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Postcard shows ferry and old railroad bridge

By HARRY McLAUGHLIN *The York Dispatch*
York Dispatch

Nacwill Wonner was a telegrapher for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and one of his stations was the steel railroad bridge connecting Wrightsville and Columbia.

He collected tolls from the pedestrians, carriage and wagon traffic that used the lower portion of the bridge not used by trains.

So, Robert K. Wonner of Dover was excited to see a postcard that shows a ferry boat and a good, broadside view of the bridge in a recent publication of the York Heritage Trust publication, "The Chronicle."

The postcard is part of a collection of 200 vintage postcards and images featured in "York," published by local author, Scott D. Butcher. The book will be available Saturday at the York County Heritage Trust Historical Society, 250 E. Market St. From 1 to 4 p.m., Butcher will sign copies of the book, which costs. \$19.90.

The book will show trolley cars, five-and-dime stores, downtown department stores and high-style buildings, among many others.

Butcher is a lifelong resident of York County and an active participant in the community. He served on the boards of directors of Main Street York, Historic York, the York County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Leadership York. He has written extensively about York and York County for visitor guides, relocation guides, architectural features and web sites.

Back to Nacwill Wonner. He would collect tolls from a couple of pennies to seven or eight cents for a wagon of goods. Some teamsters chose to cross over the ice to save the money but some broke through the ice.

A railroad telegrapher had a responsible job, much like airport controllers of today. He made a "good" wage of five cents an hour. When crossing gates were installed, he received a 1 cent an hour raise. It became necessary for telegraphers to handle gates by hand. He was among the first to work an eight-hour day.

Robert Wonner is a well-known contributor to letters to the editors of the newspaper editorial page.

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The York High class of 1959 is sponsoring an "Oldies Record Dance" and Silent Auction for the benefit of the York City Dollars for Scholars, a nonprofit agency that awards scholarships to needy and deserving students. The event is from 7 to 11 p.m. on Friday at Wisheaven Hall Ballroom, 2985 East Prospect Road. Music will be provided by Bob Rudy, popular disc jockey from station WSOX, Oldies 96.1 FM. For details, phone Gary Kraybill at 764-1680.

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Long-time friend, Margaret Martin of Dover and eight friends rented a van and driver and traveled to New York City to visit the wife of a World War II buddy of her late husband, Richard "Pepper" Martin. The soldier-friend was Ernie Fried. After Fried's death, the Martins kept in touch with his wife. Then Margaret's husband died in 1985. Mrs. Martin always wanted to meet Mrs. Fried, but it took 50 years for that meeting to happen. "Pepper" was a member of the 94th Infantry Division, and in one battle, he fired an anti-aircraft gun at a German jet plane while in convoy near Ludwigshafen at the Rhine River. "Pepper," a well-known local baseball player, died five months short of the Martins' 40th wedding anniversary.

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Yvonne Leiphart of Lycan Drive says she remembers a cage at Penn Common that housed alligators. She was responding to an *Around Town* column that mentioned the alligators as recalled by Nancy Lipschutz, who lived near the park on South Beaver Street.

"As a child my mother and I walked across Penn Park to go to church. There was a circular pond surrounded by an iron fence and there were also fish ponds that contained beautiful gold fish. Just a reminder of the way things were in the good old days," writes Ms. Leiphart.

Harry McLaughlin's local Around Town column runs Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in The York Dispatch. Reach him at hmclaughlin@yorkdispatch.com.