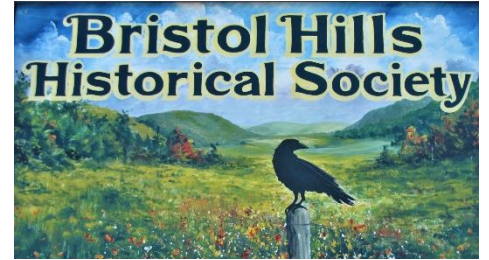


NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 15, 2023



Bristol's Famous Burning Springs Open to Public on Two Upcoming Weekends

The Bristol Hills Historical Society hosts its annual opening of the privately owned Burning Springs on two upcoming weekends, with a lecture on the site's centuries-old history and an optional hike up the gully to see the lit flame and waterfall. The Burning Springs farm's lush gardens will also be in full bloom, including more than 150 tree peonies.

The event will be held on four days of two consecutive weekends: Saturday and Sunday, May 27-28, and Saturday and Sunday, June 3 and 4. The site at 4348 Case Road, Canandaigua, in the town of Bristol, will be open from noon to 5 all four days. The lecture by site owner Alan Jones will take place each day at 2 p.m.

Naturally fed gas flares in shale creek beds occur in various places throughout the Finger Lakes, but this one has a significant cultural history. It was long considered a sacred site by local Senecas. The first known non-native encounter with the Burning Springs was in 1669, when Seneca guides showed the springs to the French explorer La Salle.

That visit caused a sensation in Europe and eventually sparked the first international interest in natural gas as a fuel source. The site also has long served a communal purpose, as noted in the new local-history picture book published by the Historical Society. "During the 1800s, visitors from Canandaigua and the surrounding areas often took day trips by carriage to view the scene," site owner Alan Jones wrote for the book. "Burning Springs became a site for picnics and family reunions. Community groups, Boy Scouts, church groups, busloads of school classes, and others also made their pilgrimage to the burning waters."

During the open-gardens weekends, visitors can wander the gardens and view the burning spring nearby the farmhouse. The more adventurous can hike up the creek to a scenic waterfall and gorge.

The event is free and open to the public, but the Historical Society asks visitors to consider making a \$5 donation to support the work of the society. Children are welcome.

The Historical Society's new picture book, *History and Mystery: The Folklore and Legends of the Bristol Hills*, features dozens of other stories and original paintings telling the history of the towns of Bristol and South Bristol. The book will be available at this event for pickup by advance purchasers. Additional copies will be available for purchase at this and all other Historical Society events starting with the book release celebration on May 20.

The Bristol Hills Historical Society is a volunteer-run 501(c)3 organization serving the towns of Bristol and South Bristol, N.Y. Its work includes sponsoring educational lectures and preserving the organization's two historic buildings, the 1846 Bristol Center church and 1923 Bristol Springs Grange Hall.

For more information on the Bristol Hills Historical Society, and to watch the calendar for upcoming events, visit bristolhillshistory.org or the society's Facebook page, at facebook.com/bhhistorical.

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Photos included: peonies from the Case Road garden, Burning Springs sign, Burning Springs waterfall