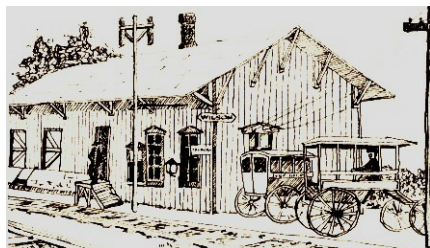


May 2017



Wilson Historical Society

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FRANCIS GALLAGHER

CURATOR—VACANT

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

45TH ANNUAL

MEMORIAL DAY FAIR

MONDAY, MAY 29TH, 2017

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM GROUNDS

****SUPER FLEA MARKET****

250 VENDORS

FREE ENTERTAINMENT

FEATURING "BARROOM BUZZARDS"

GREAT FOOD INCLUDING CHIAVETTA'S CHICKEN BBQ

WELCOMING BACK 2-BARN-FARM PONY RIDES, PETTING
ZOO AND BOUNCE HOUSE FOR KIDS!

FREE PARKING IN THE VILLAGE

FREE SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE TO THE GROUNDS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED THROUGHOUT THE DAY

CALL 751-6704

**THERE WILL BE A MEMORIAL SERVICE ON THE
GROUNDS AT 12:00 PM HONORING OUR VETERANS**

******CLASSIC CAR SHOW—DONATION \$5.00 PER CAR***
INCLUDES DASH PLAQUE & FREE PARKING ON GROUNDS***

Thanks SO MUCH for your support!!

EXCERPTS FROM BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETINGS**FEBRUARY 2017~ MARCH 2017**

- ◆ Property Transfer finalized
- ◆ Alarms placed in buildings, John will instruct.
- ◆ Donation items from Larkin Building arrived!
- ◆ We need to test our Fire Alarm
- ◆ Renewal of membership of with Niagara County Federation of Hist. Societies
- ◆ Diane reported on possibility for grant for a new sign for Billy Sherman
- ◆ CD's from the digitizing have been returned.
- ◆ Summer concert date is August 13th, Winter concert is December 3rd.
- ◆ John is working on cleaning and moving items in the depot.
- ◆ All extinguishers will be checking all extinguishers on March 14th.
- ◆ Discussion was made on purchasing a projector with a locked card.
- ◆ Wilson Lions requested permission to use the Barnum Building on April 15th for their Easter Egg Hunt.
- ◆ Diane was given the okay to offer Steve Smith use of the Barnum Building for his Star Search program.
- ◆ John is submitting an application to the William Pomeroy Foundation for the grant for Billy Sherman.
- ◆ Theresa McCabe of Healthy Neighborhoods will be speaking at the Barnum Bldg. on Monday, March 27th, at 7:00 pm.

Why We Say What We Do ~ Dark Horse ~

This is a racing term meaning someone who is unknown, and therefore not one of the "favorites" , but may or may not have potential winning power. Sometimes unscrupulous people dyed a champion horse and passed it off as an unknown in order to make money betting on it!

From the President's Desk ~

It's been a busy spring, and now we're finally getting the temperature to match up with the date!

Make sure to come check the newly refreshed displays at the Depot museum on Fair Day. A quick reminder that the museum will be open every 1st and 3rd Sunday from May 7th through October 15th, or by special request.

This is our 45th Annual Fair, and we really want to make it a memorable success! We need volunteers for two hour shifts to work in the museum buildings as well as various other capacities, so if you have two free hours you can spare, we will REALLY appreciate it! You can call me or Diane at the Town Hall to sign up.

The Historical Society is excited to be a part of the plans for the Town of Wilson Bicentennial Celebration coming up in 2018. Lots of terrific ideas are being discussed, including a July Social at our location. Any ideas you have will be most welcome!

Enjoy this great weather and hope to see you soon at the Fair!

John Sinclair, President



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Monday, May 13th	Mothers Day Craft	1:00 pm—3:00 pm
Monday, May 29th	Memorial Day Fair	8:00 am—4:00 pm
Monday, June 26th	Annual Meeting/Picnic Burgers/Hot Dogs/Pop Provided Please bring a dish to pass!	6:00 pm
Sunday, August 13th	Annual Summer Band Concert	1:30 pm

DID YOU KNOW??

The United States recently marked an important anniversary in its history. The event was the decision to enter WWI on April 6th, 1917 on the side of the Allies against Germany. Like many small towns across America Wilson witnessed many of its young men go off to war. One can find 202 names listed on the WWI era plaque in Veteran's Memorial Park adjacent to Greenwood Cemetery. Tragically, some did not return, paying the ultimate price. This is the story of one young man who did return but not before enduring a great deal of hardship and having the distinction as the only Wilson man unfortunate enough to be captured and serve time as a POW in a German prison camp in WWI.

Lewis S. Wheeler, born March 6th, 1894 was the son of Wilson residents Milton and Rose Moore Wheeler. Here is the story of his capture: After being conscripted, Wheeler left Lockport on February 24th, 1918 for basic training at Camp Devens located near Lowell, MA. From there, he went to Camp Upton, Suffolk County, Long Island, a transient camp and embarkation point for conscripts heading to France and the front lines. He departed by troop ship on April 6th, 1918, landing in Liverpool, England on April, 19th. In England, Wheeler received more training before he was shipped to the front lines on June 24th. However as fate would have it, his days of fighting were to be short lived.

