



Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

April 2015

Volume 18

Our Recent Donors

Gregory Snyder
Ronald & Sarah Maynard & family
Joe & Helen Nurenberg
Marilyn Weber
Bertha Simon

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



School Related Theme

We are currently preparing a school related theme in our building, and if you have any items that you would like to display on loan, give us a call. A donation of 33 P-W yearbooks was received from David Trierweiler. These belonged to his parents Donald and Germaine Trierweiler. A few years are missing 1962, 68, 69, 75, 76, 93, 95, 2000 and 2005 to present. If you have any copies you would be willing to permanently donate to complete the set, please let us know.

Our hours have changed for the spring and summer. Our building will be open the first Sunday of the month, beginning on May 3rd from 1-4. It will also be open on the third Wednesday evening of the month from 5-8. Also, if you know someone will be in from out of town or here for a family gathering during non-posted hours, please contact us and we will try to open to accommodate.

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Upcoming Events

Bake Sale

Thursday, April 23

The historical society will have baked goods for sale at the Portland Federal Credit Union. Stop in during the Westphalia Garage Sales to grab a snack. Donation of baked goods or purchases are appreciated.

Westphalia Antiques Road Show!

Wednesday, May 6

Between 7 - 9 pm Dennis Beard and his sister Jacklyn will be at our building to give verbal appraisals on antiques; Jacklyn will only be appraising quilts. Since there will be no charges for this service, they ask that each person bring no more than 2 items.

Pretzels for Sale

Thursday, June 18

Again this year, we will be selling pretzels at the Cruise-In.

Cemetery Walk

Sunday, September 13

Plans are underway for another cemetery walk. This year's date is September 13, with a rain date of September 20.

Oktoberfest

Plans are taking shape for this celebration on the 3rd of October. Check back later for more details.

See the calendar on our website to keep track of WHS events.

Happy Birthday!

Vincent Keilen will be 99 years old on May 31st and **Donald Schafer** will be 89 on May 30th! Also, Belated Greetings to **Bernie Bengel** whose 91st birthday was on March 23rd!

March Guest Speaker

The Guest of Honor at our March meeting was Mr. Wayne Summers, a teacher at P-W schools, as well as local historian and author. There were 46 people in attendance who were eager to learn about the history of schools in our area.

Information garnered from his talk included that at one time Westphalia Township had six one-room schools:

The **first school (Westphalia Village School)** was formed with State Primary School Funds around 1843 on Ash Street in the village. In the early days, lessons were taught in both English and German.

In 1846 two more schools (**Old District No. 1** was located on the west side of Hinman Road, south of Jason Road, and it dissolved by the 1870s. Also, the **Sanford School** was located on the southeast corner of Chadwick and Wright Roads).

The **Luecht (Light) School** was formed in 1854, located on the south side of Price Road, about 3/8 of a mile east of Wright Road. It was replaced by a new school built around 1873 on the southwest corner of Price and Wright Roads. It closed in 1930 and is now a private residence.

The **McKim School** was also formed about 1854; it was on the northeast corner of Cutler and Clintonia Roads. It continued until the mid-1940s.

The **Gross School** was formed in April 1863 on the southeast corner of Grange and Pratt Roads. Sometime later a new building was built on the northwest corner. The school closed by the mid-1940s and merged with the Westphalia District in the 1950s.

Also in April 1863, the **Esch School** located on the east side of Hinman Road (about 3/4 mile south of Lehman Road) was formed. A new building was built on the west side after 1895, but the school closed by the mid-1940s and merged with the Westphalia Village School.

Mrs. Weiland has also given us this information on the schools:

The Ash Street School is now a private residence. The school was always well attended, especially by children living in the village. An early teacher was Moses Bartow, and the last to teach there was Donna Myers Colby. This school closed in 1936 with the formation a fully accredited 4-year high school, a unique public-parochial school.

The second school, the Luecht School on the southeast corner of Price and Wright Roads, is now also a residence. Marge Schmitz Platte and many Thelen children attended this school for their first and second grades.

Two well-known teachers at the Sanford School were Isabelle Cook Wilson and Rosemary Lehman Harrington. The first school was replaced with a frame building in 1884. The school closed in 1957, and the building was torn down, and a home was built on the site.

The Gross School offered grades K-8. Some of the teachers were Mary Sturgis, Margaret Trierweiler, Seraphine Noeker, Edna McCausey, Estelle Trierweiler Geller, Mary Simon Morris and Irene Smith Hruscik. The schoolhouse was sold and moved to the Quinn Farm on Grange Road.

The McKim School was known as a fractional district with Portland Township, Danby and some of Eagle Townships. The building is now a private residence. Two well-known teachers were Cora Schueller and Mary McCrumb.

