



Allegany Area Historical Association

March 2008

Issue XXVII Vol. 1

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The marvelous bakers of Allegany did it again. We made \$1,270.75 on our annual Christmas Cookie Sale. Last year we sold everything we had in just over 2 hours, so this year everyone baked a little more and we had at least 80 dozen more cookies to sell than last year. We had cookies left so Alice went to the Park and Shop the next Saturday and quickly sold the rest. A huge "THANK YOU" to all our bakers, packagers and sellers. As usual, we could not do it without you. The money earned will help us pay our heating bills this winter. Our annual Community Christmas Service held the next day was well attended, as usual. It is always a lovely way to start the holiday season. We received a nice note from Genesis House, thanking us for our donation of paper products and our cash donation of \$47.00. Thanks to all who helped with the service and all who donated to Genesis House. Donations such as ours enable them to continue ministering to temporarily homeless people.

As of January 30, we have raised the price of our Allegany history book to \$10. It has been a popular item, so much so that we recently placed an order for 150 more copies. On our last reorder, we received an anonymous donation that allowed us to keep the price at \$7.50, but we didn't get a donation this time, so have raised the price to cover the cost. It's still a bargain at \$10.

Speaking of our history book, Dr. Tom Schaeper of St. Bonaventure University was the typist for the original book printed in 1981. Tom has offered to re-type the book, correcting the typos and the factual information as he goes. This will afford us the opportunity to make some changes to the book such as putting street numbers to all the businesses mentioned, and adding a chapter bringing the history up to the present time. We can also add more genealogies to the final section of the book, and perhaps use new pictures. When we are finished, we could then print a second edition of the book. There is no rush since we have just purchased 150 more copies so this will give you time to put together a family genealogy for use in the second edition, if you wish. Or perhaps just correct the current genealogy. We also need proofreaders to go over each chapter to correct factual information. If you want to proofread, give me a call.

Carl Monkhouse, IV, is doing some work for us at the Heritage Center as a way to earn his Eagle Scout badge. He has painted the outside wall downstairs - I didn't realize how bad it was until it got re-painted. Looks great now. He is also raising money to put in shelves for us in the back room downstairs so we can be a lot more organized, and definitely know just what we have and where it is. It's a slow process but by summer he will be done.

Our Vice-president, Marge Geise, did an oral history interview with her mother-in-law, Catherine Martiny Geise. We are running half of it in this issue and will complete the interview in our May edition. I encourage those of you with older relatives to do an oral history interview with them. We need to gather this history for future generations. We have a small and easy to use tape recorder you are welcome to use. Contact me for further details.

Last call for dues - single membership - \$10; family - \$15; patron - \$20 or more.

FRANCIE POTTER, PRESIDENT

This is the first of two parts of an oral history with Catherine Martiny Geise. We hope you enjoy it. Part Two will be in our May issue.

CATHERINE MARTINY GEISE INTERVIEW

November 5, 2007

I was born February 20, 1913 at home on the West Branch in Allegany. My mother said this was my birth date, but when I was sixteen and went to get my driver's license, we noticed my birth certificate said that my date of birth was February 13th, not the 20th. We tried to get it corrected, but neither the doctor nor the recorder was available at the time. In those days it was simpler to keep it as it was, so that's what we did. My family always teased me about having two birthdays though!

Frank and Christena Gerringer Martiny were my parents. My father made his living by farming, the main crops being milk and apples. Both sets of my grandparents, whom I never knew, also lived on the West Branch and were farmers. My paternal grandparents were Peter and Mary Obera Martiny. George and Mary Hirt Gerringer were my maternal grandparents

Our house on the West Branch was a large white farmhouse with four bedrooms. It had a big cellar that was divided in half. The warm cellar, under the part where we lived, stored the potatoes. The other half was the cold part, being underneath the parlor where there wasn't much heat. In this part, we stored our apples and other fruit. I recall there being a large bin full of sand where we kept turnips, carrots, and beets, covered with sand. They sometimes kept until springtime. There was no indoor plumbing until I was about ten or twelve. We had natural gas for lighting and heating until the lease well went dry. At that point, we switched to oil for our lights, which we used until the electric lines came up our road. However, I do remember an "Aladdin lamp" sitting on the living room table that used kerosene and gave off a bright white light. We could all sit around the table and read. We used wood for our heat. Our barn was pretty big and there was a double garage on the property.

