

## APS UNIT 28

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EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY



Mail from Germany was addressed to *Eben Ezer* long before the post office opened in the tiny community.

## EBENEZER POST OFFICE HAD STRONG GERMAN TIES

By Alfred Carroccia

The Town of West Seneca in Erie County can trace its beginnings to the Seneca Indians who first occupied the surrounding land. The site of what is now West Seneca was part of the Buffalo Creek Reservation — 2.6 million acres of land surrounded by the lands of the Holland Land Company. In 1835 the Indians, through treaties, disposed of the Buffalo Creek Reservation and migrated south.

Soon after, a group of German Lutherans, the Community of True Inspiration (also known as the *Ebenzers*), arrived in the area and purchased 5,000 acres of the recently vacated Buffalo Creek Reservation at \$10.50 an acre.

Four hamlets — Middle Ebenezer, Upper Ebenezer, Lower Ebenezer, and New Ebenezer — were established as more than 800 immigrants came to the area from Germany between April 1843 and October 1845. The Ebenzers formed their own governing body and spurned a communal society where jobs, goods, food and services were available to the community for use by all. Their charter was titled *The Community of True Inspiration* and the belief manifested itself as the community grew. However, as other German settlers seeking religious freedom moved in, the Ebenezer community and its way of life felt threatened. A new settlement was established in Iowa with most settlers leaving New York.

The post office at Ebenezer was established on July 21, 1863 with Frederick Wendling as first postmaster. It was located in Lower Ebenezer on Seneca Street not far from the current location of the West Seneca branch post office. Postmaster compensation was between \$200 and \$300 per annum as can be seen by the number “3” in the bars of its Doane cancel indicating it was a small post office. It operated until July 31, 1950 when mail was redirected through Buffalo and the West Seneca 24 branch, which would open the very next day.

1857 Württemberg cover courtesy Harvey Bennett