



Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

May 2012

Volume 1

Who/What is the Historical Society?

The Westphalia Historical Society was formed in 1985 as a recognized non-profit in the State of Michigan. It has a set of by-laws and four officers as required by law. The current officers are President, Evelyn Weiland; Vice President, Barb Thelen; Treasurer, Rose Schafer, Secretary, Theresa Quartermus. There are no annual membership dues and anyone can become a member by simply coming to the meetings (*our next meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 22 at the Village Hall*). The purpose of the Society is to preserve our German Heritage for current and future generations.

What is a future goal?

After the 175th anniversary, the Society had heard many positive remarks about the display of antiques and heirlooms the Society had gathered in Audie Cassel's shop and the Hardware Store. There is a real interest in having a museum/archive to showcase local historical items and to store written material about our community. Accomplishing this goal in the not too distant future is one of the Society's chief objectives.

What are we doing now?

To put it simply we are trying to raise money to fund our future goal, and collecting information and items of historical significance. We are going to attempt to put together periodic newsletters to let you know what's going on and to perhaps have some interesting articles of our past. Our current projects include reprinting the "Brown" book which will be a reprint of the "1836-1976 140 Years of Growth" book and includes additional updated material. There were some errors and omissions in the original book which have been updated and corrected so it will contain some extra pages. For more information on availability of the new "Brown" book, please contact Maggie Upson 587-4193 or Margie Wirth 587-6984.

The second project is to raffle a beautiful quilt at the Car Cruise-In. It was sewn by Karen Spitzley and quilted by the Peace by Piece quilt group, namely: Rose Kolp, Marilyn Pline, Evie Pohl, Gladys Rademacher, Betty Schafer, Kay Schneider, Chris Smith, Mary Lou Thelen, Maggie Upson, and Margie Wirth. The Westphalia Knights of Columbus have graciously agreed to assist us with the raffle. Ticket prices will be \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00. The Portland Federal Credit Union has made a generous donation of \$250.00 to defray the cost of printing the raffle tickets.

Thank you Portland Federal Credit Union!!

We are also planning to reproduce the DVD that was shown on Main Street during last year's 175th celebration if enough interest is shown. The DVD contains film footage taken by Fr. Gutha in 1936 of the centennial, St. Mary school students, building the Cemetery Grotto and the 125th celebration in 1961 as well as other events. The cost will be \$15.00; if interested, contact Maggie Upson or Margie Wirth.

Future fund raising ideas.....

One possibility would be to perhaps reprint some of the family tree books that are no longer available such as the Thelen, Spitzley, Feldpausch, Fink, Koenigsknecht, Pohl, Schmitt, Fedewa, etc.

We are always open to new fund raising ideas from anyone in the community, and we more than welcome any donations toward the goal of keeping Westphalia's heritage alive and well! Any donors will be recognized in our newsletter unless he/she wishes to remain anonymous.

Alte Sprichwörter

Mai kalt und nass
Macht für eine grosse Fass.
May cold and wet
Will bring in a great harvest!

Books for Sale....

Currently we have the following books for sale:

- 1) Of Pilgrimage, Prayer, & Promise - \$23.00 each,
2 or more \$20.00 each
 - 2) Quiet Heroism - \$6.00 each
 - 3) Westphalia High School Reunion 1938-1950 -
\$3.00 each
 - 4) Sisters of Christian Charity - \$1.00
- To purchase contact Cindy Fedewa 587-3681 or Evelyn Weiland 587-6839.

Visitors from Germany

Günter Pung, along with two cousins, plans to visit Westphalia this summer, perhaps in August or September. They are coming from their home in the Eifel area of the German Rhineland. Günter believes he has many relatives here.

Women with young children, their men and their priest,
Left their German land one hundred fifty years now past,
To find a new life — one with freedom and peace.
Life where a man could dream his very own dreams.

Lembarking from Bremen town, the LEONTINE set sail,
To carry them Westward for thirty-eight days.
Til they sighted the lights of New York Harbor,
Their wishes were saved; praise God our Father.