My parents had seven children: Leona, (1900) Clara (1901), Mary Catherine (1905), who died of a seizure before she was one, Margaret (1907), Charles (1909), myself, and Edward (1916). Margaret (Karl), Charles (Chuck), Edward (Red) and I all lived in the area after our marriages; Leona and her husband moved to Buffalo; Clara and her husband lived in the Detroit area.

Our big meal during the school year was usually in the evening, unless it was Saturday or Sunday. We were all expected to eat at the table at the same time. Before dinner it was my job to go down in the cellar to bring up any vegetables that Ma needed to cook for the meal. I helped peel potatoes and used to bake the cakes. We all ate whatever Mother put on the table, whether we liked it or not. There were no other choices, nor did we dare make any complaints. We raised the meat that we consumed (beef, pork, and chicken), as well as the vegetables and fruit. Desserts, of course, were everybody's favorite. If there were any shenanigans at mealtime, my father took care of it. I remember one time during the winter when my two brothers were throwing a ball at the table. One of them missed and it hit and broke the window. It just so happened that my father was sitting right in front of that broken pane. He made Red stand up and hold up a blanket over the window until the rest of us got through eating. Chuck wasn't punished because if there was any nonsense happening, Red was the one who was always behind it. I'm not sure if Red ever got to eat dinner or not.

In the early days of my life I think my mother did the laundry using a washboard. Later on we had a hand pumped washer. The machine had a corrugated tub with a finger-like projections that came down from above and functioned like an agitator. There was a big wheel in the back of the machine, and two levers to make the tub rotate. My mother could use one of the levers standing up, or we kids could use the lower lever. They were not both used at the same time, however. We boiled the white laundry in the clothes boiler on the stove. Then we heated the water to pour into the machine for the other loads, as well as the rinse water. There was a wringer attached to the side of the washer that we kids used to have to turn. The bottom of the machine had a spigot for draining the tub. On wash days, when the laundry was finished, it was our job to use the soapy water from that spigot to scrub the porches, then rinse them. Mother made some of the soap we used, but most of it was Fels Naptha

that we purchased from the store. When we got the gasoline powered Maytag washer later on, it was a joy to wash. As soon as the electric line was installed, probably when I was around nine or ten, we purchased an electric washer, iron, sweeper, and other appliances that made our lives (and our chores) a lot easier. With the new electric lights we thought we were in city living!

Mother hung the clothes out because the lines were too high for us to reach. We were responsible for folding the clothes that she brought in from outside, however. It was our job to sprinkle the clothes and to do the ironing. We'd heat three irons on the stove, use a hot one, then when that got too cool, we'd put it back on the stove and take another to continue our task. We ironed the sheets, pillowcases, and all the clothes except for socks and underwear. Basically, the girls helped with the household chores and the boys worked outside with the farm chores unless it was time for haying or harvesting the fruit and vegetables. On those occasions, we all pitched in.

My brother, Red, and I had the daily chores of going out to get the cows and gathering eggs. Every Saturday it was my job to wash the windows and polish the family shoes for Sunday church. It was a treat when we could go into town shopping in the horse and buggy, although we seldom got to do this - only if we needed shoes or something. Those of us who didn't need to go to town got sent over to the neighbor's house for the afternoon. Every Sunday though, the whole family would go to church together. Allegany had the meat shop, grocery store, and hardware stores where we did most of our shopping. If we needed to go to Olean to get something, we usually took the streetcar. We'd put the horses in the livery stable behind where the present post office is on Fifth Street. It was Grandusky's Mill and I think they'd put horses in there. Sometimes, in earlier times, members of my family would take the train to Olean, but I don't think I ever did because I was too young. The Erie Depot was located at the end of South Fifth and Union Streets where passengers could catch the train.

