



Allegheny Area Historical Association

November 2016

www.allegheny.org

Issue XXXV Vol. 4

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We lost a good friend with the death of Orin Parker on August 31st. Orin and his wife, Margaret who is a trustee and general source of knowledge about all things Allegheny, were and are strong supporters of our historical association. He had many interests but his primary love was his family. He always had a twinkle in his eyes and a ready smile. My enduring memory of Orin – every time I called Margaret, and I call her quite often, Orin would usually answer the phone. When I asked him how he was, his answer was, "Why I'm finer than frog's hair." I could see the twinkle in his eyes. He is sorely missed by family and friends but his memory lives on.

We have finished doing the high school and college memoirs of Irene Schnell McRae in this issue. My husband, Bob, had her as a teacher and dearly loved her. One of his favorite stories was when he went to a dance and, as usual, the boys sat on one side and the girls on the other, and nobody was dancing. Irene was the chaperone and she got up and went over to Bob and said, "Mr. Potter, you and I will lead the dancing." Bob was petrified because this meant that he would have to put his arm around his teacher! But you didn't tell Miss Schnell no, so he got up and led off the dancing, with his arm around her, and lived to tell the tale.

Our de-humidifier in the basement recently died. It didn't owe us anything as it was quite old. Hans and Char Sendlakowski bought a new one and donated it to the organization. They even did the set-up. Thanks so much for your generosity, it's much appreciated.

We received two donations to help with tree removal and tree replacement – thanks to Judy Wilson and Milton & Christine Bailey!

Francie Potter, President



Our 33rd annual

Christmas Cookie Sale

Will be held on Saturday, December 3rd

at Nature's Remedy, 120 West Main Street, from 9:30 to 2 p.m.

This is our only fundraiser of the year. If you don't get a call asking you to bake some cookies, just call us to volunteer your services. The effort of all our members and friends is what makes this sale so successful year after year.



On Sunday, December 4th at 2 p.m.

at the Heritage Center, 25 North Second Street,

We will hold our 34th annual

Community Christmas Service

which is always a nice way to start the holiday season.

Fr. James Vacco, O.F.M., from St. Bonaventure Church will conduct the service.

At the service we will once again take up a collection of money, canned goods, and paper products to benefit Genesis House, the homeless shelter in Olean.

Anything we can gather for them is needed, and very much appreciated by them.



Thank you in advance for your support of these two events.

IRENE SCHNELL McRAE MEMOIRS – PART 3

Irene is now graduating from St. Bonaventure College.

My graduation was June 6, 1926. It had been a hectic two months. I was teaching, having pictures taken, taking exams, being measured for cap and gown. Hectic but exhilarating. It would soon all be over. How misled I was. It was just beginning!

I must have taken time off to graduate because it was a school day. It was the day that Mrs. Frank Collins was killed by a train at the Bonaventure crossing while she was crossing the tracks on her way to seven o'clock Mass.

It was a lovely graduation. There were only ten ladies who were not considered part of the student body as women are now. But for graduation we were allowed to march with the men – at the rear, of course. This was all before the days of Women's Lib and visitation privileges. I can think of another name for those visitations.

After having worked so diligently to finish four years work in three summers and three years, the prospects of not going to class were grim. That was practically all the social connection I had. There had been so many wonderful people among students and faculty that I thought it would be great to take a class or two and enjoy myself. Formerly we had been permitted to take three courses, but I seemed to squeeze in an extra one. Not for the summer of 1926! As I looked over the catalog, there were so many of my favorite professors teaching interesting courses that I just had to take – this one and that and that – four in all and I never worked so hard.

One subject was Latin Poetry, Horace! What a change from my other eight or ten Latin courses. I love poetry, but scanning Horace was killing. To make matters worse, the course was taught by Father Mark Kennedy, OFM, a dear friend but a tough taskmaster. I can recall being simply paralyzed and one day I blurted out, "I can't do it" (read the lesson in Latin). My dear friend calmly said, "Yes you can," and of course, I did. It was a good thing he had taught many of my courses and knew the kind of work I had done for him. That was a tough course for me. As I review the situation, I think I was just exhausted because I was getting up early to help with the work and take the milk to the plant on Union Street. That was a lesson in humility (always others had expected me to answer "accidentally" when they couldn't).

In that class was a seminarian who procrastinated a lot. He groaned one day when Father Mark gave out an assignment (sound natural?) and Father Mark said, "If you don't like it, get out." No further groans. To regress a bit. When I was taking De Amicitia from Father Mark, I developed a bad cold. I coughed for weeks but didn't dare skip a class. With my working schedule that would have been tragic. In that class at 5:30 pm, I took the train from South Vandalia to the depot on Union Street to reach class at that time. One night Father Mark said, "Miss Schnell will not have to recite until her cough is better." What a mistake! Every night I was told before classes how favored I was, etc., etc., in finitum. It was all friendly repartee by good friends.

