

Joseph P. Martin Memorial

Hello, my name is Joseph P. Martin, I was born on July 17, 1911. The son of Ferdinand and Katherine Schafer Martin. My parents had 7 children. My siblings were: August, Anna, Clara, John, Nicholas and Regina. August and Anna died at birth and Clara passed away at the age of 15. I grew up with John, Nick and Regina.

When I was a child I grew up on our farm on Hanses Road. It was $\frac{1}{2}$ mile North and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile West of Westphalia. I worked mostly on the farm and worked in the family orchard. We used horses for farming for many years. It was a long time before we started using tractors. One day when I was young, I got a little red wagon for Christmas and I decided to hitch it to a small horse or colt. Things were going well when all of a sudden the wagon rattled and scared the horse. The horse took off. The wagon smashed into the wall and broke into 100 pieces. So much for my little red wagon!!!!

Growing up, I went to St. Mary's school. I was 9 years younger than my next oldest sibling, which meant that I was left with no one to play with most of the time. I was lonesome a lot of the time, so I took up reading and playing the piano. I have always loved music. I initially was taught the piano by my sister, Regina, who learned from my brother John. At the age of 15, I was fortunate to be able to take piano lessons from Prof. Frank Loehner. I started playing some of the masses at church when I was 19 years old. After Prof. Loehner's death in 1932, when I was 21 years old, I took over the position as full time organist at St Mary's. I kept that position for 53 years. I retired once, and then came back for a short time. The last time I played the church organ was for my son's wedding in 1999, when I was 88 years old. I told my son I would be proud to play for their wedding, but only if I could make it up the choir steps on my own without any help. I did!

My interest in music continued throughout my entire life. I formed my own band at one time. I played for a couple of other bands and was a member in the Westphalia band. With the help of Father Roy Schoendorf I helped to form the Glee Club. I played various instruments including the organ, piano, tuba, xylophone, accordion, clarinet, trombone and drums.

I was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church, the St. Joseph Society and Holy Name Society.

When I had the time I enjoyed playing the piano about 2 hours in the evening. Sometimes we had glee club practice at our house, also. My kids said they enjoyed hearing the piano and our

practices. Sometimes, Pauline, would request that we play one of her favorite songs. I always enjoyed getting my children to sing at family gatherings, especially at Christmas.

Playing cards was very important to me. Sometimes the kids just wanted to set around and talk. I would give them about 15 minutes then I would say "Okay, time for cards now." In later years we had regular card games and played mostly Solo.

I met my loving wife, Pauline Thelen, at a social function in Westphalia. We were married at Most Holy Trinity in Fowler on October 1st, 1935. Together we had 12 children, Josephine, Mary Ann, Bernadette, Anthony, Therese, Imelda, Francis, Marion, Celine, Rita, Paul and Luke. We lost a child that we named Marion. We were married for 64 ½ years at the time of Pauline's death.

My mother, Katherine, and father, Ferdinand, lived in the house with Pauline and I and our children until they died. Mom passed away in 1943 and dad in 1955. We all spoke German most of the time so when my eldest child went to school, the nuns admonished us because she couldn't speak English.

I played for all the masses every Sunday and every day of the week with exception of Good Friday. I also played for weddings, funerals and pretty much any function of the church, since I was the only organist at that time. In the summer when we had visiting priests we had 3 masses a day. My father died on Good Friday. On the day of the funeral I had the privilege of playing for the regular mass, a wedding mass and then my father's funeral.

Occasionally, when I was on my way to mass, the neighbor kids would watch for me in the morning and were conveniently available for a ride to school. I was determined to get to mass even if I had to walk. Sometimes, when we knew our road would not be very good, I would park our car on the main road. Then I could either walk to the main road or drive the tractor through the snow or mud to the car. For payment as organist, I received paid insurance for the family. I always told my kids, "I did it for God." There is a small plaque that says that in the choir loft now.

I took great pride playing for the choir. We worked hard and played hard. We often had a picnic in the summer at the park near Stoney Creek. We also, got together after Midnight Mass. We had choir practices often either at church or our home or other people's homes.

