



WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

August 2017

Volume 33

Summer: A Time for a Picnic in the Park

The Electric Park in the 1920s and 30s was a great place for a Sunday afternoon picnic or a Saturday evening of dancing and romancing.

There was swimming too. For a dime you could rent a basket with a towel for a change of clothes in the bath-house and then go for a dip in the river. The park had a picnic area, a baseball field, a band stand and a playground area with swings, slides and a merry-go-round. And it had a beautiful pavilion where the dance floor was on the upper level with food and drink concessions on the lower level. Saturday night dances to live music were provided by local musicians, especially by the "Platte Band".

The Electric Park also attracted residents from Portland and Lyons as a place for Sunday school picnics and family reunions. At one time an excursion boat service ran from Lyons up the Grand River to the park.

The Electric Park was located on the Grand River's east bank above the dam where a turbine generated electric power. It was about nine miles northwest from Westphalia. The Electric Park Company was organized by John F. Platte, Joseph Simon, William Bohr and William Arens.



Picture of the Westphalia Band at the Electric Park Baseball Grounds, ca. 1920

Back Row Standing – Left to Right:

Hilary Snitgen (large drum), Joseph Wieber, known as "Fips" (snare drum), Ferd Platte (clarinet), Alfred Snitgen (clarinet), Julius Platte (clarinet), Joseph Thome (clarinet), John Fink (director), Ferdinand Platte (trumpet), William Arens (trumpet), Anthony Trierweiler (trumpet), Joseph Platte (trumpet), Joseph Freund (French horn).

Front Row Kneeling – Left to Right

Michael Trierweiler (trombone), Leo Snitgen (trombone), Frank Loehner, Jr. (trombone), Joseph Schueller (tenor tuba), Jake Schneider (tenor tuba), John Platte (bass tuba/sousaphone).

Cemetery Walk: Sunday, September 17, 2017

This year's beloved ancestors:

1. Johann Fuchs (Fox), famously known as "The Father of Immigration from the Eifel Area of the German Rhineland". His great-great grandson, Kevin Fox, will be his presenter.
2. Marie Bengel was a WWII German War Bride and was a dedicated member of the Westphalia Historical Society. Her granddaughter-in-law, Donna Briggs will be her presenter.
3. Sister Bonifacia Gunther, Sister of Christian Charity and teacher at St. Mary School for 31 years. Helen Schafer Thelen, companion of Mother Pauline SCC, will be her presenter.
4. Mathias Belen, owner and operator of Belen's Meat Market on Main St. in Westphalia. Thomas Manning, his grandson, will be his presenter.
5. Joseph P. Martin, church organist and band member for 50 years. Francis Martin, his son, will be his presenter.

Light Parade: December 2, 2017

Get your imagination rolling for this year's parade. The past two parades have shown some real neat ideas. And, let's hope the weather cooperates again.

Westphalia Historical Society Fun Day Thursday, October 19, 2017

- The bus will leave Westphalia (pickup location TBD) at 8 AM.
- You will arrive in Shippshewana with free time before the 1 PM showing of "The Home Game" at the Blue Gate Theatre (show is 1 1/2 hours long.)
- You will have free time between the show and dinner.
- Those going to the Amish dinner will board the bus at 4:15 PM for a 4:30 PM dinner at a local Amish family home. *If you choose not to attend the group Amish dinner you will be staying in town and will find a dinner on your own.*
- The bus will leave Shippshewana at approximately 6:15 PM to arrive back in Westphalia at approximately 9 PM.

Cost is \$85 (includes transportation, theater ticket and dinner). If you choose not to attend the dinner, subtract \$25 from your payment.

Non-members are welcome.

Payment in full must be received by August 31. You may pay at the August 15 WHS meeting or send payment to Westphalia Historical Society, Box 163, Westphalia, MI 48894 (send in time so it is received before August 31) (check payable to Westphalia Historical Society). Any questions, please call Chris Piggott 989/587-6558.

Michael Spitzley 1883 - 1888	Frederick Barker 1909 - 1912
D.H. Strahan 1889 - 1890	John B. Spitzley 1912 - 1923
Peter Thome 1890 - 1891	Peter Wahl 1923 - 1924
William Smith 1891 - 1892	Louis Wieber 1924 - 1935
Frank Noeker 1892 - 1893	William Bohr 1935 - 1946
Louis Fink 1894 - 1895	Aloysius Droste 1946 - 1957
Henry J. Wieber 1895 - 1896	Gregor Thelen 1957 - 1966
Laurence Keusch 1897 - 1898	Elvan Pohl 1966 - 1971
Samuel Watley 1898 - 1899	John Lehman 1971 - 1984
William Smith 1899 - 1900	Fred Martin 1984 - 1996
Phillip Cook 1900 - 1902	Charlie Schafer 1997 - 2007
Peter Wahl 1902 - 1903	Mark Schafer 2007 - 2008
Theodore Hengesbach 1904 - 1905	Dave Boswell 2008 - 2011
Anthony Feneis 1905 - 1908	Dean Kohagen 2011 - Present

2016 Cemetery Walk DVD

If you'd like to order a DVD from last year's walk, please let us know as we can order more for a cost of \$15.00 each.

Here is a list of Westphalia Village Presidents. How many names do you recognize?