On Sunday, December 11, 1977, I called at the Friary infirmary at St. Bonaventure to visit a friend and asked to see Father Mark, who had been there for years. I had meant to go, but the first visit always seems the hardest to do. The nurse said, "He has no company and he would like to see me." He surely was! We talked for some time and I promised to go back soon. He is thinner and 52 years older, but still the same Father Mark.

We are now back in that summer of 1924. One course was Restoration Drama. One of the plays we studied was "Venice Preserved," a delightful play made even more delightful by my favorite teacher of all time, Father Virgil McGovern, OFM. Thereon hangs a story. Fr. Virgil had been on the Shakespearean



Irene Schnell
1954

stage for 12 years, but, upon pressure from his mother, had joined the Franciscan Order. He taught several Shakespeare courses which I pursued. When brilliant people like Grace Andre say that I made her love Shakespeare, I take no credit. All the credit belongs to Fr. Virgil. He would come into the classroom for a two hour lecture and say, "Tonight we shall read the balcony scene from "Romeo and Juliet." There was no sign of a book. He would begin and charm us with his delivery. Don't be fooled. He worked us like mad and I never worked too hard and loved every minute of it. I believe that was my best work, the work I did with him.

We might have 20 memorized passages, long ones and short ones, to learn from Tuesday night until Thursday night. The time between Thursday to Tuesday classes was better because I had more days to learn them. One day I would have the whole quotation in my mitten walking to Chipmonk and Vandalia. That was the first step. If I was not quite sure about them, I would write only the first line of each to which I could refer if I was having trouble remembering. The true test was the next step, only the first word of each line. By then I really didn't have much trouble. One night as I passed his desk he stopped me and said, "Miss Schnell. You learn your selections out of doors, don't you?" I answered, "Why yes I do Father, but how did you know?" His answer was, "I can tell." Cryptic, succinct, and unrevealing, and what a teacher!

Father Virgil was never quite sure he belonged in the priesthood. He used to talk to us about his calling, or lack of calling. He knew he had to make a decision before final vows. His bishop allowed him to take a leave of absence to pray and meditate. He went to Denver, Colorado, where the Franciscans have a monastery or college; he wrote me from there. His mind was still in turmoil. After a year had passed, his bishop extended his leave of absence. He still wrote telling of his progress. At the close of the second year, his leave could not be extended. He did not say what his plans were. I missed his letters and wondered where he was and what he was doing. And after a few years later, I knew.

One day our music teacher, Lucille Pollina, said, "You know, the teacher you have told me about, the one who was such a great teacher? He is at Dunkirk this weekend acting in and directing the Easter play, 'Veronica's Veil'. I saw the announcement in the Dunkirk paper." On Sunday, a beautiful sunny day, I got into my little black Plymouth and drove to Dunkirk to the church hall to see the play. My old friend played Judas. What a performance. He slithered across the stage looking every inch the villain he was portraying. At the close of the show, I asked an attendant to say that an old friend wanted to see him. He came out, knew me immediately, and sat down for a visit. He said that when he could not make the decision to remain in the order, he left with the blessing of his bishop and his mother who I believe had died when I spoke to him. Both knew that it was better to be a good actor than an unworthy priest.

I was quite touched by one thing he said. He remarked that he remembered the great progress I had made in my writing from my first work with him until my last. Classes those two or three years had been a joy for me. Father Virgil was a writer and has several books to his credit, mostly semi-religious romances. He gave me two or three of them. When we were doing reviews in a class he gave me one of his books to review. I am afraid that the review was my poorest work for him because I was too "uptight" because it was the teacher's book! While studying various Shakespearean plays we were each assigned a different character from each play whose character sketches we had to write. Father Virgil chose the best each week for publication in the college literary magazine. I recall that one of mine was Iago from Hamlet. Sometimes we had more than one chosen.

Enough of my favorite teacher.

This is an isolated note of college days. One Franciscan philosophy professor was Father Francis, a short little man who always wore the Franciscan brown "beanie", and who inhaled snuff, after which inhalation he would sneeze. He had a procedure which was supposed to make us work harder. He would have us

write a paper every week and then give "honorable mention" to the best. At least, that is what we were to believe. There were so many nuns in the class who naturally had to be mentioned first that it took a long time for a layman to be mentioned. I finally "made it" near the end of the course. Fr. Francis had a favorite topic on which he loved to expound. He included a question on this topic in an exam. I wrote in length, not what I thought on the matter, but what I knew he thought. I received honorable mention – maybe not so honorably.