The Esch School closed in 1944-45 and the building was sold to Wilfrid Rademacher and moved to his farm on Lehman Road (now the Livingston Farm). Many students completed their eight grades at the Esch School; e.g. Arnold Weiland, Walter and Mary Stump. Buddy Miller was a student there for his first few years and Josephine Spitzley Wirth was his favorite teacher. Bernita Cook Fedewa also taught there.

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Joseph J. Hanses General Trucking

Much More Than Just a Truck Driver

Joseph John Hanses was born in 1895, the son of Bernard and Mary (Herres) Hanses and the grandson of one of Westphalia's founding fathers, John and Elizabeth (Martin) Hanses. Joe married Laurina Wirth in 1920 and lived his entire life in Westphalia, either at the family farm on Hanses Road or in a house just north of the village limits. They had six children, all of whom remained in the area.

Joe owned a farm most all of his life, but most of the farm work was done by hired hands and his children. In 1929 he started a trucking business which continued until the 1970s. His fleet grew to three stock trucks, and some of his children also worked in the business. He started by hauling animals from local farms to Fowler to be loaded onto train cars. Later he would haul to various stockyards and meat processors in the area. While cattle, sheep, and hogs were the main loads, he certainly hauled more than livestock. Other trips included delivering fertilizer from Ohio, and salt from Port Huron, and sugar beets to Lansing. On Sundays following Mass, Joe could be found in Martin's Restaurant where you could pick up your check for the animals you sold during the week.

If Joe were picking up animals from your farm, you likely had the opportunity to ride along to Rosevale Packing Company in DeWitt, to the stockyards in Detroit, and to other locations. Many men in the area can recall these ride-a-longs with Joe. As a passenger, you were likely treated to cinnamon rolls or long-johns chased down with chocolate milk. You might also return with a humorous story to tell. Bud Thelen recalls a new red convertible pulling alongside the truck loaded with cattle at a stop sign. One did its business out of the side of the truck which landed in the car. When Bud told Joe of this he simply responded that "He shouldn't have got so close". Another memory is a time was when the cab was full, Justin Thelen had to ride in back with the sheep! Dorothy Hattis, one of Joe's daughters who also drove a truck, recalls that when her father would smell manure he would say "That's money in the bank." Delbert Thelen remembers that Joe would bring substandard or rejected cereal from Detroit and have him grind it up to be mixed with feed for his own animals.

He might be most remembered for his trips hauling sheep and cattle to Detroit. As you might imagine, the early years predated the construction of the interstate highway system, and the route mainly following the old US-16 to Detroit must have taken many hours each way. Return trips often included goods and supplies bound for Westphalia area farms and families. There was a salvage yard in Detroit in which Joe picked up used lumber for use by our frugal area residents. He was known to take orders and bring back the lumber you needed. Area buildings known to be constructed with such lumber include the Historical Society building, the coal (now fertilizer) bins at Westphalia Milling Company, and buildings on Leon Theis' farm.

If the hour was late Joe might stay at the motel at the stockyard for the night before returning home. A brother, Anthony Hanses, lived in Dearborn, which might have been another option for rest or a visit. Anthony ran Hanses Hardware, which is where what might have been the first girl's bike in Westphalia came from, a light blue model for Joe's oldest daughter Revella (Smith). While in Detroit he was known to take in a Tiger ballgame or spend time with relatives.

On one of his trips to Detroit he was interviewed for a story headlined "How Housewives React to the high Cost of Living" which appeared in the September 10, 1947 issue of the *Detroit News*. The caption below a photo of Joe near his truck read: *Having brought a load of lambs to market and sold them "at a good price but nowhere near the profit that most people think." Joe (actually misprinted as "George") Hanses, Westphalia farmer, denies that farmers are getting the lion's share of meat prices. "These times are good for no one," he says.* This may be why Joe would inspect unclaimed freight in Detroit and buy dented cans of food to bring back to Westphalia for distribution to those who could use it.

Paul Fedewa worked for Joe for about five years and remembers him as a good-hearted man who made friends wherever he went. He even became friends with a Tiger ballplayer by the name of Chet Laabs who visited Westphalia on a few occasions. When nuns began or ended their assignments at St. Mary's, Joe would transport their trunks full of belongings for them. Joe wore a hat, and as was customary at the time, would tip his hat in reverence as he passed by our church. He was well known throughout the area and served the public as a member of the Clinton County Road Commission from 1951 to 1957, and as Westphalia village assessor from 1951 to 1964.

I was honored when I was asked to write a story for the Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter about Joe, my grandfather, and his trucking business. I was 15 when he passed away in 1979, and I don't have a lot of personal memories of him. I learned from talking to people about this story that he was a kind and generous community-minded man. If you have memories that you would care to share, I would love to hear them.

- By Phil Hanses

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