



of Bluffton & Pandora

P.O. Box 5

Bluffton, OH 45817

Schumacher Homestead

8350 Bixel Rd.

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MEMBERSHIP

Annual Household \$30

Annual Sustaining \$100

Life \$1,000

Swiss Community Historical Society

PO Box 5, Bluffton OH 45817

WINTER 2026

From the Swiss Settlement

Hiring of Museum Director Neil Allen

Neil Allen has accepted the position of museum director with the Swiss Community Historical Society.

He comes to the position with vast experience. Neil previously worked at the Maritime Museum of Sandusky in Sandusky, Ohio.

His work there included the museum's daily operation, creating museum exhibits, and developing educational programs.

He is also experienced in grant writing, fundraising, and supervising.

As museum director for the Swiss Historical Society, Neil will plan and put together exhibits and supervise displays.

He is currently reviewing and organizing the artifacts the society has long had in storage. The Swiss Historical Society is looking forward to the great things Neil will do as museum director.



Thank you to our Volunteers

Over the past 75 years, SCHS has depended on volunteers with many different skills to carry out our mission. We want to publicly acknowledge those who worked so tirelessly in 2025. We deeply apologize if we missed anyone. And to those who worked during the years prior, please know that we deeply appreciate your contributions to making SCHS what it is today. See also our list of board members on page 1.

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PUBLICITY

Bergstrand Family:

Benji, Sarah, and sons

Phillips Family: Denny,

Kaye, Sarah, Carter

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Sarah Bergstrand

Ron Bowerman

Mark Brumbaugh

Rich Bucher

Miev Chan

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Barb Stettler

Tom Schumacher

Joyce Suter

Alex Weaver

Ben Weaver

Lois Wetherill

Marie Yoder-Dyck

Shawna Yoder

Wren Yoder

Christmas Open House

“Es kam die gnadenvolle Nacht, Wie leuchter's dir des Morgens strahl.”

If you had lived in Switzerland in the 1800s, these two song lines may have been ones you yourself sang. They are from the Swiss Christmas carol, “Es kam die gnadenvolle Nacht” (The Gracious Night Came) by Johan Kasper Lavater, from Zurich.

If you attended the two-day 2025 Christmas Open House at the Schumacher homestead, you would not have heard this carol, but you would have heard many others.

The new Heritage Center rang with live music, surrounding the hustle and bustle of the gift shop, refreshment table, and visitors enjoying the first museum exhibit.

Visitors made their own hand-dipped candles in the basement of the farmhouse. All came together to create a Christmas experience that was cozy and even a bit magical!



The December 6 and 7 open house was free and open to the public.

A new gravel parking lot accommodated a large number of guests in very snowy, quite Christmas-y conditions.

2025 Bluffton Fall Festival

Fall fest 2025 was a rousing success! The whole homestead was buzzing with activity inside the buildings and outside on the lawn.

There were displays and demonstrations of many period items, including tin smithing, bobbin lace making, and chair caning.

The Heritage Center hosted some of the activities. The air smelled delicious, as the wind carried the scent of popcorn being popped and stew simmering.

Live music added to the festive atmosphere.

There was a straw maze and games for the youngsters and anyone who was brave enough could try the stilts.

The weather was beautiful, and so were the sights and sounds of the community coming together to celebrate.



First Exhibit: Clearing the Land

An exhibit of agricultural tools is now displayed on the walls of the Swiss Heritage Center. The exhibit opened in conjunction with the Swiss Community Historical Society's Christmas Open House in early December. The tools are grouped by the stages of agriculture: Clearing the Land, Preparing the Soil, Planting, Cultivation, Harvesting and Storage.

The Clearing the Land section includes a two-man whip saw used to cut the length of the log. Round, square and hexagon-shaped drainage tiles are displayed in the Preparing the Soil section. The Planting section includes a unique 1890s seed broadcaster called the Fiddle Bow Seed Sower. Hand-forged hoes are displayed in the Cultivation section. Various scythes and a buck rake model represent the Harvesting area of the exhibit. Hay harpoons, used to lift the loose hay from the wagon into the hay mow in the barn, are shown in the Storage section.

Each section also includes information on the implements, historic photographs, and quotes from P.B. Amstutz's book *Historical Events of the Mennonite Settlement in Allen and Putnam Counties, Ohio* and Edgar L. Schumacher's *Life in the Bluffton and Pandora, Ohio, Community, 1877-1910*: Excerpts from "The Bluffton News."



Homestead featured on BGSU-PBS

Season 2025 Episode 4 of WBGU-PBS Scenic Stops & Stories includes the Schumahcer Homestead and docents Van Risser and Jason Althaus. View at <https://www.pbs.org/video/amusement-art-and-family-vd9tcu/>



**SWISS COMMUNITY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
PO BOX 5
BLUFFTON OH, 45817