Shall we go back to 1926? Restoration Drama, Horace, Spanish, and another subject, the name of which eludes me. That was a great schedule. How I worked and enjoyed every minute of it.

Somehow I have lost a year in my narrative. I know I graduated in 1926 and went to school that summer. Perhaps I went the next summer also to complete work for my Master's Degree. This schedule is correct:

1922-1923 South Nine Mile School; Summer School 1923

1923-1924 South Nine Mile School; Summer School 1924

1924-1925 Chipmonk School

1925-1926 Vandalia School Graduated June 1926; Graduate Study Summer 1926

1926-1927 Vandalia School

Earned the Master of Arts degree 1928

In September, 1927, I went to Allegany to teach. I had applied for a position there because I knew that Mildred Forness was leaving to teach in Edinboro where she remained until her death four years ago. The President of the Board of Education, Pinky Edwards, was an old man, a friend of Uncle Peter Forness. It seems Uncle Pete was putting in a good word for me to his friend. Mr. Edwards, "She thinks she can run up there a few nights and then be prepared to teach." He had a surprise in store for Uncle Pete had watched me struggle to get an education in less time that it takes some others to do the same thing, and in addition to teach a full day. He proceeded to fill in the facts for his friend. Mr. Edwards recommended me to the Board of Education and I was hired. Maybe it would have been better had I gone elsewhere. Mother really needed me here, though, to have someone to depend on when she needed help.

It was near June of 1928 that I received a telephone call from Fr. Gerald McMinn, Dean of Studies, asking me to go for a measurement for my gown. For what? For the Master's degree. I was astonished. I had not written any of my thesis and had no idea that I had acquired enough credits for a Masters. (I must have taken courses in the year 1926-1927 or during the summer of 1927, or both.) Father Gerald said I should get my degree with the class in June 1928 and write my thesis that summer. That is what I did. I believe if I had time, I can look up the report cards which are filed – somewhere. For now, the above is the best I can do.

That first year (1927-1928) in Allegany was a nightmare. I walked from home on Birch Run until November. I taught departmental work in seventh and eighth grade – geography, math, history. My smallest class was 44 and my largest 54. I taught six periods and supervised a large high school study hall. Most of the Juniors and Seniors were in it – and they were a lively bunch. That year, wherever I went, I marked papers. I guess the administration was trying to kill me, but I fooled them and lived – just about!

In November, I went to live in the Thompson home where Chuck and Helen Williams now live, two doors south of the school. That was a switch. Mrs. Mary Keating, a high school English and history teacher, a very sweet, lovable person lived there too. Mrs. Thompson was a great cook. She used all sorts of rich sauces and desserts. I should have taken Mrs. Keating's advice and eaten slowly and more sparingly. But you know me when delicious food is set before me. By June, I had gained 40 pounds. I have never weighed less since that time – sometimes more but never less! My present dieting in 1977 isn't going too well. I lost ten pounds in October but have regained it all. Losing weight, for me, is an almost impossible

task. I lived at Thompsons two years. It was there that Father Gerald called about my taking my Master's Degree. The Thompsons were good Baptists and were not above making snide remarks about Catholics. The house was small so Mrs. Keating and I could hear the conversation downstairs. They had the Baptist minister, Dr. _____ and his wife to dinner one night and we heard a remark by Mrs. Thompson who was "shushed" by her husband. Al Smith, a Catholic, was running for president. With a curl of her lip, Mrs. Thompson remarked how "coarse looking" Mrs. Smith appeared in a newspaper picture. What she quite obviously meant was that she was a Catholic! They were good people but a bit biased regarding religion. They did much good for their church and its societies. They have both been dead over 25 years.

It was while I was living at Thompsons that Edwin bought his Studebaker. He was living at the Park Hotel and one evening took Alice Wilhelm and me for a ride. It was that night that a car came out of a tavern driveway and hit us. It is a miracle that we were not all killed. The man had no insurance. That seems to run in the family – to get hit by a driver without insurance. The next day I stayed home from school. That afternoon I was sitting on the front porch when my principal, Mr. Fuller, came by. He stopped to ask how I felt. I assured him that I felt that I would be alright. He said, "I know a man who was in an accident and thought he was alright. The next day he died." Such sensitivity!

After my first two years at Allegany doing grade work, the Latin-English teacher left and I was given the position for which I had trained. I had about 24 hours of college Latin and many hours of English. In fact, my undergraduate major was English and minor in Latin. My graduate major was English and my minor was Latin and French. I took the state written examination for permanent certification in French under supervision of Sr. Paulette at St. Elizabeth's. I went to Buffalo to take the oral exam from Dr. Price of the State Education Department from Albany. I was so frightened that I sat in the room while person after person went up to be interviewed. Finally Dr. Price called me up saying that I had been there a long time. As if I didn't know it!

