



# Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

April 2016

Volume 24

## Recent Donations

A special thank you goes to Tony Fedewa, John Biergangs and Rosie Thelen Fedewa for their donations to the Westphalia Museum Archives.

Tony gave us a picture of his graduating class of 1939 from St. Mary's School. What a good-looking bunch of students and their teacher, Sister Expedita.

John gave us a picture of the bakery and restaurant in Attendorn, Germany that at one time was the business place of his ancestor, Frederick Biergangs. Fredrick was a teacher in our Westphalia Settlement.

Rosie Fedewa gave us school books used by her aunt, Odilia Theis who attended the Luecht School on the corner of Price and Wright Roads.

We truly appreciate these donations.

## Annals of Westphalia & St. Mary's High Schools 1945 – 1946

An epidemic of ring worm in the vicinity alarmed the members of the school board to the extent that they purchased an ultra-violet ray lamp by which this obnoxious disease can be detected. Fortunately no symptoms were visible after repeated examinations.

Westphalia High School joined the State Basketball League this year. The first league game was held in the high school gymnasium December 6. The opposing team was Lyons High School. Although this team made a strenuous effort to win, the final score was 27 –19 in favor of W.H.S....

At these games, 10 cents admission was charged to children and adolescents, while grownups were asked to pay 25 cents.

Our Central Michigan Class D League included: Lyons, Saranac, Pewamo, Westphalia, Fowler and Maple Rapids.

## Cemetery Walk

It's not too early to mark your calendar for our next cemetery walk on September 18, 2016. This year the walk will feature Prof. Frank Loehner, Johann Lehman, Esther Pung, Martin Rademacher, and the Bohrs: Joseph and his son William (Tinner).

## Veterans Display

We are getting display items, many of which are WWII and Korean War relics. Presently we have very few items from Vietnam. If you or someone you know has items such as pictures, uniforms, medals, flags, and other military items that you would like to have displayed, please contact Bernie Thelen at 587-6885. *Please note: we will not accept any guns.* The public will get to view the display on Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup>. Again this year we plan to be open the afternoon of the first Sunday of the month and the evening of the third Wednesday of the month and by appointment.

## WWII Speaker Richard Thelen

Richard Thelen, a resident of Lansing who served in the Pacific Theatre during WWII, was one of only 317 survivors out of 1196 on board the USS *Indianapolis* during WWII when it was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine in shark infested waters. He will be at St. Mary's Parish Hall on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm to share this life-changing experience. He will also speak to St. Mary's elementary students earlier in the day.

Richard Peter Thelen

## WWII Pacific Theatre

Navy - Seaman, 2nd Class

**Unit:** USS *Indianapolis* CA-35, 5<sup>th</sup> fleet flag ship

**Citations:** Purple Heart, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Medal, Navy Unit Commendation & Combat Action Ribbon, USS *Indianapolis*



## Popcorn & Bake Sale

We will be hosting a Popcorn & Bake Sale on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 9am-5pm (the first day of the Westphalia Garage Sales) at the Portland Federal Credit Union in Westphalia. We welcome anyone who wishes to bake or buy our goods. Items may be dropped off at Teresa Quartermus' porch the day before or brought to the PFCU that morning. Baked goods can be put on a one dozen plate, or 3 cookies, muffins, brownies, etc. in a baggie. Thank you PFCU for hosting us and for the use of your popcorn machine. Come in and enjoy a baked item or some popcorn while visiting our terrific garage sales. Any questions, contact Margie Wirth who has agreed to chair this event.

## Before Tissues

Several family members had sniffles or a cold. For that they used handkerchiefs.

Boxes of three hankies made great gifts for any occasion. The boxes were square and flat.

On ironing day there were many squares to be ironed. Stacks of them were piled up looking like new waiting to be used again.

Men's hankies were about 12" square. For good, men and boys, used white, many with a letter for their name embroidered on them. For work, there were big hankies, red figured or navy blue figured. Women's hankies were about 10" square – figured for general use and white for good.

Moms and grandmothers often crocheted around them to make them special. For example: a bride carried a special hanky along with her rosary and bouquet when she walked down the aisle.

Then, suddenly, tissues were invented!!! What a Godsend! Now they are found in the kitchen, bedrooms, and everywhere in beautiful boxes that are all colors. What a great invention that we take for granted. Thank you Kleenex. *Bernadette Snitgen Thelen*

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Do you use any of the following?

Our website: [www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com](http://www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com)

Our email address: [westphalia1836@gmail.com](mailto:westphalia1836@gmail.com)

Facebook link: [ww.facebook.com/westphalia1836](http://ww.facebook.com/westphalia1836)

## THE APRON

### Do you remember?

The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath, because she only had a few, it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and they used less material, but along with that it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying tears and on occasion was even used for cleaning dirty ears.

From the chicken coop the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron and the men know it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace the "old-time apron" that served so many purposes.

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Thought this was cute too.....

Remember when Grandma used to set her hot baked pie on the window sill to cool.

Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw!

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"If pigs could vote, the man with the slop bucket would be elected swine herder every time, no matter how much slaughtering he did on the side."