



Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

April 2013

Volume 6

Business Women of Westphalia.....Past & Present

Women in business have been a long-standing tradition in the small growing community of Westphalia. Years ago many of the women worked in business as a means of survival. Many were widowed and had to work to keep their families solvent (remember there was no Social Security back then). These are examples of some of the businesses that were run by women in the local community years ago:

Sophia & Elizabeth Pung (1880)..... Millinery

Mrs. (Clara?)Kemper.....Confections
Dorothy Platte..... Confectionary Store

Louisa Schaefer Schueller &
Paulina Schaefer..... Ladies' Ready to Wear Shop

Katherine Bohr.....Fine Millinery

Augusta Loehner MartinPostmistress

Dora Pohl..... Drug Store

Margaret Martin.....Martin's Restaurant

More recently we had.....

Audrey Riley.....Audrey's Beauty Shop
Betty Platte.....Betty's Beauty Shop
Beverly Platte.....Beverly's Beauty Shop
Hope Fox.....Hope's Beauty Shop

Esther Simon.....Simon's Flower Shop
Dr. Janet Schroeder.....Medical Office
Shirley Wohlfert.....Say Cheeze Photography
Bernadette Droste.....Postmistress
Audrey Cassell.....The Java Garden

This is just a sampling of different businesses that have been headed by women in our community & little has changed since we still have many women in the area who run their own businesses and keep Westphalia thriving by making major contributions to our town. Just going down the streets of town we notice some of those businesses. The titles may have changed from

hats and candies to landscaping and exercise, but the hard work it takes to run a successful business remains the same. Here are some of today's businesses:

Kim Nurenberg.....KN Design LLC

Bonnie Fink.....Travel Your Way

Vickie Noeker.....Tropical Sun Fitness

Diana Kerbyson.....Diana's Pizza & Subs

Lori Pung.....Plannedscapes & Little Flower Bakery
Cindy Schmitz.....Simon's Flower Shop

Dr. Deborah Gadille.....Dentist

Lori Lambo.....Postmistress

Ann Rademacher.....Hair Care
Jeannie Schroeder.....Village Beauty Shoppe

Julie Martin.....Julie Martin Photography

Peg Keilen.....Cakes by Peg
Ann Marie Schafer.....Cakes by Ann Marie
Carolyn Weber.....Carolyn's Cakes

Nicki Arens.....The Growing Patch
Mary Jane Hengesbach.....Mary's Little Lambs
Patty Piggott.....Little Angels Day Care
Chris Pline.....Funtime Day Care
Renee Spitzley.....Renee's Day Care

Alice Bengel, Cindy Fedewa, Chris Smith.....Catering

As you can see by the lengthy list, women in business is a tradition in our town. Please patronize their businesses and keep their success and ours alive and well!

"The History of Clinton County, Michigan" published in 1980 states: "1881 Westphalia - the annual sale of pews in St. Mary's Catholic Church here for the coming year foots up a nice little sum of \$6,035.75." (A practice from earlier days, this was commonly known as pew rent.)

“The name Westphalia is not so uncommon. Maryland, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Texas and Georgia each have a town named Westphalia. There may be another located in the Catskill Mountains on Route 28 near Ashokan, New York,” so said Marjory Platte of our Westphalia. (Marge, Marjory, a noted local historian/genealogist, died on Feb. 24, 2013. May she rest in peace.)

In this issue we write about Westphalia, Iowa – a German Catholic Settlement. The first families of that settlement (Emil Flusche, Herman Schwarte, and Matthew Freund) arrived 30 August 1872 on land set aside for them by the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company. Father J. Weber was the first pastor of St. Boniface Parish. The first post office was established in Nov. 1875, but their hope for a railroad never materialized. Today, Westphalia, Iowa is a thriving farming community and is located in Shelby County northeast of Council Bluffs on U.S. Hwy. 191.

A Historic Footnote:

Two of our early families settled first in Westphalia, Iowa before coming here. They were Caspar Schneider and Henry Knoop. Today their grandchildren say, “That’s where grandma met grandpa.”

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**Our Collection Is Growing**

- 1). “Forest Hill History” by Patricia Martens
- 2). “Knoop Family Tree” compiled by Romilda Wieber Pung, donated by Janet Brown.
- 3). “Beal City Michigan Area Centennial 1875-1975, donated by Maybelle Thelen
- 4). Plat Maps of Westphalia Township, surveyed in March & April 1827 by Lucius Lyon, donated by Don Bengel

**Books/DVD for Sale...**

- 1). “Of Pilgrimage, Prayer, and Promise...The Story of St. Mary’s Westphalia 1836-1986”, \$23.00 each or 2 or more for \$20.00 each available at the Credit Union, Plannedscapes, or Westphalia Milling.
- 2). “Quiet Heroism”. This book remembers the 87 young Westphalia area women who entered the convent, \$6.00 each at Ox’s Smoked Meats & Groceries.
- 3). “Westphalia High School Reunion 1938-1950”, \$3.00 each at Plannedscapes & Westphalia Milling.
- 4). “Sisters of Christian Charity”, \$1.00 each from Evelyn Weiland.
- 5). “Historical Film Footage 1936-1961” taken by Fr. Gutha of the 1936 Centennial & footage from the 125<sup>th</sup> in 1961. DVD, \$15 each from Teresa Quartermus.
- 6). “Westphalia Area History 1836-1976, 140 years of growth” (Brown book) a limited number available.

**Annals of St. Mary’s High School**

The Sisters of Christian Charity kept a yearly journal of their time teaching in Westphalia. The following are excerpts from their journals. We will start with the 1936-37 school year in this newsletter and continue through the 1960-61 school year in future newsletters.

**1936-1937** For some years prior to 1936 Mrs. Donna Meyers Colby had conducted 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades in the public one-room school in the district. Under the leadership of Fr. Edward Gutha, the formation of a fully accredited four-year high school took place. On September 8, 1936, the new school opened with an enrollment of 11 freshmen and 4 sophomores. At this point the school was known as St. Mary High school. Classes were held at first in the former parish dining room in the West Side School. Sister Marianda Koelbl, SSC was the first teacher. A regular high school curriculum was offered comprised of the following subjects: Religion, Algebra, Plane Geometry, Latin I & II, and World History.

At the end of the 1936-1937 school year the public school in town was discontinued due to lack of students and St. Mary’s became Westphalia High School. To complete their senior year three girls transferred from the now closed public school and became the first graduating class of Westphalia High in 1938. They were: Cornelia Belen, Rosella Bohr and Catherine Pline. Sr. Octavia, SSC arrived as a teacher and Principal for the new school year, 1937-1938.

**Donations Received:**

\$50 from Mike Gross in memory of my mother and father Clarabelle & Leo Gross.  
  
\$20 from Glenn Fink in memory of Marjory Platte.

\$100 from Mary P. Gross Walter, Lawton, Michigan in memory of my mother and father Clarabelle & Leo Gross and my brother, Leo Gross, Jr.

*Donations to the Westphalia Historical Society may be sent to Rose Schafer, Treasurer, Westphalia Historical Society, 5131 S. Grange Rd., Westphalia, Michigan, 48894.*

**Correction:** “The February 2013 Newsletter incorrectly identified the Westphalia Historical Society as a 501(c)(3) organization. Although licensed by the State of Michigan as a non-profit corporation, the Society has not yet been designated as an IRS 501(c)(3) organization.”

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