Most of my fun as a child was spent playing with my younger brother, Red. We'd ride our wagons or sleds down the hill. We would also slide on the ice in our shoes when the creek would freeze over because we didn't have any ice skates. We played ball for hours. We'd also play board games and cards, or do puzzles for entertainment. I had a doll that I liked to play with, whose name was Susie. My mother taught me to sew and do embroidery as a young girl and I remember making one of those samplers. I learned to knit (which I still do today at 94) and crochet. We had a radio, but we couldn't play it very often because it was run by battery. When we were allowed to use the radio the whole family would sit around in the evening and listen to the story programs. There were no family vacations in those days.

I attended a one-room grammar school at district # 7 on the West Branch through 6th grade. There were separate doors for the girls and boys to enter the schoolroom and a cloakroom in the entryway for our coats and lunch pails. The schoolroom itself was small, with three rows of single desks and a big blackboard across the front. There was a wood stove in the front, with the stovepipe reaching to the back of the room, for warmth on the colder days. There were separate two-holed privies for our use, one for the boys and one for the girls, each located on opposite back sides of the schoolhouse. These made good targets for the older boys, especially on Halloween. Because our house was the closest to the school, we could see if the outhouses had been overturned the morning after Halloween. If they had been, (and it seems they always were) we'd call the men from the neighborhood together to help get them placed back where they belonged. This task was accomplished early in the morning before school started. Over the years I remember there was once a manure spreader on the roof of the school, and even a time when a horse buggy was hanging from the flag pole, having been hauled up by the rope and pulley. That was creative thinking on the part of some adventurous souls. These were pranks that gave many a good laugh, I'm sure. We kids always planned on washing the soaped windows during recess.

Every day the teacher appointed a couple of boys to go up behind the school to the spring and carry down our drinking water in a bucket. They'd pour it into a tall crock to keep it cool for the day. There was a spigot on the bottom so we could easily get our drinks. Each of us had our own cup from home, with our name on it. They hung on hooks on the wall near the crock. The school was practically across the road from our house so it was an easy walk for my siblings and me. We used to go home for lunch every day. Once in a while, if Mother would have to go down town or to a Larkin meeting at lunchtime, we'd get to take our lunches to school in a syrup pail. It was a real treat for us to eat with the other kids who always stayed in school for lunch.

At recess time we would go out back and slide down hill in the wintertime. In nice weather we'd have ball games or play other favorites like "Ante, Ante Over". My favorite class was geography. We'd make salt maps, which I liked to do. There was not a lot of time for many activities, though. My worst subject was spelling! I was not a good speller (and neither was my mother. If we needed help spelling a word we always asked my dad, who was good at it.) With students of all ages together in the schoolroom, the older ones helped the younger ones, and the younger ones would learn from listening to the older ones.

After 6th grade I went to the Allegany high school on 4th Street. I remember I was really nervous about going to "the big school" from the little country school. In the beginning we'd get back and forth to school in a Ford car that my brother, Chuck, drove. My dad and Chuck taught me to drive so that when he graduated, I got my junior license and I drove. I think I was limited to driving to school with that license and I couldn't drive after dark. The Ford had a pedal shift in the middle and had open sides. When it rained we had to put down the side curtains that had isinglass (clear plastic-like substance resembling the mica that was used on stove fronts) windows in them. There were no school buses at that time. If you couldn't drive you had to walk and it was a long ways. Once in a while the boys would catch a ride on the milk truck as it went down by the house. We girls never did this though.

I remember flunking spelling in 8th grade. I was mortified that I had to stay in 8th grade spelling while all my friends went into high school. I thought I could go on to the high school spelling in January, but they said no, I had to stay there for 8th grade spelling for the whole year. That was a really humiliating time for me.

