



www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com

www.facebook.com/westphalia1836

Cemetery Walk 2021

We were again blessed with beautiful weather. We estimated that around 400 people showed up.

A big thank you to all the people who made it a big success again. It takes a lot of work and coordination.

Wedding Exhibit Book

The first printing of the wedding book has sold out. Another 100 books have been ordered and are due to arrive soon. At last count, around 25-30 were still available. If you are looking for a beautiful Christmas gift, this is it!

There are over 250 wedding pictures from 1860-1970. There is sure to be one or several of them that are related to you.

Honoring Veterans: November 11

At the 11th minute of the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, World War I ended. Every year on November 11th we celebrate and honor all veterans who have served this country: those that returned to us, and especially those that lost their lives serving. The letter below was from the Civil War but could apply to any war. This story is being printed in honor of all veterans.

Peter Sontag: A Union Soldier by Evelyn Weiland:

This is a true story about a young Westphalia man who was a soldier in the Civil War. His name was Peter Sontag, son of Casper Sontag and Elizabeth Sprigop of Bickhofen, Germany. Peter was just 29 years old, not married and working as a farm hand. In the year 1861 when the Civil War broke out in April of that year, Peter believed as did so many of Westphalia's young men that slavery should be abolished. And so he enlisted in Company F-14th Michigan infantry on November 15, 1861. Below is a letter; the last letter written by Peter to his brother William in Westphalia, Michigan.

WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 10 | Issue 5 | Number 57 | October 2021

Light Parade & Tree Lighting

The light parade will be Saturday, December 4th at 6:00 PM. We have some new features in our event this year that we are excited about!

- Our parade will travel the usual two blocks. Then...
- We'll light the tree – Ben Prince will be flipping the switch.
- We'll have a few Christmas carols after the parade.
- St. Nick plans on making an appearance.

This year's Christmas tree has been donated by Leroy and Stephanie Schafer.

We NEED parade entries.

While it's fun to watch the parade, getting your family or neighbors together to BE in the parade can be more fun! Please consider entering.....The last couple of years the entries have been dwindling. We no longer have a July 4th parade so let's keep this one going or this parade will also become history. **Contact us for more information.**

SPECIAL MUSEUM EXHIBIT

With dates and times to be announced..we're excited to offer a limited exhibit of nativity scenes in the museum. We hope to be open to display this exhibit for a few hours the day of Light Parade and the day after...but we'll keep you posted.

The exhibit will display over twenty various sizes and types of nativity scenes on loan from Glenn Fink.

From Pittsburg, Tenn. 25th of April 1862

Dear Brother,

Now I want to write a few lines. They might be the last ones written by my hand. We have been in this camp in Pittsburg for the last two days. I am about 1300 miles away from you, dear brother and dear sister-in-law. We have been informed that we should be ready for the big battle.

We are close to the battlefield where the previous battle took place about 14 days ago. I saw the grave where the Confederate General and the 2 Colonels are buried. I have not seen the graves where many thousands of bodies are piled on the battlefield. Most soldiers said they have seen graves with 150 bodies in each. We know that the battle we are about to go into will be even more terrible. There are more than 100,000 Union troops ready. How many the Southerners have we don't know. Once it starts it will have a terrible end.

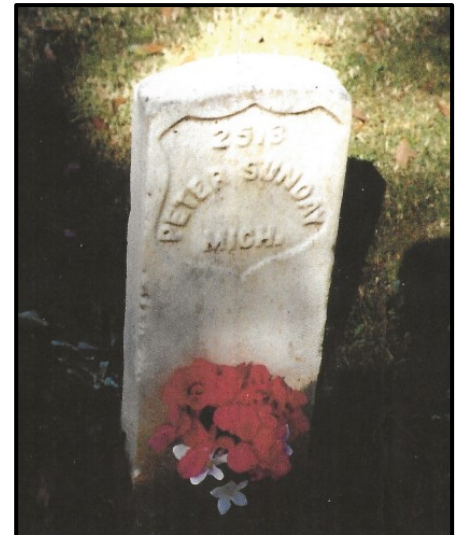
The woods here are green like in Westphalia in the summer. Along 15 miles of the Tennessee River our soldiers are ready. We are under the Command of General Paz and the rumor is that that the Southern army will be surrounded from all sides and attacked. Everywhere I came through the countryside, fields were not planted and livestock had run away. The war is not being fought in the water or in the woods, but in the clearing. It will be the worst battle in American history.

If I die in this war please pay Joseph Platte one dollar and Michael Spitzley one dollar and use 5 dollars for Masses for me. Please can you think about me dear brother and sister-in-law and pray for me should I die. I have sent you twenty dollars to Lansing and you can pick it up at the Express Office. I am mentioning it again in this letter in case you have not received my last one. You don't have to write to me at this address. I don't know if I will be alive. Remember me should I die. If I die in battle, you can use the money I had coming. In three or four years when you can, send \$100.00 to our parents and brothers in Germany. Please pay any debts I might have with people at home. I send greetings to you dear brother and sister-in-law. Now till an eternal meeting with you, think about me as long as you live.

Peter Sontag

Peter died on August 20, 1862 and is buried in the National Cemetery in Corinth, Mississippi. He did not die on the battlefield, but in the army hospital in Farmington, Tennessee, as was the case with many of the Civil War soldiers, whose wounds became infected. Disease killed far more men than did the bullets.

The original letter was written in German and translated by the late Marie Bengel. Peter's relatives (Kolp) have kept his story for all these years. Special thanks to Alice (Kolp) Fedewa for the picture of his tombstone which she took. Note that his name on the grave marker has been Americanized to "Sunday".



Museum News

Don't forget our museum hours are the first Sunday and Third Wednesday of the month until we close down in December. That means you only have a few more chances to stop in this year! As a reminder, we have a new large photo (small portion at right) of downtown Westphalia and many other things to take a look at. Stop in!

Sunday 11/7 ~ 1-4:00 PM

Wednesday 11/17 ~ 5-8:00 PM

Special Exhibit December TBD

