



# ***Allegheny Area Historical Association***

May 2011

[www.aaha.bfn.org](http://www.aaha.bfn.org)

Issue XXX Vol. 2

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

It was a very hard winter for AAHA. We lost some of our oldest members, both in age and length of membership.

Orma Carls died March 4<sup>th</sup>. She was a founding member of AAHA. Back when Allegheny celebrated its Sesquicentennial and people were talking of possibly starting a historical group, Orma was one of the first on board. She was one of our "Founding Mothers." In AAHA's early days Orma did just about every job we had. And she seemed to know everyone and their families so she was able to answer many questions that we received about genealogy. Our files would not be as complete as they are now without Orma's expertise.

Marion Dale died Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> at the age of 90. Marion's father was Erich Steiger who operated the former Weyerstall's Meat Market on Main Street in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marion worked at the former Smith & Schultz store, but some of our members might better remember Marion when she worked at the Grosstal ski area, later Wing Hollow ski area. She sold tickets there and was the first person you had contact with when you came to ski. She always had a smile on her face and remembered everyone and made them feel very welcome.

Catherine Geise died Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> on her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was a Martiny and that made her related to half of Allegheny. Kate was independent as long as possible, driving herself to church well into her nineties. For many years Kate kept a scrapbook for AAHA, cutting articles from the Olean paper that related to Allegheny and Allegheny people. Kate was a member of the Grange, one of America's oldest organizations for farmers and their families. She wrote an article for us in our history book, "Our Allegheny Heritage, 1831-1981" about the Grange. In 2008, Catherine's daughter-in-law, Marge Geise, (and AAHA's Vice-President) did an oral history interview with Kate and we ran it in two issues in March and May of 2008. It was a remarkable picture of growing up in a much different time, and Kate's great sense of humor was evident all through it. What a marvelous piece of history for us and for all her family to share.

Women like Orma, Marion and Catherine will be missed by the entire community.

This will be our last newsletter until the fall so I will remind you now about Heritage Days and our display "The Oil and Gas Industry in Allegheny". We still need pictures and stories about oil producing in our area. I know many of our members, particularly in the Four Mile area, had family involved in the oil business. Please search your files and give us a call – we need your help.

Our neighbor to the south, Allegheny Laminating Kitchen & Bath Center, has to put in a sewer line to the manhole connection which is in the back yard of the house to our west. To do so, some of our trees on the south property line are going to be taken down this spring or summer. We may be able to keep some of them but that will depend on many factors. But since trees are a renewable resource, we can always plant new ones.

We will open for the season on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> and will be open each Wednesday thereafter until the end of September. Our hours are 1 to 4 p.m. If any of our out-of-town members are planning a visit to Allegheny this summer, I hope you will stop by to see us, our exhibits, and do some research in our genealogy files.

**FRANCIE POTTER, PRESIDENT**

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## WE GET MAIL

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Jerry Buffington Chadderdon sent a lovely note about Orma Carls. "She was one of the original founders of AAHA, quiet and gentle but strong in her convictions that Allegany history is worth preserving. She always seemed quietly involved and willing to do anything necessary for AAHA and/or Allegany. She will certainly be missed and leave a space unable to be filled. May she rest in peace and prepare a place for us, a place efficient and filled with beautiful history."

We received a nice letter from William Wing of DeWitt, Michigan. He is a railroad buff and has donated several books to the Allegany Public Library about railroads of Western New York, especially Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties. I encourage our local members to check out these books as I am sure there is a lot of local history in them. He also says that "We started visiting Allegany to see our grandparents (Fred and Ruth Smith; Forrest and Orlena Wing) during the summers of the 1950's. My grandfather Fred took me to the Allegany Airport, to look at the airplanes. He knew Mr. Fox, who operated the airport. Mr. Fox flew a yellow Piper Cub airplane. In the late 1950's Mr. Fox gave my grandfather

and me a ride in his Piper Cub. I sat on my Grandpa's lap, in the back seat of the plane. We flew over Allegany, Olean and Humphrey. Two other books we donated to the library in January were: *Bush Planes* and *History of Flight*. The Piper Cub is spoken of in both books." I am sure some of our older members remember the Allegany Airport and Mr. Fox. Does anyone know the first name of Mr. Fox? Even in our history book he is only mentioned as Mr. Fox. Mr. Wing also sent along the 2011 Erie Lackawanna railroad calendar for which we thank him. We have last year's calendar if any of our members are rail buffs – it has great pictures and we would be glad to give it to you.