Along with the basic subjects I took the required homemaking, which I enjoyed, and was in the chorus. There were plays and other things for after school activities, but we couldn't be in them because there was no way home. If kids didn't have their work done on time, or didn't have their homework assignment, they had to stay after school. In that case they might have to walk home. If it were necessary for one of the kids in my family to stay after, my father probably would have come after us. (But if it were our fault that we were staying after, we would have had to walk.) I always had my work done on time and I didn't skip school. My brother, Red, did though. He got punished at school and then got in trouble at home, too. We didn't get grounded, like kids do today; we didn't know what that was. Instead, we'd get a good lecture, one that we paid attention to. If it was necessary to spank one of us kids, Ma got the strap that was made from a piece of harness. It "became necessary" for Red many times. The rest of us would hide when somebody was getting the strap. Red got the strap so often that he'd hide it so Ma couldn't find it. It was supposed to hang behind the stove in the kitchen, but he'd take it out and bury it someplace in the yard if he knew he "had it coming". I think if leather grew, we'd probably have had a "strap forest" in the back lawn. Mother caught on soon enough and would just go and get another strap from a different harness.

Coletta Felt was my favorite teacher in high school. She taught language. I took three years of French with her. (I started out with a year of Latin, but I didn't like that.) Language was required for all the students. In 1931, after I finished high school, I went for one year to Teachers Training Class at School # 5 in Boardmanville in Olean. I drove two other girls that I graduated with, in our Chevy Coupe. If people went through the training for a year and passed, they received a certificate that allowed them to teach in a country school for three years. If they wanted to teach longer, however, they had to go on to college. I taught for three years at School #7 on the West Branch, my former school. I really liked the teaching and sometimes wish I had gone on to Normal School. My marriage changed that.

The Larkin Club, to which my mother belonged, would meet once a month in the home of one of the members. Its name came from the Larkin Company out of Buffalo, with which it was affiliated. The ladies would cut out quilt patches for their own quilts at a few meetings, then maybe use the following meetings to sew them together and quilt them. If someone had a basket of mending to do and somebody else liked to mend, then that woman would mend the other's socks or clothing while the other quilted. At these get-togethers women placed orders from a Larkin catalog for such household items as vanilla, pudding, spices, thread, yarn etc. Coupons were given out with the purchase of these products and when members had saved enough, they would redeem them for goods that they needed, much like the yellow and green stamps that came later. I remember Ma got a set of good dishes with her coupons. Not only was this Larkin Club a way for the women to get things for their house

that they might not have had the money to purchase, but it also got them out of the house to socialize. It was a very popular pastime for ladies. As a kid I wasn't allowed to go, but when it was Mother's turn to have the Larkin club, we girls had to help serve the meal, which was customary for such meetings. We could eat with the ladies if we were home, but then we had to make ourselves scarce. Most of the time though, we were in school.

It was a tradition for the whole family to go visiting the relatives on a Sunday afternoon. All the Gerringer and Martiny relatives lived nearby, but we always loved to go to Aunt Rose (Gerringer) Stephan's house at the end of Lippert Hollow, close to Rock City. She had babies who were smaller than we were and we liked to play with them and help take care of them. We also liked to visit Aunt Mary Miller's ice cream parlor in Bolivar. This trip would be in the summer, in between haying and harvesting, when my father was free. We'd squeeze six kids (some sitting back and some sitting forward, maybe some standing, and one probably on Ma's lap, with another little one in the front between my parents) and two adults in the car and away we'd go, probably once each summer. Ma never learned to drive so that's why we had to work around Dad's schedule. Aunt Mary, who was my mother's sister, would make sundaes for all of us when we arrived at the parlor. Uncle Hank Martiny used to have a Chandler that we'd always be excited to see showing up at our house. This was a seven-seater with little seats that would flop down from the back of the front seats. We loved riding backward in this vehicle and probably wished we could have had one for our crowded family outings.

The Mohrs (Frank and Maggie) and the Spindlers (Charles and Cornelia) lived near us on the West Branch. A lot of Friday nights we would go to the Spindlers to play Casino and other card games. Cornelia used to make fudge for us and boy was it good! I remember my family selling eggs and milk to the neighbors.

