1st.

We Hope to See You!

GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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262-628-3170