



Allegany Area Historical Association

October 2004

Issue XXIII Vol. 3

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

So much has happened since the last newsletter I hardly know where to begin. First, I think I'll tell you a story about our heating system. Three years ago, a skunk managed to get into the building and into the furnace. Of course, he couldn't find his way out, so he died there. The smell, as you can imagine, was quite bad, but eventually it went away and when we turned the furnace on in the fall everything seemed all right. Two years ago, a bird got into the furnace and died. This time when the furnace was turned on, feathers spewed out the registers. Last year another bird died in the furnace. Search as we might, we had no idea how the critters were getting in. This spring, we were in the building and heard scratching noises coming from the ductwork, which was a definite sign we had another unwelcome visitor. Sure enough, in a few weeks we began to notice an very unpleasant smell. It kept getting worse. Not knowing what else to do, we called Mazza Plumbing & Heating in Olean, who services the furnace. A very nice young man came out, we told him the story, and he, gently humoring us old ladies, went to see what kind of "critter" had invaded this time. Very shortly he reappeared and announced in a loud astounded voice that we had a dead woodchuck (!) in the furnace. What's more, he volunteered to remove it for us! Which was good as none of us even wanted to go near the furnace to see it. He disposed of the woodchuck, sanitized the furnace, and then did a survey of the premises to see how it and the rest of our "visitors" had been getting in. He found a place outside where they had been invading and we have now closed off that avenue of entrance. I can hardly wait for the next big adventure! When you have an old building, many things can and do go wrong, but wildlife invading your furnace isn't one of the first things that comes to mind.

Another thing that goes wrong in an old building is the ceiling falling down - literally. The ceiling tiles have started dropping in two places. A panicked visit to Duggan & Duggan Construction immediately followed, and Mel sent a crew to put things back together, so the ceiling doesn't fall on our guest speakers or our audience. So if you see Mel around, be sure to thank him, and if you need heating work done, I highly recommend Mazza Plumbing & Heating.

The 22nd annual Heritage Days was once again a success. We sold out on the chicken BBQ on Friday, and we had one of the few rainless days on Saturday for all our outdoor events. Our major display this year was "Allegany's Military Heritage" and it was warmly received. Many people loaned us pictures to copy, the past issues of the *Allegany Citizen* were searched for stories, military uniforms from our collection were brought out, letters and memorabilia were gathered from various sources, and lots of volunteers put together a very interesting, educational display. We picked this theme to go along with the book we published (more later in this newsletter) about the letters of Richie Boser and Clem Martiny to the *Allegany Citizen* during World War II, and the letter from Van Munson relating his experiences as a German prisoner of war. The display showed Allegany servicemen from the Civil War right through to the current conflict in Iraq. One of the great additions to the display was the work of Kyle Stetz, who has been a Civil War buff since he was very young. He's now in college, and volunteered to help us during Heritage Days. He patiently answered many questions during the day about artifacts from his private collection that he so

generously shared with us for the day and about the authentic period uniform he wore, and he also talked about the men from Allegany who served in that war. Many thanks to Kyle for sharing his knowledge with us.

Several people have asked about the water fountain that was in front of the Town Hall, and that was removed when Main Street was reconstructed last year. They will be relieved to know that the fountain is back, not near the street as it was before, but back a ways in the Town Hall lawn. It spent the winter at Studio 4 East, being repainted and refurbished. It looks very nice, but isn't hooked up to a water supply. I don't know if that is in the plan, but it is back.

Mel Duggan has had some of his men mowing our lawn in the past. This year he paid a gentleman, Dave Swatt, to do the job. Mr. Swatt has the place looking the best it ever has. He trims around the flower planter and the sign, and edges the walk. He even mows along the back fence line. If you should happen to be there when he is working, or if you know him, please thank him for a job well done.

The winner of the naming contest for our book of letters from Richie Boser and Clem Martiny was Rebecca Fortuna Black, a member from West Palm Beach, Florida. She suggested the name, Tales of War and Confinement from World War II. She received a free copy of the book. Thanks to all who offered names. There is more later in this newsletter about the book, and how you can order copies. I think it would make a great Christmas present for Allegany friends far and near.

