

WALWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 34 Number 4 Feb. 2010



Walworth Museum: 2257 Academy Street, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568
WHS Website: www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org

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President's Message By Jessie Keymel

Each January we all spend time looking back at the past year and looking forward to the coming year. The Walworth Historical Society is no exception.

In 2009 we were fortunate to receive a grant from the Augustus and Jennie Hoffman Foundation, allowing us to purchase a lap top computer that we have used in conjunction with our projector to present programs at the museum and to take our show on the road. The copper beech tree was groomed and treated to a good dose of fertilizer to keep it healthy. The project of the Walworth High School class photo restorations has proceeded very well. A committee put many hours into making our collections more user friendly; they still work weekly on this project.

As we look back at the programs we presented in 2009 - from the March presentation of "Home Town Portraits", May's "Glimpses of West Walworth" at our annual meeting, Bob Marcotte's presentation on "Rosie the Riveter" in September, and the November meeting about "Cobblestone Houses" – it is evident this is quite a variety. All programs were well attended.

Spring and fall sessions of Walworth Memories, in conjunction with the Walworth-Seely Public Library; a booth at the Festival in the Park; a float in the parade; and our fall open house and Flag Day presentation, kept us active in our community. As we plan for 2010 we look to you for ideas for programs and help with our many activities. Thank you members, for your support.

A Little Info About Us

The Walworth Historical Society is a volunteer organization established in 1975. Our chartered purpose is to collect, preserve, and display items and artifacts of historical interest and importance to the Town of Walworth and its environs. Donations are tax deductible as we have 501(C)3 status. Our newsletter is published six times a year. The newsletter committee includes Bob Mogray, editor; Gene Bavis, Mary Jane Devlin, Dorothy French, and Jessie Keymel.

Helping and Visiting at the Museum By Jessie Keymel

Do you sign in every time you are attending a program or visit the museum? We need to be able to prove we are open to the public to keep our state charter. Can you guess how many people signed in when they visited our museum in 2009? The answer is found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Help is needed to coordinate the volunteer schedule for Sundays and Wednesdays. This important job can be done from home via phone or computer. Can you do this simple task for us?

We need to ensure there is coverage on Sundays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4 PM from June through September. This would be a great way for a member to bring a friend and show him or her the museum. If you have never hosted an open house there, we can provide training. In addition, there is a list of responsibilities posted at the museum.

Yes, We Can (S)can

We continue to enlarge our file of photographs, thanks to those who have given or loaned us pictures of people, places and things. The good news is you do not have to give up the photographs unless you want to donate them to the museum. We have the capability to scan them into our computer. If you loan them to us for a short time we can copy them and then return them to you, or we may be able to copy them on the spot if you have the time to wait. Photos don't have to be old to be important. To share your photos, contact Bob Mogray or any WHS Board Member listed on the front cover of this newsletter.

A Tale of Five Brothers in WW II: The Ebert Family

By Bob Mogray

This is a story about WHS member Molly Hill's family. Molly was one of a family of twelve that included her parents, John and Norma (Grimes) Ebert, as well as ten children. There were five brothers and five sisters. This would be considered a huge family by current standards. It was the involvement of the five brothers in World War II that this story is about. This twelve-member Ebert family originally lived at 5128 Albright Road in what is now the house of John Haak. The names of the children were: Winifred Virginia (Winnie), Vivian Rose, Evelyn Ann, Kenneth Jay, Gordon Walter, Ellsworth George, Wilfred Harlow (Bill), Harland Ray, Geraldine June, and Malora Jean (Molly).

Oddly, all five brothers ended up serving in the military at the same time. This was something that was usually not allowed. Usually at least one brother was left home to help out with the family. Luckily, all five survived the war and made it home afterward. The following are brief summaries of the five brothers' lives from the youngest to the oldest:



Harland Ebert - He was the youngest of the Ebert brothers and was born on January 3, 1927. He is the only surviving Ebert brother as of this article. He lives in Macedon, New York, and has two children: sons Gary and Tom. Harland served in the U.S Army in Germany during WW II. He was sent home in 1945 only to re-enlist. He then served as a switchboard operator in Germany and was discharged in 1946. After the war Harland worked at the Rochester Steel Treating Company.



Wilfred (Bill) Ebert - Born on April 26, 1925, he also served in the U.S. Army in Germany in WW II. He was a farmer before the war and after the war he worked a short time at the Webster Basket Factory. Bill passed away a few years after the war on July 12, 1948.



Ellsworth Ebert - He was born on March 18, 1923, and served in the U.S. Navy in WW II. He was serving in Hawaii when he got appendicitis and was unable to ship out to Japan. It is interesting to note that the man who was his replacement while he was in the hospital was killed in Japan. After the war, Ellsworth had three sons and a daughter. Their names are Randy, Ricky, John, and Cheri. For a number of years he was a pipe-fitter at Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York. Ellsworth Ebert only recently passed away on May 29, 2009.