Vernon Field's daughter, Karen Streif, sent along a memorial for Bob Conhiser. She notes that Bob was so thoughtful to Vernon in Vernon's later years. She also remembers getting rides from Bob to and from the Cattaraugus County Fair.

Tom Capra of Olean wrote to say how much he enjoyed the article about "Sport" Miller, and the entire newsletter. If any of our members have ideas or requests for articles, we'll try to fulfill them.

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## THE PRICE OF KEEPING HEALTHY BY William Bonhoff

Last week I signed up for one of those health "Lifeline Screening" deals that are advertised from time to time in the local paper. They do this quite a lot for the older people who go south for the winter—especially in Florida. I guess they do this because it gives the Senior Citizens something to do and keeps them off the streets. There is nothing worse than driving behind a "northerner" poking along at seventy miles per hour holding up traffic. But that's another story.

Anyway, I got an e-mail today addressed to **William** (last name omitted to protect said party) confirming the appointment along with some instructions. They must not know I already made a note on my calendar. The e-mail goes on to tell me what I should wear on this eventful day. I should wear a two piece outfit of loose clothing, open collar and short sleeves. Are they kidding? Most of my clothes are too tight as they "shrunk" from being washed so much. I wonder if I should buy a new outfit for this occasion? They didn't specify what color, so I assume any color would be appropriate, except black. This is supposed to be a fun day, right! So I'll make it something bright. Also don't eat anything four hours prior to the tests. I think they'll be serving a big lunch afterwards.

Farther down there were more instructions on what to wear for more tests. As I read the next tidbit, I looked up to the top of the sheet to make sure it was addressed to **William**. It was! "Please wear short sleeves and no pantyhose. You will be asked to take off your shoes and socks." What kind of a place is this? This is getting more interesting by the minute. I told them I was healthy. They gave me the test and took my money anyway. It's nice to get a second opinion and I don't wear pantyhose.

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# Memorials



*For: Marion Dale*  
*From: Bob and Francie Potter*  
*Bob and Susan Bubbs*

*For: Jack Terry III*  
*From: Bob and Francie Potter*

*For: Catherine Geise*  
*From: Marion Elling*  
*Orin and Margaret Parker*  
*Bob and Francie Potter*  
*Alice Altenburg*  
*Catherine Putt*  
*Paul and Betty Hanson*  
*Michele Gilbert and family –*  
*Wayne, Sara, Eric*  
*Margaret Green*  
*Ruth Thomas*  
*Linda Monsell*  
*Jerry Chadderdon*  
*Don and Lucy Benson*  
*Horace and Ellen Peck*

*For: Mary Orsini Lentola*  
*From: Bill and Kay Palmer*

*For: Naomi Pittman McGee*  
*From: Duane and Caroline Clark*

*For: Mary Stephan*  
*From: Christine Duink*  
*Jerry Chadderdon*

*For: Bob Confiser*  
*From: Karen and Vincent Streif*

*For: Orma Carls*  
*From: Orin and Margaret Parker*  
*Kathleen Karl*  
*Bob and Francie Potter*  
*Margaret Green*  
*Alice Altenburg*  
*Cecilia Kelly Ladd, Doris Kelly*  
*and Kelly Family*  
*Newton and Helen Degolia*  
*Jerry Chadderdon*  
*Leo and Pat Nenno*

*For: Glenna Booth*  
*From: Carol and Betsy Livingston*

*For: Jim Spindler*  
*From: Bob and Francie Potter*

*For: Tom Louser*  
*From: Bob and Francie Potter*

*For: Paul Kelly*  
*Dotty Riley*  
*Jennie Scarlato*  
*Neen Vossler*  
*Ed Dornow*

*From: Steve and Betty Eaton*

## **DUMMIES WANTED**

Before everyone raises their hand, what we are really looking for are mannequins or dress forms so we can display some of our vintage clothing at Heritage Days. We have some dress dummies but they are very old and in sad repair. Our clothing collection is nice and we want to share it with everyone but to do it to best advantage we need some help. So search your attics or give us a call if you know where we can get some mannequins. Thanks.