He was very kind and had me read a long poem which I did very well, partly because I was a fine French student (here, here!) and partly because Sr. Paulette had gone through the same procedure. She had been asked to read the passage going to be translated on the written exam so she had drilled me on that selection. I can almost recite it now. Dr. Price complimented me on my pronunciation and asked who my instructor was. When I said I had studied under Sr. Paulette of the Allegany Franciscans, both in high school and college, he said, "She is a fine teacher." I was surprised that he remembered her and her record. She is still living in 1977 (also in 1979). I have promised faithfully that I would visit her soon. I must do that before Christmas. I hope to get there while she still lives. So many times we wait too long. (Haven't been to see her yet in December, 1979).

Dr. Price was also pleased with my grammar. He scolded some other people before me. "Open your mouth, open your mouth," he said to one woman. (Guess we were only girls back there in the summer of 1928) and my knees sort of melted. It seems a shame that I never taught French. Colletta Felt had taught it at Allegany High for years before my time and for approximately twenty more years until her retirement because of failing health. She was an excellent French and math teacher but I always thought she taught French for the Regents and did not have the students speak it fluently as a living language.

This ends Irene's memoir of her high school and college years. She went on to a long and distinguished 34 year teaching career at Allegany High School. She retired in 1964 and passed away in 1988 at the age of 84.

Memorials



For: Orin Parker

From: Rhea and Paul Carls

Charlene and Hanford Sendlakowski

Jim and Diane Boser

Alice Altenburg

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Jonak

Francie Potter

Harold and Marjorie Geise

Pat and Kathy Premo

Horace and Ellen Peck

For: Rita Keim

From: Horace and Ellen Peck

Daniel and Cindy Pikulski

For: Margaret Capozzi

From: Horace and Ellen Peck

For: Mike Clark

From: Milton and Christine Bailey

For: Lena Henton

From: Kay and Bill Palmer

For: William Nenno

From: Leo and Clyde Nenno

-REQUEST-

Please let us know if your address changes. We pay once to mail the newsletters out, we pay again if your newsletter is returned to us because of a wrong address, and then we pay a third time to re-mail your newsletter to your (new) correct address.

Also, don't forget your dues, which are due in October. Don't miss an issue of our always interesting newsletter.



Class of 1926

Front Row: Irene Gerringer, Ruth French, oward Smith, Mary Hollister, Howard Strobel, Mildred Shaffer, Margaret Blessing
 Back Row: Charles Strobel, Rudolph Heubsch, Anita Forness, Alfred Karl, Laura Smith, Lorraine Hirsch, Charles Krampf, Mabel Smith, Bert Wilcox, Edward Collins.

Margaret Blessing, the 1st Graduate, was the mother of Hans Sendlakowski.

TREASURER'S REPORT

October 1, 2015 – October 1, 2016

This report is presented to give you an understanding of our sources of revenue and our expenses.

AAHA RECEIVES NO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FROM VILLAGE, TOWN OR STATE.

INCOME

Membership Dues	\$2,210.00
Memorials	2,902.00
Donations	492.00
Christmas Cookie Sale	1,181.00
Sales, Misc. Items	477.00
Copier Usage	5.00
Shrubbery Donation	140.00
	\$7,407.00

EXPENSES

NYSEG	\$2,075.00
National Grid	792.00
Insurance	768.00
Bulk Mailing Permit	225.00
P.O. Box Rental	72.00
Acme Service Policy	199.00
Newsletters	
Printing	300.00
Mailing	133.00
Programs	25.00
Donations, Dues	230.00
Equipment, Supplies	203.00
Collections	132.00
DVD Copies	538.00
Austin Security	852.00
Electric Service Repair	1,436.00
Lawn Maintenance	300.00
Shrubbery	420.00
	\$8,700.00

NOTE: The cost of tree removal on our property was \$7,000.00. This amount was taken from our savings account at the Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation.

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

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INSIDE SPECIAL ISSUE:

Presidents Report

New Teacher at Allegany

Please Notify Us!

NEXT MEETING

We will meet on Sunday, November 20 at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Center to hear a talk by Ellen Sirianni Frank about the eight U.S. Presidents who were natives of Ohio. She will discuss the Presidents and the importance of the homes they lived in while growing up.

Mrs. Frank, a teacher in the Salamanca school system for 32 years, is the Vice-President of the Ellicottville Historical Society, and has a very deep interest in local history.

Please join us for this interesting talk, especially in this election year.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20 – 2 P.M.
HERITAGE CENTER
25 N. 2ND STREET, ALLEGANY