We have lost some members since the last newsletter - Catherine Riehle Senyk from Westons Mills and Jean DeArmitt of Allegany. Ann Boser also died, on September 13th. Ann was one of the founding members of AAHA, and an avid genealogist. The results of her family searches have enriched our genealogy files. She organized our Community Christmas Service for 21 years, and could always be counted on for help in any area whenever we needed it. She will be greatly missed.

Our Vice-President, Marge Geise, has once again put together an interesting schedule of programs for the coming year. All the meetings are on Sundays at 2 p.m. On October 17, Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, will speak on the History of the Franciscans and the College (more on that further in the newsletter); Sunday, November 14, Craig Braack, Allegany County Historian, will give a talk on the Final Burial of 28 Western New York Soldiers from the War of 1812; Bruce Perry of Bradford will talk on March 13 about sports car ice trials on Red House Lake; and Steve Howard will finish our season on May 15 talking about a Prehistoric Site Along the Allegheny: Reports from a Field School, detailing a dig he did along the river in back of Bockmier's Farm Market.

One of our long-time members who is also our Secretary, Vernon Field, is now residing at The Pines, the Cattaraugus County Nursing Home in Olean. He goes from there for kidney dialysis on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, but other than those days he would certainly welcome visitors. He's in Room 11, so check to see what the visiting hours are and stop by to say hello.

I hope you are all enjoying the delightful late summer-early fall weather we are having, and I hope to see you at our October meeting.

Francie Potter, President

The following article was given to AAHA during Heritage Days by Edward Wheeler Havers of Olean. I hope you find it interesting.

There is no doubt that we, the citizens of the United States of America, are going through some very difficult, sad and scary times. However, we have come through other frightening challenges and succeeded in overcoming them. Now, we are challenged once again and we must be as determined to accomplish the task of overcoming the terrorist regime that has brought us to this state of affairs as we have in years before when we fought the Revolutionary War which made us a free nation, followed by the confrontation of the Civil War which pitted state against state and family against family. It was that war which brought us together as the United States of America. We have been engaged in many great battles which have called us together as a united people, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and others, and in each we have stories of brave young men and women who stood for what they felt was the right. Thousands of these brave veterans fought to keep this wonderful land of ours free, and so many gave the supreme gift, their lives.

An example of such a young man is Devillo Wheeler, a fifteen year old lad who on September 24, 1862, left his home on the North Nine Mile in Allegany, N.Y. to join the 154th N.Y. Volunteers, one of the army regiments which many other young men had joined. He lied about his age to enter the confrontation, because he felt that it was his duty to enlist. Sixteen was the age for enlistment, and as stated, he was only 15.

Most of the Civil War enlistees were sent to Jamestown, N.Y., separated into regiments, and then moved to an active post. The following is a short excerpt from a letter written by Devillo while in Jamestown on September 27, 1862: "We have marching orders from here now and expect to leave on Monday. I send this check for I can't come home. We only get \$50.00, and I bought a watch. I am sending you all that I can. Spend it as you see fit. I probably shall never see you again unless I come through the war safely. I should like to see you all again but I can't. I'm leaving for Camp J. M. Brown."

Fighting a war is a difficult and frightening experience. Many decisions have to be made. The letters sent to family members and friends read as pages from a history book many years after they are written. One has the chance to look into the past and learn what the sender and his comrades had to endure. They not only had the war about which to think, but often they worried about the folks back home. This is another excerpt from a letter sent from a camp near Fredericksburg, Va., February 2, 1863: "We are going to have some more pay the last of this month then I will send you some. I only have \$5.00 for myself and need money a great many times. Things to buy are very dear. I have seen brandy sold for seven shillins a drink. I tell you when a man has been out on picket and comes in all wet and cold, seven shillins a drink is no object. I was on picket the other day on the Raphanock River and the Rebs come over and give me some tobacco but I didn't use it. I gave it to Capt. Mills. The Rebs said they was sick of the war and wanted to go home as bad as we did. The reb regiment was the 10th Alabama. Some of them threwed down their arms and gave themselves up. It is easy to cross the River by jumping from stone to stone. The Rebs want our hardtack bread and they trade tobacco for it. I shall see home by the next time if I am alive war or no war. It makes no difference to me how I must see it." (The rest of the letter is missing.)