## **CHANGE OF VENUE FOR MAY MEETING - CHANGE OF USUAL DAY**

You can read about our May meeting elsewhere but this is just a reminder that the meeting location has changed – we will meet at the **Allegany American Legion Post** on **Monday, May 23**, instead of our usual Sunday time.

*In our last issue we had an article about a "murder" that wasn't, but in 1869 there was a murder in Allegany. The following is taken from the web site of the New York Correction History Society.*

"Theodore Nicklas – 1 of 12 men convicted of Murder in Cattaraugus and Executed."

\$2 Ending of life for Distinguished Old Man and a Wayward Youth.

In his eight decades of life, Andrew Mead proved himself a remarkable individual – saw-mill builder, doctor, jurist, town supervisor, church leader, fraternal lodge founder, and storekeeper. The Hornelville Tribune of Dec. 24, 1869 (as quoted by the New York Times on Christmas Day, 1869) described him as "a resident of the county for the last fifty years, a very respectable and influential citizen."

About the year 1832, Dr. Andrew Mead built a saw-mill near the mouth of Four Mile Creek. In 1838 it became the property of Seymour Bouton. Previously active in nearby Olean, he came to the community of Allegany in 1847. Allegany is a village in the Olean metro area situated along the Allegany River in the Southern Tier region of New York State. The community name derives from the Indian term for "long river" or "fine river." It is the home of St. Bonaventure University.

In 1848, Dr. Mead donated a store building he had in Olean to that community's First Baptist Church for use as a place of worship. He had been one of the congregation's earliest members. The building continued to be used by Olean Baptists as their church until 1860. In 1852 he helped establish the Olean Lodge, No. 252, F. and A.M., serving as one of its first officers. In 1854, Mead and the Rev. E. F. Crane presided at the founding meeting of "the First Baptist Society of Allegany." Mead served as a Trustee of the society that for many years held its worship services in the village schoolhouse. But the society never did construct its own church edifice and eventually ceased activity.

One of the early county judges, Dr. Mead was elected justice of the peace at various times through the years (1833, 1842, 1859) and elected town supervisor in 1868. Even in his late years, he continued activity in Cattaraugus courts. Additionally, for many years Mead had maintained a considerable practice as a physician.

A bachelor, Dr. Mead lived alone in a building on the west side of Main Street, Allegany, which also served as his place of business. By 1869, he kept the front part of his building more as a grocery than a medical office since he had given up his medical practice a few years earlier. After all, though quite muscular and still active, he was at that point in time pushing 80.

The evening of December 18, the retired doctor/jurist was by himself in his grocery when a young man named Theodore Nicklas entered. The 19-year-old was in desperate need of cash, having been barred from his own home by his parents. Apparently his ways of behaving were too much for them and for their German family tradition of personal self-discipline. Dr. Mead was well aware of the teen's unruliness and the parents' disapproval. Theodore was his nephew.

Nicklas "asked" his uncle for \$2, a "request" that may have sounded to the old man more like a demand. His refusal led to an exchange of words that escalated into an altercation. With an iron stove implement that he had grabbed, Nicklas struck repeated blows to Mead's head, rendering the doctor helpless. His assailant took \$55 from Mead's pants pocket and a watch from the doctor's vest. Locking the store door behind him, Nicklas fled into the night, leaving his victim to die on the floor. The robber ran to Olean where he hopped aboard a freight car headed to Buffalo via Hornelville.

A \$1,000 reward – a vastly huge sum in that era – was offered by the community for capture of the killer. The youth's wild spending of his ill-gotten gains and his sale of his victim's watch reportedly contributed to Nicklas' apprehension in January, 1870. A New York Times report of Jan. 28 quoted from a Buffalo Express account of an interview with Nicklas while the youth was detained in Buffalo. Nicklas claimed he wanted to "borrow" \$2 from Mead for passage to Dunkirk, N.Y., but when the doctor refused to loan him the money, the youth determined to take it by force. However, Nicklas said that in the ensuing

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struggle, "The doctor was too strong for me and got me down...The doctor got up and locked the door and locked me in. I thought he was going to get a gun to guard me, for he keeps a gun and is an awful tempered man when he gets mad. I seized a small shovel by the stove and hit him over the head two or three times, the key fell from his hands and I don't know but I struck him once or twice after that. I took the watch and the money, unlocked the door, went out, locked the door after me and started for Olean."