I recall that it was a real thrill to see an airplane fly over the area in my childhood days. We'd immediately get on the phone to call the neighbors to alert them so that they could see it too, in case they had missed it. Everybody had to run outside to see it fly over. Our phone was a big old wooden thing with the "talk in part" permanently attached on the front, and the earpiece attached by a cord on the left side of the phone. The crank to "ring somebody up" was on the right. We had eight people on our party line. I remember that our ring was one long and five shorts, and that the phone number was 504F14.

Memorials



For: Edward Klice, Sr.
From: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Podraza

For: Pete and Dorothy Fortuna
From: Donald and Rebecca Black

For: Carl and Mary Monkhouse
From: Donald and Rebecca Black

ITEMS FOR SALE

In addition to our history book, we have many more items for sale. These make good birthday presents, or just anytime presents. Here's what we have:

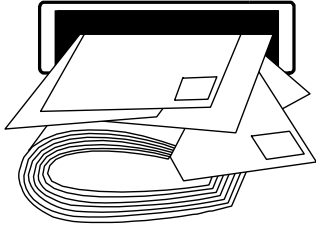
POST CARDS - 4 different Allegany scenes -
75 cents each, plus shipping.

ALLEGANY HISTORY VIDEOS - \$10, plus \$5
shipping

ALLEGANY HISTORY DVD'S - \$18, plus
shipping

TALES OF WAR AND CONFINEMENT - \$6,
plus \$3 shipping

WE GET MAIL



We received a nice note from **Doris Kelly** of Chipmonk to “express our enjoyment of the article in the latest historical newsletter about the Sutter family in Chipmonk written by Earl Rowe. (Ed. Note: This appeared in the November 2007 issue.) We (Doris and Paul Kelly) purchased the Sutter home and farm in 1960 and have lived here happily ever since then. The Chipmonk Valley is a special place and a great neighborhood.”

Kathleen Podraza of West Seneca, New York wrote to request a memorial for her dad, Edward Klice, Sr., who was a member and passed away on October 5, 2007 at the age of 92. He loved reading your newsletter in spite of failing eyesight. It brought back many happy memories of his early days on the farm in Allegany. Many thanks for the joy your newsletter brought to Dad.”

We're sorry for her loss but pleased that we were able to brighten Mr. Klice's days with some fond memories.

Mary McClure of Albuquerque, New Mexico sent her dues and said that “I find the recollection of past and present residents especially interesting because I follow their stories and discover names and places which refer to my Dad's family members and other associations. Several issues ago (*November 2006*) the lady who recalled her childhood (*Ruth Hitchcock Smith*) spoke of harvest time on the farm when her mother needed extra help in preparing meals for the workers. I sent the publication to my cousin and can't remember if the helper who was so efficient was my Dad's great-aunt, Malinda Moyer or Melvina Moyer ((I'm not sure which). (Ed. Note - *it was Melvina Moyer.*) The Moyers lived on the Five Mile Road which is often referred to.

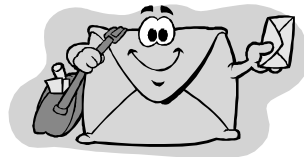
In your May, 2007 issue you presented the story by Bob Mitchell of his friendship with Doc McClure and how Doc's prediction of winning the Irish Sweepstakes actually came true — after his death. I first met Bob McClure, as my Dad called his cousin Hubert, in 1934, the summer before Dad's death. Then again in 1938 when he visited us in Cleveland. He was a very pleasant person and our family enjoyed his visit. My brother stopped to see him in his restaurant whenever he was in town calling on Mr. Mutschlechner of the Allegany Citizen, or St. Bonaventure College Printing Department. Both my Dad and brother were salesmen of printing equipment in their time and both owned their own print shops too.

