

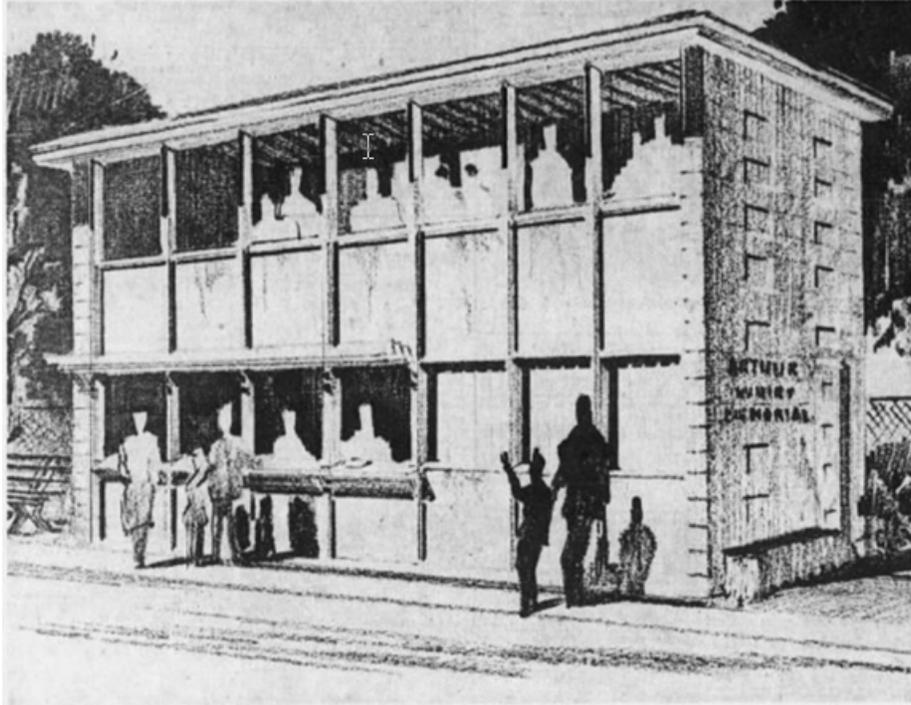
Arthur H. Whirt
West Elmira Police Officer 1944 to 1961

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Town of Elmira Historian October 2021



Arthur H. Whirt

Star Gazette 1936 (NYS Trooper) and 1958 (West Elmira Police Officer)



“Proposed” Art Whirt Memorial Building from the Elmira Star Gazette May 5, 1962



Art Whirt Memorial- being re-painted in October 2021

Many people that have attended baseball games behind the West Elmira Town Hall have seen the original concession stand building that is named the *Art Whirt Memorial* building but they may not know who Arthur H Whirt was and what significance he had in the Town of Elmira. Arthur Whirt served as the West Elmira policeman for nearly 18 years from January 1, 1944 until his death on December 10, 1961. Arthur was a native Elmiran born to Mr and Mrs Howard Whirt in 1894 and attended Elmira Public schools. He grew up on West Thurston Street on Elmira’s North Side. His father, Howard Whirt, was an electrical engineer at the J. N. Stearns Silk Mill that was located down the street from the family home. After attending local schools Arthur was listed as a chauffeur for Barton and Wheadon (a local wholesale grocery company) in the 1917 Elmira City Directory. At the age of 22 years he enlisted in the Navy and served in the Naval Aviation Department during World War I. Following his service to his country Arthur returned to the Elmira area to become a New York State Trooper in 1927 and served the State of New York in that capacity through the end of 1943 when he came to work as a police

officer for the Town of Elmira. As a state trooper Arthur served the towns of Big Flats, Waverly, Sidney and Cooperstown, New York in that role. There was an early photo from the Elmira Star Gazette from 1941 of Arthur in his State Trooper uniform on a state issued motorcycle at an airplane event at the Sing Sing Airport in Big Flats. He married his wife Dorothy E. Whirt in 1941. Dorothy operated the Westside Nursery School on Coleman Ave for 16 years and died on March 12, 1988 at 77 years of age. She and Arthur had no children. In his adult life Arthur lived in various locations including along the “narrows” (Rt 352 west of Fitch’s Bridge) on Cleveland Avenue and finally on Coleman Avenue in West Elmira.

Officer Whirt became the West Elmira Police Officer and served our community for nearly 18 years. In reading tributes to Arthur from the Elmira Star Gazette after his passing in 1961, it was very evident that he touched many people’s lives over his 34+ years in law enforcement. He was a soft spoken and mild-mannered man. He was however a stern and tough police officer while tempering justice with mercy particularly when dealing with the youngsters in the town. He was very dedicated to protecting the town residents any time of the day or night seven days a week. In reading the many articles in the Star Gazette about Arthur Whirt’s work as a police officer you could tell he was always 100% committed to the serving and protecting the people of the town to the best of his abilities. Unfortunately, Arthur would not live to see the opening of the new West Elmira Town Hall in the fall of 1962 because he passed away during it’s construction. With his interest in the town youth it was only fitting that the new concession stand with a second floor press box overlooking the new baseball diamond be named the “Art Whirt Building and Memorial Field”. Officer Louis. A Pirrozzolo was appointed as the West Elmira Police Officer following Art Whirt’s passing. Very big shoes to fill but Lou was certainly up for the new task at hand!

Information for this Arthur Whirt article was taken from records at the Town of Elmira, US Census Data and Elmira City Directories from the Steele Memorial library and various information from the Elmira Star Gazette articles.

Writers Note: I continue to look for historic subjects (people, places, homes, historical events, old schools, family history, etc) about the Town of Elmira to write about. If you have any suggestions or information for future articles please e-mail them to me at demingsw@yahoo.com or call me at 607-426-2957