Nicklas acknowledged he had one prior arrest, that being for allegedly stabbing a man. "Now that I have no hope of escaping the gallows, I shall only strive to obtain the forgiveness of God." After being detained in Buffalo for the murder of Dr. Mead, Nicklas was incarcerated in Little Valley where he was tried, convicted and on March 18, 1870, hanged.

Five hundred dollars was allotted to the Sheriff's Office for the execution, just about half of which went to the construction of the gallows. Some of the money may have been spent on closing off the execution area from public view so as to conform it to the 1835 New York law banning the public viewing of executions.

The New York Times account of March 19, 1870, detailed the execution: "The gallows was erected in the jail yard. The condemned left the jail in charge of Sheriff Cooper, leaning upon two deputies. He was preceded by Fathers Sorg and Bloomer, and followed by some of the county officers. He ascended the platform with a firm step. The death warrant was read and the rites of the Catholic Church performed. He was overwhelmed at the moment and wished Father Sorg to say for him that he was sorry for all the sins he had ever committed and that he hoped for salvation and trusted that his fate would be a warning to all young people. He dropped eight feet and died without a struggle. His body was delivered to his friends."

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*"The Democrat" was a paper published in Olean in the late 1800's. The following news items are from their Allegany correspondent. We hope you like them.*

**November 15, 1880** - Willard and Smith are placing a large line of prints and other dress goods on the market at cost. Sugars, teas and coffees are very cheap at this house.

**December 2, 1880** - Allegany Four Mile oil territory is now producing more oil than at any time previous. Over one thousand wells within an area of two miles, producing over eight thousand barrels of oil per day. Another pipe line is very much needed. Some of our oil men are holding their oil for better prices.

The cheese manufactured by Jerome B. Jewell at the Union Cheese Factory, Five Mile, is pronounced the best and brings an extra price.

**December 6** - Mr. Joseph Blair has purchased the interest of Wm. Ensworth in the grocery business of Ensworth and Kline and will in early spring move into the village.

During the past few days of sleighing a very large amount of logs, timber, bark, oil, hay and grain have been moved.

**December 20, 1880** - A disease called the Sunday Hacks prevails hereabouts causing a very small attendance at our churches, in fact renders church service absolutely lonesome.

The Allegany Nine Mile tannery owned by Bishop Canfield, Esq., is doing a fine business, and is now finishing a large amount of first class stock. Allegany is a good place for tanneries.

**January 2, 1881** - Two of our citizens while hunting in Pennsylvania a few weeks since learned that a certain ex-president caught three trout from the Kane fishery, for which he paid the snug sum of ten dollars each for breaking the Pa. laws. Served him right.

**January 10, 1881** - A telephone is to be established between the Allegany and Olean oil exchange and convenient for oil men. Our oilmen are watching matters very closely and are ready for any necessary improvements. Let the line be made without delay.

**Allegany Area Historical Association  
P.O. BOX 162  
Allegany, NY 14706**

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**INSIDE SPECIAL ISSUE:**

Presidents Report

No Pantyhose!

A \$2 Request Ends in Death

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## **NEXT MEETING**

To honor America's fallen veterans, we will hold our next meeting at the Allegany American Legion Post #892 on Rt. 417 on Monday, May 23 at 7 p.m. Our speaker will be Allegany County Historian, Craig Braack, with a talk entitled "Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941 – December 7, 2008." He will give a slide presentation about his trip to Hawaii and to the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial. The Memorial, which was dedicated in 1962, is the final resting place of the 1,102 sailors of the U.S.S. Arizona who died in the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Please join us for Mr. Braack's very interesting presentation.

**MONDAY, MAY 23 – 7 P.M.  
ALLEGANY AMERICAN LEGION POST #892, ROUTE 417  
MONDAY, MAY 23**