



# Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

February 2014

Volume 11

## Had enough of this winter weather??

It might not be over yet. In 1894 one of the worst blizzards ever known in Michigan prevailed Sunday night February 11 when the temperature fell to 22 below zero and Monday February 12<sup>th</sup> when the temperature plummeted to 24 below zero. Along with the subzero temperatures, snowdrifts four and five feet high filled the streets here. Also that month the coldest Leap Day on record occurred in Lower Michigan with Lansing falling to 15 below zero and Detroit to 6 below. So maybe January 2014 wasn't so bad!

### Our Recent Donors

Theodore & Rose Marie Hengesbach  
Fredric & Marlene Martin  
David Nurenberg  
Arnold & Dorothy Nurenberg family  
Marilyn Pline  
Carl & Pat Pfaff family  
Germaine Pohl  
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Glenn & Marie Smith  
Paul & Lucille Fedewa  
Deb Heim  
Patricia Hacker Hennig  
Leon & Theresa Feldpausch  
Elvan & Mary Ellen Pohl

If you would like to make a donation, please send it to Westphalia Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Westphalia, Michigan 48894-0163.



We would like to express our appreciation to the **Catholic Order of Foresters** for sponsoring the Matching Funds Fazzoli dinner on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. They were there to setup, help serve, cleanup, and contribute baked goods. We also wish to thank all the people who came out to support us, on a not so nice, snowy Sunday. Because of all of you, we are a little closer to our goal.

We would also like to extend a special "thank you" to **Theodore & Rose Marie Hengesbach** for donating his book "The Hengesbach Family Story 1430-2013" to the Westphalia Historical Society. ..."So much history still to be uncovered, so much still to be lived"...

Alles Gute,  
Ted

### Annals of Westphalia & St. Mary's High School

The Sisters of Christian Charity kept a yearly journal of their time teaching here. The following are excerpts from their journal.

**1939-1940** - In October a WPA\* project was launched here in Westphalia. A musical instructor, paid by the government, was to give lessons to anyone who wished to avail himself of the opportunity. The cost of 10 cents a lesson was used to defray the instructor's travel expenses, also the heat and light bill. Over a hundred children, besides a number of adults, took lessons beginning Tuesday, October 17.

*\*The Works Progress Administration was one of President Roosevelt's New Deal agencies. It employed millions of Americans, men and women, mostly in construction projects, but also in the arts. Musicians, artists, writers, actors and directors were also employed through this agency. There are many sculptures and murals in Lansing (and around the state) created by workers in the WPA.*

**1940-1941** – On the evening before the opening of the new term, Fr. Gutha solemnly blessed the school, also the high school and the new annex.

Because of the death of her grandfather, John H. Thelen, Rosaline Pohl did not return this year.

First boys to be elected as Westphalia High club officers: Robert Trierweiler, president and Delbert Bohr, Vice President. This being the first time boys held office; everyone expressed the hope that 1940-1941 would be an outstanding year in the history of the club.

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### **1915 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Exams**

**Thank you to Denise O'Brien for sharing this information with us. It comes from school papers kept by her grandfather Edwin Arens and passed on to her by her mother Bernice Arens Schneider.**

#### **Agriculture**

1. In plowing a rectangular field why should we not always plow "round and round" the field?
2. Tell how a field should be prepared that is to be planted to corn.
3. What is meant by rotation of crops? Why is this necessary?
4. Name the best laying type of chicken.

#### **Orthography**

1. Indicate by diacritical marks the sound of *e* in they, fern, nest, event; of *u* in pull, up, church, rude.
2. Use the following words in sentences: rein, rain reign, assistance, assistants, among, between.
3. Divide into syllables, indicate the accent, and mark diacritically these words:  
parent, desire, Chicago, broth, cabbage, exact.
4. Why is an apostrophe used in each of the following?  
can't, 4's, horse's?

#### **United States History**

1. What degree of religious liberty was enjoyed by the people of the following colonies:  
Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maryland?
2. What circumstances led to the settlement of Virginia?
3. Why was Gettysburg regarded as the decisive battle of the Civil War?
4. Name 5 inventions that have greatly influenced the development of the United States.

#### **Reading**

1. Write a paragraph concerning Oliver Wendell Holmes.
2. Tell briefly the circumstances under which the Gettysburg speech was written.
3. The Gettysburg speech is regarded as one of the greatest orations of all time. State some reasons for this.
4. Tell what you can of the early life of Lincoln.

#### **Written Arithmetic**

1. A field containing 2 acres is 32 rods long. Find the width of the field, also number of rods of fence necessary to enclose it.
2. Find the area of a circle whose diameter is 6ft., a square whose side is 6ft. and a triangle with base and altitude each 6ft.
3. If a train runs 25 mi. 48 rod in one hour, how far will it run in 12 hours?
4. A dealer buys books for \$1.50 each less 20%. For what must he sell them that he may gain 15% of the cost.