I remember one time when there was an awful smell in the choir loft. The smell just got worse and after some investigation, Izzy and I found a dead cat in the organ. I don't know how or when it got there, but we gave a decent burial.

Our beautiful St. Mary's burned down on April 20, 1959. We were able to save the Blessed Sacrament, chalices, and the other holy vessels used at Mass. Twelve men were needed to carry the pulpit from the burning church. We also, were fortunate to save a lot of the sheet music from the church, but we lost so much. I was happy to be able to temporarily furnish our family organ for Masses in the church hall.

To support our family I farmed and worked at the Westphalia Telephone Company.

We had an orchard with 95 fruit trees. We had many varieties of apples as well as cherries, plums, and pears. We sold drops for cider at a nickel a bushel, if they picked them up. We got a dime a bushel if we picked them up. We always took the first wagon load of apples to the Nuns each season. The Nuns always made sure I got a nice cold beer when we delivered them. If you are wondering where the beer came from, I know where some of it came from. Some former friends who lived in Ann Arbor would stop by Martin's Bar and ask them to deliver a case of beer to the Nuns. They would get a funny look when they asked, but the nuns appreciated it. The Nuns often gave a beer to people that helped them. Whether any of them drank it, I can't say.

We milked cows and separated the milk for the cream and sold it. At one time, I delivered milk downtown Westphalia. We also raised chickens, sheep and hogs. We planted about 120 acres of wheat, oats, corn, beans, and hay. We did a lot of custom corn planting, combining, spraying apple trees, brush, and crops.

I was privileged to be able to be a part of building the Grotto at the cemetery. We built the Grotto using horses and large scoops.

All summer we had a regular route spraying apple trees around the neighborhood (maybe 6 or 8 places in all). Once in a while, if we had time, I might be offered a beer or a glass of hard cider. I bought a backhoe to mount on my tractor that sure made things easier. I dug some graves in the cemetery and the footings for the original garage building at the junk yard, which is still standing. I also dug the footings for the foundation for the St. Peters Lutheran Church in Riley. I did a lot of tiling in the fields. For many years we did all the tiling by hand.

We made apple cider and apple butter most years. We made dandelion wine and cherry pit wine sometimes. We also, made a lot of sauerkraut. We often had a 30 gallon crock of it around. The kids and I (the girls and the boys) used to help me cut wood every year. Pauline and I had some great kids that helped with the farming, livestock, orchard and other chores around the farm.

I got involved with the Westphalia Telephone Company in the 50's. We switched over to new phones and dialing system in 1959. We switched from switchboard to automatic calling. We

still had party lines, but we had a 7 minute cut-off so everyone had a chance to use the phone. I served as lineman for about 10 years and manager for about 20 years. It was definitely a hands-on position. The phone company needed a lot of maintenance. We worked on the lines and in the office. Eventually we put all new cable in and eliminated most of the wires.

I liked to play ball with the kids once in a while. Pauline and I liked to walk through the orchard every Sunday. On Rogation Days we took the kids and walked up the lane to all the fields and sprinkled Holy Water on them. Evenings we always prayed the Rosary as a family.

When the kids were little we rarely traveled, because I always wanted to get back to play for mass. When we did go with the family we needed to come back the same night.

In later years, when I wasn't so involved with playing every mass, Pauline and I, started taking trips with friends. I really enjoyed traveling. One of my favorite trips was to see the "Big Trees" (Red Woods and Sequoias) in California. In the late 70's, we had a new house built on the West end of the property where the orchard used to be. When I was in my 80's, we bought a motor home and traveled with some of my adult kids and adult grandkids throughout the country.

Our family, as of today, has been blessed with 52 grandchildren and 142 great-grandchildren and 28 great-great grandchildren with 3 more on the way.

My wife Pauline has always supported me. We were blessed with 64 ½ years of marriage. I was away from home a great deal. As well as playing at all the masses and church functions, I also had choir, glee club, and band practice. I farmed sometime late into the evenings. I occasionally had emergency calls for the phone company. She was alone so often to raise our children, care for my parents and manage our household. She was a great lady. She truly was the love of my life.

All my life, I did everything for the Greater Honor and Glory of God!