

Jefferson College Historical Society

Vol. V No. 1

January 1972

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Historical Society will be held Wednesday evening at 8:00 P.M., January 19, 1972 in the meeting room of the Municipal Building. The election of officers will be held. The offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and one Director are to be filled.

Program

The program will be a repeat of the popular "Show and Tell". Each member is asked to bring an old article and tell the group about its history.

Museum and Meeting Room

The "faithful few" are still working every Tuesday evening. Progress is being made slowly but surely. We will soon need some painters or even daubers. Why not stop up some Tuesday evening and see what is going on?

Joseph Solobay did it again. He prepared a very interesting exhibit for Veteran's Day in the Colaizzo Insurance Agency window. The old pictures, newspapers, and other memorabilia were all concerned with men of the Canonsburg area who had served in the wars from 1861 to 1918. Thank you, Joseph.

New Organization

An effort is being made to organize a Washington County Chapter of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. You will read about this in the papers later this month.

Invitation

Why not bring a friend to the meeting? If you can't bring a friend - bring a relative - or if you can't bring either, just bring something old and take part in the program.

Treasurer's Report for 1971 :

Balance forward 1/1/71.	\$1,265.08
Income from dues.	444.00
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	\$1,709.08

Disbursements:

Two film rentals	27.84
Postage.	39.20
Materials for new rooms. 506.00	
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	573.04

Balance on hand Dec. 31, 1971. \$1,136.04

Joseph A. Solobay, Treas.

New Members in 1971:

- Mrs. Helen Beedle, 422 Woodland Road, Canonsburg, Pa.
- Mrs. Adelaide Cholak, Meadowlands, Pa.
- Mrs. Mary J. Ducsai, 138 Greenside Ave., Canonsburg, Pa.
- Steve J. Ducsai, 138 Greenside Ave., Canonsburg, Pa.
- Mrs. Miriam Ducsai, Morrison, Colorado
- Steve J. Ducsai, Morrison, Colorado
- Edward J. Duda, 407 Giffin Ave., Canonsburg, Pa.
- James R. Frenz, R.D. #1, Canonsburg, Pa.
- Mrs. Walter B. Forbes, Cypress, California
- Mrs. Sarah Kidder, 115 Kidder Lane, Canonsburg, Pa.
- Mrs. Betty A. Robinson, 303 Munnell Street, Canonsburg, Pa.
- Mrs. Ruth Riggle, Aravda, Colorado
- John E. Solensky, 120 Norris Drive, Canonsburg, Pa.
- Miss Miriam J. Solobay, 514 Craighead St., Canonsburg, Pa.

Total active members as of January 1, 1972 87

IN MEMORIAM

Walter M. McPeake
February 2 , 1971

A prominent citizen and charter member of this society who maintained a lifelong interest in the history and landmarks of this community.

A Good Deed

Our kind friend and fellow member, Mr. A. L. Zeman, has presented an original John Canon deed to the Historical Society. The following is excerpted from this interesting old document signed by John Canon and his wife, Jennet, 176 years ago:

This indenture made the twenty first day of April in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred ninety-five, between John Cannon (sic) of the Town of Cannonsburg (sic) and Jennet his Wife, of the one part, and William McCall of the same place...for and in consideration of the sum of Three Pounds Specie...a Lot of ground...extending on Market Street Six Perches and back at right angles to said Street, Ten Perches; bounded on the West by said Street, on the North by Pittsburgh Street, on the East by an Alley leading to the Spring...and marked in the general plan of said Town No. 38...To Have and to hold the aforesaid Lot of Ground...Subject nevertheless to the Yearly Ground Rent of Seven Shillings and Six pence Specie to be paid by the said William McCall his Heirs or Assigns, unto the said John Cannon (sic) his Heirs and Assigns yearly and for every year forever. ...To grant to the said William McCall, his Heirs and Assigns forever, the full use and privilege of the Coal Bank, South of the Dam, to take as much coal therefrom as will be sufficient firing for the Houses now built, or that may be built hereafter upon the hereby granted Lot...provided that the said William McCall, his Heirs and Assigns do not injure the Works of said Dam.

Signed sealed and delivered
in the presence of

John McDowell
Wm. Wick

John Canon Seal
Jennet Canon Seal

There are a few noteworthy points that come to mind concerning the contents of this indenture:

- 1- The spelling of proper names was variable and not considered of great importance. Note that the scribe of the deed spelled Canon with a double "n" in both the family name and the town name - yet John and Jennet signed their name "Canon". The scribe would have been an acquaintance of

Canon and employed by him to write the deed as the body of the document is not in Canon's writing.

- 2- The yearly ground rent was a provision in common use by town proprietors. John Canon was the proprietor of this town - he owned all the land on which the original town plan was laid out; he prescribed the size of the lots, the width and placing of the streets, donated the land for the school and market house and even restricted at least one lot, that it never be the site of a tavern. The ground rent was meant to be a source of continuing income for the town proprietor that would enable him to finance public improvements perpetually. However, ground rents and quit rents were declared illegal and non-binding around 1800.
- 3-"...privilege of the coal bank, South of the Dam..." this stipulation explains why there were so few fireplaces with large openings in houses built in Canonsburg at this period. The fireplaces were built to burn coal rather than wood. This also verifies that coal was being mined from "Dam Hill" (mentioned in the lot plan of 1788), and that access to the coal bank was by crossing Chartiers Creek on the mill dam breast.
- 4- Payment in Specie: the value of the various paper currencies was so unstable at this time that the common practice was to accept payment in coin only. The Spanish silver dollar was probably used in this area more frequently than the United States coinage.
- 5- Market Street and Pittsburgh Street are now North Central Avenue and Pitt Street. The lot described is on the Southeast corner of the intersection of North Central Avenue and Pitt Street and is presently owned by Mrs. Edna Jacobs.

J.T.H.

If You Missed It

Our talented members, Mrs. Renton and Mrs. Richards, conducted the program at the November meeting. Their topic was Genealogy or How to grow your own family tree. Their presentation was not only interesting and instructive but was very entertaining - even if you didn't have an ancestor to your name!