

“THE WAY IT WAS”

History of the newspaper column “The Way It Was”

Written by William Allen Zulker

For the

Lebanon Daily News

Lebanon, PA

In the spring of 2010, I prepared and submitted six columns of “The Way It Was” to the editor of the Lebanon Daily News, asking if he would be interested in publishing them. He responded favorably and said that the columns would begin in July and be published on the first Sunday of each month. The first column appeared on Sunday, July 4, 2010 on page two. Interestingly enough, the front page carried an article on me entitled “Retiree Shares County History.”

SUNDAY, JULY 4, 2010

Retiree shares county history

By STEVE SNYDER
Staff Writer

At 83, Bill Zulker is still a relative youngster in terms of learning about Lebanon County.

A retired administrator at Eastern University in Delaware County, Zulker and his wife of 60 years, Isabel, moved to Richland five years ago to be close to their daughter, Beth Mellon, and five of their nine grandchildren.

“The older I get, the more interested I get in fascinating experiences of the past,” Zulker said one sunny morning last week as he sat on the back deck of his Country Lane home, overlooking a 100-acre cornfield.

Zulker’s inquisitiveness and love of history led the ordained Presbyterian minister to learn about his new home county.

He started doing microfilm research in February at Lebanon Valley College’s Bishop Library, and the result of that effort is the monthly feature “The Way It Was!” that debuts in today’s Daily News.

Each month, Zulker will list items that appeared in the newspaper during one month from the past.

A couple examples from July 1940, which appears in today’s edition:

- Miss Elizabeth Kerr of 312 Chestnut St. was named “Miss Lebanon, Queen of the City,” at the bicentennial celebration of Lebanon.
- An Ox Roast in Coleman Park drew 12,000 visitors, and 5,400 sandwiches were served for free.

“I read through and look for things that pop out,” Zulker said. “I do it geographically. I try to find something in Annville, something in Richland, something in Lebanon, so that every part of the county is represented. I’m trying to cover the whole county.”

In addition, Zulker tried to pick out one or two national or international stories, “interesting incidents about what was happening in the world,” he said. “I’ve had a lot of fun doing this.”

Zulker even looked at comic strips to add a little color to his reports.

“The Way It Was!” isn’t his first foray into writing; he is the author of a biography of iconic Philadelphia merchant John Wanamaker.

Besides visiting with their three daughters — in addition to Beth in Richland, Barbara Marshall lives in Brewster, Mass., and Beverly Vesper lives in Wallingford, Delaware County — and grandchildren, the Zulkers have kept busy by making several trips to Europe.

Bill and Isabel are members of Zion United Methodist Church in Myerstown.

Don’t think that Zulker is spending all of his time visiting family and doing research. He has also learned to fly an airplane and helicopter at Keller and Deck airports.

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THE WAY IT WAS!
LEBANON COUNTY
IN JULY 1940

- St. Paul’s Reformed Church in Schaefferstown celebrated its 175th anniversary.
- A two-day tour of the New York World’s Fair cost only \$9.00 including hotel and two days admission to the Fair - offered by Isaac Plasterer, Ninth & Chestnut Streets, Lebanon.
- Sunday Dinners at the Brickerville Schier-just \$1.00-N.F. Haldeman, Proprietor.
- Lebanon City celebrated its 200th Birthday with week-long activities in July.
- An Ox Roast (a 2,200 lb. ox) in Coleman Park attracted 12,000 with 5,400 sandwiches offered free on the Fourth of July.
- Miss Elizabeth Kerr was crowned Miss Lebanon, Queen of the City, at the Bicentennial Pageant “Cavalcade of Lebanon” attended by 6,000 in the high school stadium.
- Neptune Fire Company of Richland held its annual carnival in July with the Allentown Band as a special attraction.
- A Three-Act Farce Comedy - “Here Come Charley” was presented by the Methodist Players in the Cornwall H. S. Auditorium. Cost - 35 cts.
- Carl Karmany was elected President of the Rotary Club of Lebanon.
- “Joe Palooka”, “Dixie Dugan” and “Tillie the Toiler” were the popular comic strips in the *Lebanon Daily News*.

The Way It Was! is written by William Allen Zulker, Richland, PA - zulker@comcast.net
Source: The Lebanon Daily News archives, Lebanon Valley College-Vernon & Davis Bishop Library