



WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 12 | Issue 4 | Number 68 | November 2023

www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com

www.facebook.com/westphalia1836

Email: westphalia1836@gmail.com

FIND US:

120 W. Main Street
Westphalia, MI 48894

ARTICLE FROM 1986

A couple of weeks ago Larry Hanes brought over a newspaper article from Germany written June 25, 1986.

The article was found while going through the contents of Revella Smith's home. The article also included a photo of Revella, Larry, Willie Hanes and Karl Knobben, a visitor from Germany who came to our Bicentennial (150)

Celebration to help us celebrate this great event. Needless to say we could not read it because it was in German, so I took it over to Evelyn Weiland to try to get it interpreted.

The article talked about how our ancestors came here from various parts of Germany and after several years realized their dreams could come true. For as little as \$1.00 per acre they could purchase good land that with clearing would produce good crops.

THE 2023 LIGHT PARADE

Kyan Thelen, one of our newest and youngest members, has stepped up and has agreed, with some help, to continue the annual light parade. Please consider participating in this annual tradition. She can be reached at 989.640.9515 or Kyan.thelen1@gmail.com. She has also included a QR code on the light parade poster. The QR code is a dead give away about her being from the younger future generation. Thanks, Kyan, for volunteering to do the parade.

The parade this year is Saturday December 2. In addition to the tree lighting we will again have a raffle. The items are a handmade quilt by our own Westphalia "Peace by Piece Quilters", toy barn and doll house donated by Andy Hengesbach and the residents of Bellamy Correctional facility in Ionia.

This year's honorary tree lighter will be one of Westphalia's newest residents, Gabe Myers. Gabe lives in the former Austin House and is the son of Marcie who many of us know as one of the friendly staff, who for the past 26 years has been at Dr. Gadille's office, Village Smiles.

This year's tree is being donated by Ray and Ann Thelen.



FUTURE EXHIBIT – FARMING

We need your help planning our next exhibit. While considering the topic "Farming in Westphalia" it became obvious how many different directions the subject could take us. In fact, we could plan 2 or 3 exhibits on that subject.

So we ask that you give us some idea of the material you could share to support any part of the topic. For example: Photos of barns and barn raising, corn cribs, water tanks, tractors, steam engines, plows, harvesters, aerial photos of farms from the 50s, windmills and their use on the farm, stories about farming passed on in your family, stories about how the Depression affected farming in Westphalia, posters of bankruptcy auctions, actual small farming implements like seed sowers, scythes, etc. the history of Centennial farms, dairy farming, the role of women in farming - whether in the field or in the home - such as butter making, spinning, canning, fireplace use, ovens and range styles used, etc.

Please call or text what you might be able to share/loan us to Margie Wirth at 989.640.4437 or to Bernie Thelen at 517.582.0901. Please, *we are not ready to accept any physical photos or implements at this time*, but we do need some idea of the material that is out there. Some ideas may be used the summer of 2024, but others might not be used until later exhibits.

CEMETERY WALK RECAP



A big **Thank You** to all who worked at the walk and especially those of you who attended this very popular annual event.

We do not have an accurate head count but it was estimated to be between 300 to 400 people. Once again we want to thank those who participated in the cemetery walk.

It is remarkable to see the talent that this area has as local residents become the characters they were asked to represent.

LOCAL NEWS & UPDATES

We recently lost a very picturesque barn. The barn, which belonged to Dwight Boak, was on the corner of Pratt Road and Dexter Trail. The Centennial Farm was once owned by Ted and Doris Snyder. Dwight is a descendant of Doris; her mother was a Jastrum and her dad was a Pratt.

Doris passed away in 1997 at the age of 86. She lived her entire life in the post card picture perfect house. She was a wealth of information and was fun to listen to. She recalled as a very young girl how that barn was moved from the general area of Wacousta Road and Pratt Road when Dexter Trail was straightened out as it is now. She talked about how a winch was set up and one horse would go round and round and wench the barn across the field to its current location. She would also tell how she could make some money (a few cents) by carrying water to the men while they were building the road. Her husband Ted was also fun and enjoyable to talk to.

Up until about a year and a half ago Dwight worked in the backroom at Ox's for about 6 or 7 years as one of their meat cutters. Both he and his wife kept their farmhouse and buildings in great condition. Someone once said their place looked like it came straight out of *Country* magazine. The neighbors as well as the Boaks were really saddened to see the barn burn down.

With the
Thanksgiving,
Christmas and New
Years upon us...

Frohe Festtage!