Toward the end of the Civil War the Battle of Gettysburg was fought. It was shortly before that battle that Devillo wrote his parents another letter. However, only an undated fragment of the letter was found. It follows: "I am all right now don't worry and don't work yourself to deep for you will get along just well."

Be cheerful and I will come out all right though if I was home I should like it better and would feel safer. Let it be ever so humble there is no place like home. When I hear the brass band play 'Home Sweet Home' in the evening it makes me think of home." Signed Devillo Wheeler to his father and mother and sisters and brothers, forever Devillo Wheeler. He adds: "You can't expect me to write on my knapsack as well as I could on the desk up there to Mother Warners."

Devilleo was taken prisoner at Gettysburg, Pa., and was transferred to Andersonville prison where he starved to death at the age of seventeen.

War is not a pleasant state of affairs, and as said before, it brings about much worry and sadness. It is a dreaded event and a terrible waste of young lives, lives such as Devillo's and others that have been lost in other battles if only the perpetrators could understand that. However, we must unite, just as our veterans did before us, and face the enemy and rid our nation (and the world, in this case) of the terrorists who are determined to bring us to our knees. Once again we will prove to the world, we are a united people who will stand up and protect our freedoms, freedoms that are a gift to us by the sacrifices of those brave individuals who fought for freedom and built us a strong nation under God.

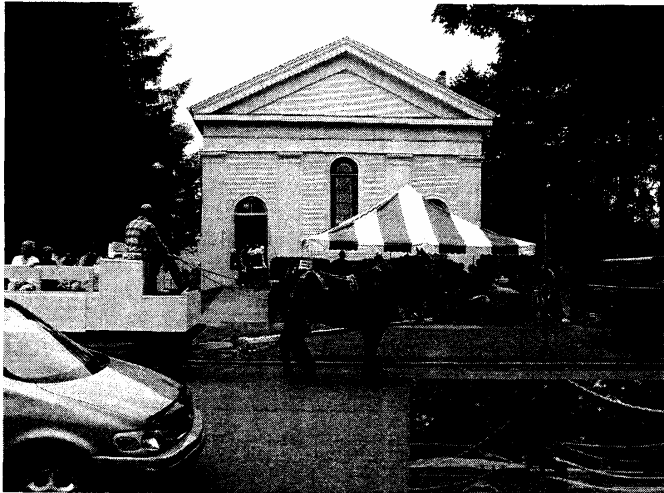
Devilleo Wheeler was (and is) my uncle. I wish I had known him personally. I admire him and am proud of his part in helping to unite our country and its people. We are a great nation under God. Let's keep it that way.

OCTOBER MEETING

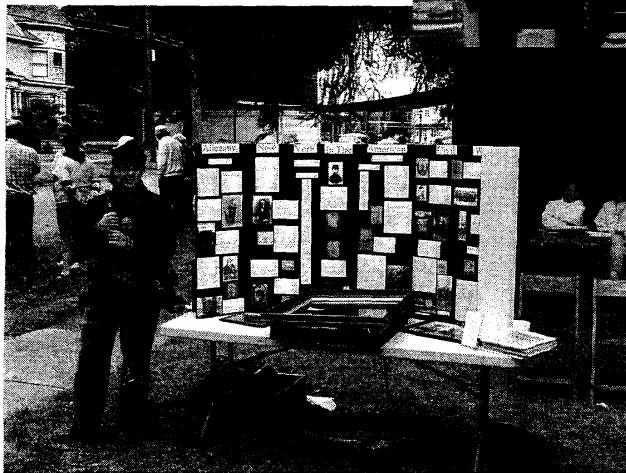
We will meet on Sunday, October 17 at 2 p.m. at the Heritage Center, 25 North Second Street, Allegany. Our speaker will be Fr. Dominic Monti, OFM, Ph.D., and a Professor of Theology at St. Bonaventure University, which will celebrate its sesquicentennial during the 2008-09 academic year. Fr. Dominic, a native of Bradford, PA., a noted church historian, and former interim president of the university, will relate the history of the Franciscan order in this part of America, and how the Franciscans came to found St. Bonaventure College on land donated by Nicholas Devereux of Utica. St. Bonaventure University is a vital part of our life here in Allegany, and Fr. Dominic will detail the rich history of the college as it has grown over the years. I hope you will be able to join us for this interesting talk.