Last month's edition carries recollections of a gentleman (*George Hall*)who described a place where the tannery employees lived. My great-grandfather, Edwin R. McClure lived in Allegany for 50 years, 1848-1898. He had a tannery and shoe and boot store. He purchased 3 parcels of property on Main Street where his store was located. The tannery was located to the rear. In the front of the property, about ½ mile from the tannery, he built his house. I wondered if this was the same tannery mentioned in the account in your newsletter. (Ed. Note - *On an 1869 map of the village, the E. R. McClure tannery is shown on a lot at the southeast corner of Main and First Streets, with a house for E. R. McClure shown on the south side of Main Street, opposite the end of Second Street. This is a different tannery than the one in George Hall's account. There is also a house for A. H. McClure shown to the side and rear of the E. R. McClure house.*) I visited Allegany in 1928 when my Dad took us to see a few remaining relatives. He showed us the house he lived in (there were cows roaming around as it was empty), and I have a tintype of it around the time of his birth in 1869. About 15 or 20 years ago my brother and I visited my cousin in Wellsville and we all drove out there. In my mind's eye I conjured up the scene in the tintype of long ago. Guess that was the 5 Mile Road. Just wanted to share my enjoyment of reminiscing in my father's beginnings. I've enjoyed it immensely. Thanks ” (*We've enjoyed it too.*)

Ellen Tapp of Olean sent a note about her great-grandmother, Phillipena Brunell who, along with her husband George Brunell, were some of the very early permanent settlers of Allegany. She enclosed a copy

of Phillipena's obituary (she died September 20, 1908) from the Allegany Citizen. "Phillipena Brunell, widow of the late Geo. Brunell, died at her home on the Four Mile Road last Sunday of complications incident to old age in her 80th year. She was one of our pioneer settlers, coming to Allegany nearly 60 years ago and since making her residence in this town. She was born in Baden, Germany, and came to the United States about 1850." The obituary goes on to list her survivors and mentions that her funeral was held in the M. E. Church, which is now our Heritage Center. She and her husband were apparently part of the wave of German farmers who settled in Allegany after the timber interests had cleared the land and made it available for farming.

WANTED: Cattaraugus County Postal Historian



Bill Howden has been researching past and present post offices in Allegany County and has hopes that someone will step forward to do the same for Cattaraugus County, especially since Cattaraugus County is celebrating its Bi-centennial in 2008. The following are some of the post offices which were in the Township of Allegany.

BURTON CENTRE - Was only open for six months, from May 25 to November 20, 1843. Many "Centre" settlements were in the center of townships. In this case, Burton Centre was open during the tenure of the BURTON post office, which was in service from June 18, 1831 until closure on April 19, 1851, when the name was changed to ALLEGANY.

Russel Chapel was the first postmaster of the CHAPELSBURG post office, established May 8, 1826 and closed July 6, 1852, when the name was changed to HUMPHREY CENTRE.

CHIPMUNK post office was open from October 24, 1891 until January 31, 1893.

CHIPMONK post office existed from January 29, 1897 until April 15, 1920. Both were serviced by the Allegany post office after closure.

FIVE MILE RUN post office was open twice; first from June 11, 1831 to September 28, 1838, and again from February 14, 1853 to February 3, 1863, with a different postmaster each time.

NINE MILE RUN post office was in service twice for very short time spans. First opened on December 28, 1837 and closed on May 29, 1839, it re-opened on February 1, 1841 with a different postmaster and finally closed on March 1, 1842.

PENVILLE post office opened on September 6, 1890 and quickly closed on March 31, 1891, with service then provided by the ALLEGANY post office.

Bill has compiled this information from New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980, by Kay and Smith. Sounds like a good job for someone with a historical bent.



MEETING

Sunday, March 16



Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, March 16 at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Center, 25 North Second Street. Barb Kubiak from Franklinville will speak on "Upstate Ties to Three Women Who Changed History: Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony and Clara Barton". All three women have been enshrined in the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York. Ms. Kubiak is a native of Auburn, New York, and is a retired social worker, having worked at the Pines for over 25 years. She is a photographer and has an interest in genealogy.

March is National Women's History Month - what a good time to hear Ms. Kubiak talk about three women who were definitely history changers, and whose works still resonate today. **SEE YOU ON SUNDAY, MARCH 16 AT 2 P.M.**



Allegheny Area Historical Association
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Presidents Report

Catherine Martiny Geise Interview

We Get Mail / WANTED
