



Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

July 2012

Volume 2

Historical Society Quilt Winner

Germaine Miller was the happy winner of the quilt that was raffled during the 2012 Cruise-In. A special thanks to Karen Spitzley and the ladies who made the quilt, Portland Federal Credit Union for printing costs of the tickets, and the Knights of Columbus for sponsoring the raffle. Their contributions were greatly appreciated. The Quilt Raffle netted the Historical Society \$730 after expenses.

Visitors from Germany

August 20 and 21 we will be having visitors from the village of Virneburg in the Eifel, Germany. They are Günter Pung (64), his brother-in-law Stefan Müller (57), and a cousin Arno Juchemich (63). Günter's relatives who immigrated here can be seen on pages 24, 25, 41 & 42 in the "Blue" '1836-1986' historical book. They were Anton Fuchs, Peter Pung, and, Johann Fuchs (Fox) who is known as the "Father of Immigration" in the Eifel area of the German Rhineland. His letters back to Germany led to many of his friends and relatives coming here to Westphalia. The Historical Society is planning an evening potluck get-together for them on August 20th at Droste Park and the public is invited! In this way, they can meet their relatives here in Westphalia (which between the Pungs and the Foxes and their descendants would probably be half of the town). So please mark your calendars, bring a dish to pass and come out and enjoy the evening. Local songwriter and singing legend Dan Pung has agreed to perform his signature song, "Westphalia Michigan" at the event for their enjoyment and ours. It will be a fun night for everyone and we hope to see you there.

From Our Past.....

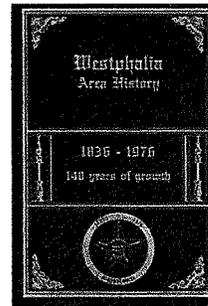
I can remember the time when we did not have a telephone. The farmers built their own lines. One day a stranger came into town, looked at the wires and said, "Why are there two wires?" The farmer replied, "One is for English and the other for German."

As told by Harold Platte in 1985

Thank You!!! To the Cruise-In 2012 Committee

During the Cruise-In, a Princess and Junior Princess contest was held with the winners being: Alison Simon, daughter of Chris & Patty, Princess & Quincee Pohl, daughter of Craig & Katie, Junior Princess. Votes were \$.01 each to vote for your favorite candidate and the total raised was \$448.17. The committee generously donated this to the Historical Society. A special thanks goes to Karen Boswell who was very instrumental in this project.

It's not too late.....



We have been taking orders for the reprint plus updates and corrections of the "Brown" book, "**Westphalia Area History 1836-1976, 140 years of growth**". Some additional copies will be ordered for a cost of \$40.00. The DVD of footage taken by Fr. Gutha in 1936 and the 1961 celebration is still available for \$15.00. The DVD was shown on Main Street during last year's 175th celebration. To reserve your book or DVD, contact Margie Wirth (989-587-6984) or Maggie Upson (989-587-4193).

We also have the following books 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, Plannescapes, 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 **Plannescapes & Westphalia Milling.**
- 4). "Sisters of Christian Charity", \$1.00 each from Evelyn Weiland.

All proceeds go to the preservation of our heritage.

**Next Historical Society Meeting - Tuesday, July 24,
7:00 pm at the Village Hall - All are welcome.**

Did You Know?

We are all very happy to see the addition of **Ox's Smoked Meats & Groceries** in our village. But long before **Ox's**, we used to have **Belen's Meat Market**. Mathias and Mary Belen started the market in 1895. After his death in 1936, his son Norbert took over the business until 1967. That's 72 continuous years in business!!!! In 1956 the market was listed as the "only real meat market in Clinton County." The original market burned in 1910 and was rebuilt.

Things were different in the late 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. Most farm families did their own butchering. However, the people living in town didn't have their own meat supply and still needed meat. Since Mathias lived in town the animals were probably slaughtered right there behind the market in his early days. Could you imagine Cliff Hengesbach doing that in town today? In the "Brown" book on page 169 the **Belen Meat Market** advertisement reads "fresh and salt meats." They did not have refrigeration back then; they had ice that was gathered and stored in the winter months in ice houses and sold as blocks for ice boxes. It was hard to keep meat during the warmer months; thus, the solution would be to salt the meat to preserve it. Besides being the village's butcher, the ad also listed Mathias as a dealer in hides, pelts, and tallow. Tallow (beef fat) was used for candle and soap making. It was also used as a lubricant for wagon wheels and machinery before axle grease as we know it today.

The meat market was also handy for kids on their way to school. For a few cents Mathias or Norbert would cut off a chunk of bologna for their lunch at school. Remember...no cafeteria lunches back then. The store would also be open Sundays after church in the early to middle 1900s. Many farm families only got to town once a week for church so having the meat market open was a real benefit for them. People would buy store-made ring bologna which back then was a real treat for Sundays.

Norbert used to slaughter one mile north of town. Connie Lenneman, Mathias's granddaughter, remembered that as a little girl she would go to Ionia on some Mondays with her grandmother, Mary, and Uncle Norbert. Connie and her grandmother would visit her grandmother's sister, Anna, while Norbert would go to the livestock auction. Tim Belen, Norbert's son remembers closing the meat market around 2:00 pm on Fridays and going to the livestock auction in St. Johns where they would usually buy 2

head (cattle) to butcher the following week. It worked out well to close early because Fridays were slow anyway since Catholics didn't eat meat on that day. Tim also remembers being asked by a lady in town to save the blood when slaughtering so she could make "Blut Wurst" (blood sausage). *Truly, nothing was thrown away except the squeal.* Norbert would also do custom slaughtering and butchering for local farm families.

The building later became Schaar's Barber Shop, then Gus Pline's Ice Cream Shop. After that it became L&D Refrigeration (Platte's) and is now home to Portland Federal Credit Union. It is good to see the old meat market building still being used. And it is very good to see the new meat market (**Ox's**) in town and hope it has a long and prosperous history like **Belen's**.

BELEN'S MARKET

Mathias Belen owned and operated Belen's Meat Market in Westphalia for many years. He started the business in 1895 as a young man and when he died in 1936 his son, Norbert, took over the business. He continued the business until March, 1967, when he closed. Belen's Market sold meat only and in 1956 was listed as the "only real meat market in Clinton County".



Do You Like Our Newsletter?

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