*The exams also included questions on Civil Government, Penmanship, & Geography.*

The following letters were written by brothers Peter & John Nurenberg who emigrated from Langenfeld, Germany and settled in Westphalia in 1856. Taken from Joseph Scheben's book, "Untersuchungen Zur Deutschamerikan, Wanderungsforschung" (Study of German American migration research). They were translated by the late Marie Bengel spouse of Julius Bengel.

**1<sup>st</sup> ....Peter's letter to his cousins in Langenfeld: Happy in a New Home in America (1869)**

Dear Cousins,

We are writing to you to let you know we are still in good health, thanks be to God, and hope the same is true for you.

We had a good year. The wheat and all the fruits of the summer yielded a very good harvest. I am back home with my parents. I worked as a hired hand for five months this summer. My pay was 16 dollars for one month.

We have not heard from you in a long time and we are concerned. We hope all is well. If only we could talk with one another again, but to return to Langenfeld is not our wish. Everything is much better for us here. Michael Gross (an immigrant from Langenfeld) visited with us this summer and he too says that life is better here than in Germany. John Klein and Michael Miller are also in Westphalia now. They are in good health.

Now I must close my letter – my greetings to all in Langenfeld  
Peter Nurenberg

**2<sup>nd</sup> letter...John Nurenberg to his godmother in Langenfeld**

Dear Godmother,

I also want to write a few words to let you know that we are all in good health. I have been working away from home as a hired hand, but now have returned to my parents' home and found them in good health – for this I thank God!

We now have 12 head of cattle: five cows, a yoke of oxen, three steers, and two calves. We also have six pigs. These are being fattened for butchering – God willing! We have 26 sheep. Recently we sold a cow for 34 dollars and this year we thrashed 150 bushels of wheat – what I am writing here is the plain truth.

Now I must close. Please extend my greetings to John Miller of Langenfeld. It has been five or six years since I last heard from him. My wife, Maria Tillmann, sends her greetings. We wish all of you a Happy New Year.

Our address here is John Joseph Nurenberg, Westphalia in Clinton County, Michigan, North America.

P.S. We have built here in our town a new church. It will cost at least \$50,000 when it is completed. (This was the first brick church which seated well over 1,000 people. This church was destroyed by fire in April 1959). We believe the first Mass will be celebrated in the new church on Easter Sunday. My mother would also like to see you once again, but no more in Germany. Here she can live more peacefully. She has more freedom here she says, and she can honor God without restrictions. She has better food, and it is so plentiful she could feed many more people if she had the opportunity. Send an answer soon to Eva Schueller Nurenberg.

John Nurenberg

Submitted by Evelyn Weiland

## The Parents Who Drugged Us

The other day I was talking to someone at a store in our town who read that a methamphetamine lab had been found in an old farmhouse in the adjoining county and asked me a rhetorical question, 'Why didn't we have a drug problem when you and I were growing up?'

I replied that I had a drug problem when I was young:

I was drug to church on Sunday morning.

I was drug to church for weddings and funerals.

I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.

I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults.

I was also drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of the teacher or the priest, or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.

I was drug to the kitchen sink to have my mouth washed out with soap if I uttered a profanity.

I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds.

I was drug to the homes of neighbors to help mow the yard, repair the clothesline, and if my mother had ever known that I took a single dime as a tip for this kindness, my dad would have drug me back to the woodshed.

Those "drugs" are still in my veins and they affect my behavior in everything I do, say, or think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack, or heroin: and if today's children had this kind of drug problem, America would be a better place.

**God bless the parents who "drugged" us.**

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### This' n That

#### Available Publications:

1). "Of Pilgrimage, Prayer, and Promise...The Story of St. Mary's Westphalia 1836-1986," \$23 each/2 or more \$20.

2). "Quiet Heroism". This book remembers the 87 Westphalia area women who entered the convent \$6.00.

3). "Westphalia High School Reunion 1938-1950", \$3.00.

4). "Historical Film Footage 1936-1961", contains footage taken by Fr. Gutha of the 1936 Centennial & footage of the 125<sup>th</sup> taken in 1961, \$15.00.

5). "Sisters of Christian Charity", \$1.00 each.

6). "Westphalia Area History, 1836-1976, 140 years of growth", \$40.00.

In case you've missed it, we now have a website [www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com](http://www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com)

Any questions or suggestions may be emailed to [westphalia1836@gmail.com](mailto:westphalia1836@gmail.com).

**Next Meeting: 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 18 at 120 West Main St., Westphalia (our soon to be home)!**