



WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 10 | Issue 1 | Number 53 | February 2021

IT'S A MYSTERIOUS DONATION

A couple of weeks ago, Walt and Bernie Thelen were at the Post Office getting their mail and noticed a white Meijer bag hanging on the door handle at the main entrance to the Museum.

Inside the bag was a scrapbook with newspaper articles from 1936 and a small diary. The diary is 5" x 3" and 1/2" thick.

It was written in 1872, with all days having an entry. The writing is very small and somewhat faded but still legible with magnifying glass.

Evelyn Wieland has determined that it was written by Michael J. Bergrath as a seminarian at St. Vincent Seminary and College in Pittsburgh, PA. He later became a priest. Fr. Bergrath was born in Westphalia in 1851.

Now the big question who left it and were they a family member?

2021: A NEW YEAR

Who knows what this New Year will bring?

A lot of unknowns...At this time we do not know if we will be able to have a featured exhibit this summer. We will not open unless we feel it is safe to do so.

On the other hand there is a good possibility that we might be able to have the Cemetery Walk this fall in September only time and COVID vaccinations will tell.

By the time the April newsletter comes out we might have a better idea of how things are going. In the meantime we are in a "Hold" pattern with no meetings or events scheduled. We are however open for donations to keep the Museum utilities paid and maintained.

**The society wishes everyone a healthy & safe
winter & upcoming spring.**

**With the opening of restaurants, it's important
that we support our local businesses & enjoy
one of their great meals!**

AS WE DREAM OF SPRING

*"Farming looks mighty easy
when your plow is a pencil, and
you're a thousand miles from the
corn field."*

— President Dwight D.
Eisenhower

*"Farming is a profession of
hope."*

— Brett Brian

*"I would rather be on my
farm than be emperor of
the world."*

— George Washington

www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com
www.facebook.com/westphalia1836

DON SCHAFER AND Schafers

Our community recently lost a treasure from our village. At age 94 he was a wealth of information about Westphalia. One of the things I always enjoyed was sitting on his porch during the summer months learning about people and events of years past. He never had an unkind word about anyone. Most stories had a bit of humor to them. We all remember Don and his brother Steve as owners of Schafer's. They bought it from their parents Adam and Pauline.

One of the things Don let us copy for the Historical Society was a copy of the original deed. His parents purchased it in 1929 for \$1.00 plus other considerations. It did not say what the other considerations were.

Schafer's' was originally a restaurant specializing in Sunday chicken dinners. It did not become a tavern until 1933 with the end of prohibition. They continued serving their chicken dinners. His dad, Adam, would go to the country and buy chickens from the local farmers and then basically process them as needed. Where the former bank, now Tropical Sun fitness center, stands was the former home of Michael Spitzley the founder of the Westphalia State bank. When his former home was removed it left a rather large hole. A large billboard was put in front of it to kind of hide the hole which was next door to Schafer's restaurant. It was behind this billboard and restaurant that the boys would butcher the chickens as needed for their parents in the kitchen. Page 69 in the "Blue Book" has the story of Schafer's, written by Don in 1986.

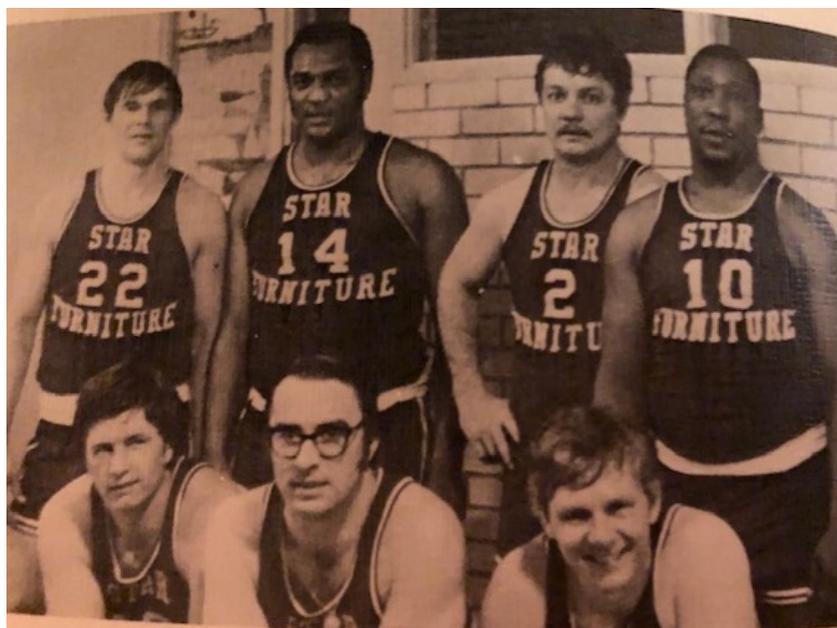
Later Don and his brother were known for their juicy hamburgers. When asked how they did it they simply said that they used a large skillet as opposed to using a grill, which kept the juices in the meat. To this day even though it has changed hands a few times since they sold it, wedding parties make it a point to visit Schafer's between the ceremony and the reception to have a beer or two.

Don would like to tell people he was the smartest boy in his high school graduation class (he was the only boy in his class of 7) who graduated high school in 1944. Three of his remaining classmates are still alive: Evelyn Weiland, Lilly Mae Fox and Bernadette Thelen.

Don was an avid sports fan especially for the Detroit Tigers. Schafer's sponsored many softball, bowling and little league teams over the years.

A little tidbit shared by Allan Pohl is that back in 1973 some of the Detroit Tigers came to P-W in February to play a benefit basketball game. Following the game some of them went to Schafer's to eat. Gates Brown had one of their hamburgers, then another, and another for a total of six!

Many of us have fond memories of visiting with Don at his tavern or in summers on his front porch. He will be missed.



Bottom Row (L to R): Jim Price, Tom Timmerman, and Jim Northrup. Top Row (L to R): Mickey Stanley, Earl Wilson, Norm Cash and Gates Brown.