Still miles to go, but our pioneers proceeded
Up the Hudson to Albany; to Buffalo then Erie.
Ships, horses, wagons and feet ...
The sights were many, but their way — weary.

Twenty-fifth of October — our heroic band land in Detroit,
A frontier metropolis teeming with light.
Newness and excitement blended — inspiring
Renewed incentive; their strength and their faith.

Priests and immigrants met at the Avenue Monroe
At "Old Saint Mary's" the question was posed:
What land awaits us? Where must we go?
"To the Grand River Basin near Lyons," they're told.

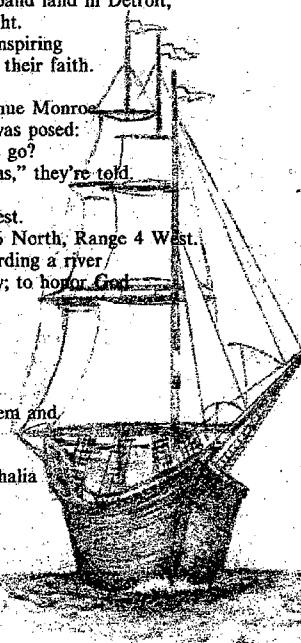
Hunt, a trapper and fur trader, knew best.
He led the band to Section 5, Town 6 North, Range 4 West.
Clearing a path; taming the forest; fording a river/
To secure a future; to seal our destiny; to honor God.

At last on that November day in 1836,
The end became a beginning.

Land was cleared and soil was turned.
A prosperous country belonged to them and
They to it.

In field and forests of this new Westphalia
Came the loud refrain:
Holy God we praise Thy Name!

Alleluia! Alleluia!
What God has given
Praise the Father, Son and Spirit!
In their honor we live. Amen. Amen.

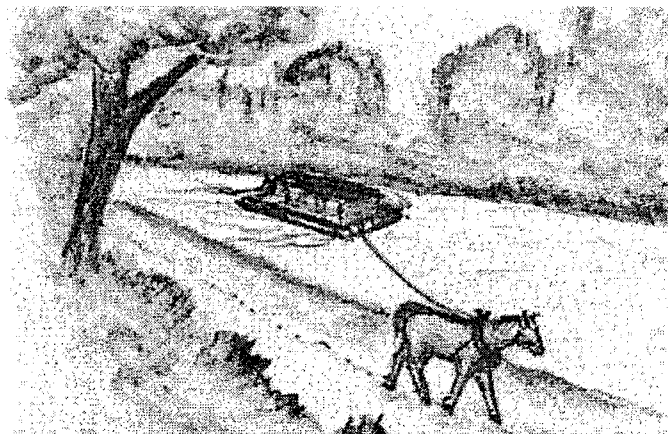


From Our Past...

To Their New Home on Hanses Road... They were neighbors in the Eifel in Germany and now they were neighbors in Westphalia in America.

Three pioneer families who came to Westphalia in May of 1841 were John Lehman with his wife Anna K. Buechel and their 3 children; Nikolous Pohl with his wife, Anna K. Mauer and their 4 children; and John Fox with his wife, Anna M. Schueller and their 5 children. Each family settled on their farms in Section 5 on Hanses Road.

Now, can you imagine what it was like to make that long journey of 30 to 40 days with young children? Their voyage across the Atlantic Ocean was aboard a sailing vessel known as a "brig". Once in New York they continued their journey on the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo, New York. They were passengers on canal boats which were pulled by horses at a speed of about a mile and a half an hour.



I can remember my grandparents saying, "We all had young children. After one particular day of tiresome travel, three little boys came crying 'we want to go back home!' Pretty soon the whole bunch was crying." I wonder how our folks handled that problem — they knew they couldn't turn around and go back home.

As told by Bernard Lehman in 1985

Do You Like Our Newsletter?

Do you have a story to tell? We welcome your suggestions. Call Evelyn 587-6839 or Leo 587-3843, or email Charlotte, jerchar@4wbi.net.