2004 Heritage Days

The Heritage Center

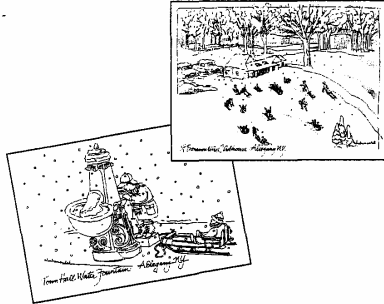


Chuck Straub's Wagon Rides



Kyle Stetz and his Civil War display

— CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SALE —



We are offering Christmas Cards for sale. Some of our out-of-town members might like these as a reminder of "the good old days" in Allegany. They come in an assorted pack of 10 cards for \$2.50, plus \$1.50 for shipping, for a total of \$4.00. Please allow 2 weeks for delivery. There are 3 cards showing the AAHA building, from a sketch done by the late Joanne Martiny Conroy; 3 cards of Santa arriving in Allegany aboard a fire department engine; 2 of the Norton house on North Second Street; and 2 of the Town Hall water fountain. The latter 3 cards were all drawn by Dan Wintermantel of Studio 4 East. Make your check to AAHA, and send to PO Box 162, Allegany, NY 14706.

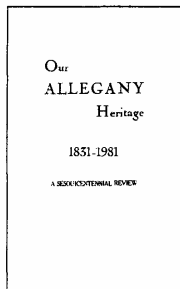
**TALES OF WAR & CONFINEMENT
FROM WORLD WAR II**

Our book containing letters from Richie Boser and Clem Martiny from World War II, and a letter from Van Munson detailing his experiences as a German prisoner of war is now available for sale. The cost is \$6.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping for a total of \$9.00. Make your check to AAHA, and send to PO Box 162, Allegany, NY 14706. Allow 2 weeks for delivery. We once again want to thank the American Legion Post in Allegany for their help in underwriting the cost of publication.



*Tales of
War
and
Confinement*

From World War II



OUR ALLEGANY HERITAGE - 1831-1981

Thanks to an anonymous donation, we have reprinted our original history book, Our Allegany Heritage, 1831-1981. This soft cover edition is available for sale. Again, allow 2 weeks for delivery. The cost is \$7.50, plus \$2.50 for shipping, for a total of \$10.00. It is the same as the original version. For our local members, it is available for sale at The Little Apple in Olean and Nature's Remedy in Allegany. Tales of War and Confinement in World War II, and our Christmas cards, are also available for sale at these establishments, and can also be purchased at our October and November meetings.

Memorials

For - Francis X Pendl
From - Harold and Marjorie Geise

For - Bertha Bucher
From - Kathleen Karl
Bob and Francie Potter

For - Judson Spring
From - John Spring

For - Ann Boser
From - Orin and Margaret Parker
Bob and Francie Potter
Margaret Green
Jerry Buffington-Dunn
Alice Altenburg
Marion Zink
Clarise Sue
Donna Sherwin
Virginia Peace and Larry Bennett
Fred Lunden
Mary Snyder
Marney Ferguson



A LONELY LITTLE PUMPKIN

By Vernon E. Field
October 8, 2003



Halloween is near
I am not a lonely little petunia
in an onion patch.
I am a lonely little pumpkin
in a pumpkin patch.
My brothers and sisters
Have left me all alone.
I long for a little child
To take me to his home,
To make me a smiling face
To show the candle light
Through mouth, nose and eyes
To lighten the dark and scary night.



DUES ARE DUE

October is the month to **pay your dues**. A single membership is \$10, family \$15, and patron is \$20 or more. Make your check to AAHA, and mail to PO Box 162, Allegany, NY 14706. **Don't forget**, because if you don't renew your membership, we will take you off the mailing list, and you wouldn't want to miss even one issue of our always interesting newsletter.

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

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INSIDE SPECIAL ISSUE:

Presidents Report

Heritage Days Pics

Items for Sale