Early on the morning on June 24th, Wheeler was wounded in the abdomen and badly gassed. According to the following excerpt from the April 4th, 1919 edition of *The Wilson Star* he was still recovering from these events almost a full year later.

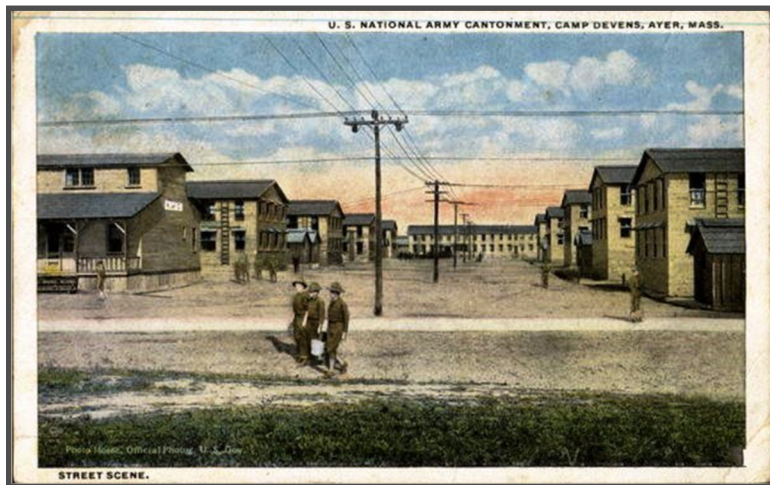
The barrage started at 2:45 o'clock a.m. and at 3 o'clock Wheeler says the officers went to the rear leaving the boys without officers or commanders. There were thirty-five men holding the lines. Six were burned up with liquid fire. We were surrounded by three battalions of Prussian guards who took our rifles and started us across No Man's Land. They struck them over the back with the butt of a rifle hurting them severely after which they took their shoes, socks, leggins, slicker, wrist watch and ring.

Once stripped of their belongings, they were forced to hike four days to a prison camp near Strasbourg, Germany. During the entire four days the only food they received was a slice of bread and one drink of water. Once they reached the prison camp it didn't get much better. The prisoners were given a small ladle of carrots, horse and cat meat to eat for each meal. After four weeks at Strasbourg, they were moved to Camp Darmstadt where the meal consisted of soup which turned out to be half mud. After twelve days, they were moved once again to Camp Rastadt. There they received cabbage leaves, carrots, cat and horse meat to eat. Wheeler was forced to work each day in the kitchen from 4 am until 9 pm.

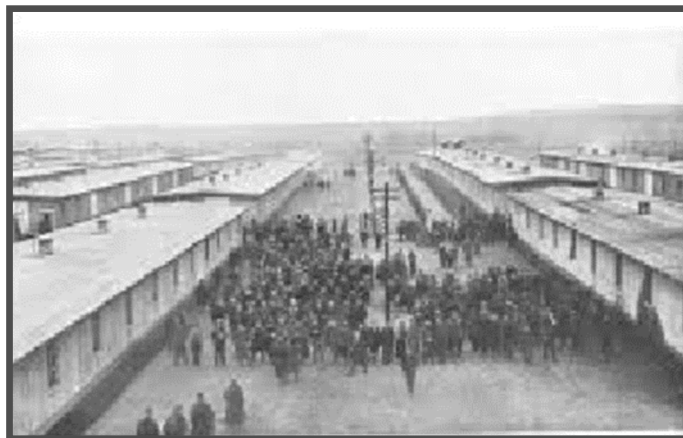
The suffering began to take its toll. Many of the men were so weak that they used canes to walk with. One died of starvation. Fortunately it was summer of 1918 and the war was beginning to draw to a close. By late August the prisoners began to receive shipments of food from The International Red Cross. On December 8th, almost three weeks after the war ended, they were taken to Berne, Switzerland. From there, they went to St Agony in Vichy France where they formed into a casual company before finally boarding the U.S.S. Huntington in Brest, France and sailing for home on March 12th. Wheeler was mustered out on March 28th.

Upon returning home, Mr. Wheeler married and settled in Lockport where he worked at Simonds Steel as an oiler before retiring. Wheeler died suddenly on August 29th, 1968 at his home of an apparent heart attack. His obituary reads that he was survived by a son, Lewis, and two daughters, Mrs. Paul (Margaret) Ogden and Mrs. Carl (Ruth) Kathke. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

~ Francis Gallagher, Town of Wilson Historian



Postcard of Camp Devens in 1918



Darmstadt POW Camp



American Soldiers Heading Home
after WWI

Wilson Historical Society
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Wilson Historical Society Membership Form

June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018

Individual (\$15) Name(s): _____

Couple/Family (\$15) Mailing Address: _____

Life Member (\$150 single/\$250 couple)

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Checks payable to: Wilson Historical Society, P.O. Box 830, Wilson, NY 14172

We will soon be accepting credit card payments for memberships in the Society! There will be an additional \$1.00 charge for the use of your card which will cover bank fees.

You can call us at 716-751-6704 for more information or to set up the payment. Hopefully this will make it more convenient for some members to make their dues payments.