Gordon Ebert - Gordon was born on December 7, 1920, and served in the U.S. Army in Italy in WW II. He was a corporal and was a mechanic in the service. After the war he had two daughters, Mary and Betsy, as well as a son, David. He worked at Sears for awhile and then went into business for himself, owning and operating a gas station. Later, he also worked at the Penfield school bus garage. Gordon passed away on May 30, 2007.



Kenneth Ebert - Ken was born on April 20, 1917, and was an officer in the U.S. Army, serving in North Africa and Germany. He was considered an excellent mechanic and soon was the head of the motor pool. His first wife was Susie and he had a daughter, Eletha. Later he married Francis and had two stepsons, Sam and Harold. He had a very friendly personality and owned a repair shop on Paddy Lane Road in Ontario, New York. Ken passed away on April 19, 2005.

WHS member Molly Hill, part of the Ebert family, was born in Lincoln and attended Lincoln school there too. She started working at Kodak as a mail messenger girl and then became a secretary. She met her husband, Larry, in high school and they were married on March 19, 1949. Larry was employed at the Hungerford Smith Company and later at Eastman Kodak Company in the film emulsion department. Molly and Larry have a son Kevin. A daughter, Vickie, passed away on February 9, 2008.



Top row L to R: Harland Ebert, Kenneth Ebert, Winifred Ebert, Wilfred Ebert, Ellsworth Ebert, Gordon Ebert.

Bottom row L to R: Malora (Molly) Ebert, Vivian Ebert, Norma Ebert, John Ebert, Evelyn Ebert, Geraldine Ebert.

Many thanks to Molly and Larry Hill for providing photos and information used in this article.

The Ebert family photo, taken in August of 1941. This is the last photo of the family before the five brothers went off to serve in World War II.

Thank You, Stuart

Stuart Huntley visited the museum on Wednesday, November 11, and brought memorabilia from the Huntley, Tuttle, and Yeomans families. This information has been scanned and copied for our files, and is a great addition to the history of these families who played an important role in our community many and not-so-many years ago. This isn't the first time that Stuart has shared pictures and data with us and we are grateful for his interest in our museum.

One of the items we copied was a book written in 1894 about Theron G. (T. G.) Yeomans, whose family and descendants were instrumental in shaping Walworth as we know it today. The book contains information about Theron's extensive farming and political ventures. It also includes a tribute he wrote about Lydia, his wife of 63 years who passed away on Easter Sunday, April 15, 1900 (more about this love story in a future newsletter).

There were many other items from Stuart. The oldest documents are an announcement of the 1857 exercises at the Walworth Academy, an 1886 program entitled "Grand Concert by Walworth Cornet Band", and an 1890 program of the closing exercises at Walworth Academy. There are programs announcing the commencement and graduation exercises of the Classes of 1913, 1930 (the year of the first commencement in the new school building), and 1931. We now have art sketches of the Walworth Academy and Evergreen Place (the T. G. Yeomans home located at 3680 High Street), and a certificate of honorable service awarded to Stuart in May 1944 when he was a member of the Army Air Force Aircraft Warning System.

Our museum's roots can be traced to the three families mentioned in the first paragraph. Stuart is a great-great-great nephew of T. G. Yeomans. Stuart's parents were Clifford and Emily Huntley; Emily was the daughter of DeWitt and Minnie Tuttle. Clifford's mother, Edith, was the daughter of Albert and Clara Yeomans; Albert was the nephew of T. G. Yeomans. In 1985 Clifford and Emily donated the property at the corner of High and Academy Streets to the Walworth Historical Society, enabling the community to build a museum. This lot originally belonged to the T. G. Yeomans family who lived across the street at Evergreen Place.

Stuart is a treasure house of knowledge of Walworth and can always be counted on to provide answers to our questions about people, places, and things relative to the area. His 90 years as a Walworth resident provide him with many memories, and we are grateful he is sharing them with us.

We Were on Display By Judy McMillan

On December 4, a committee composed of Dorothy French, Shirley Osterhout and Judy McMillan (representing the Walworth Historical Society) met at the Walworth-Seely Public Library for the purpose of decorating the lighted display case in the hall outside the library for the holidays. It was a snowy day - and the greenery, gold ribbon, rose-hip bouquets and Christmas village made the case so festive!

One shelf was dedicated to Monnie Churchill who for years has been known in Walworth as "The Angel Lady".... thus her beautiful felt angels were hung with care from the green boughs -- with a photo or two of Monnie. There were also photos of Christmas in Walworth from by-gone days. There were candles from the 50's, an antique doll and a wooden sleigh as well as a Santa tin and lots of goodies. In addition to the committee, Jessie Keymel, Diane DeMinck and Becky Appleman contributed some of the lovely items for the display.

The library complemented the display with appropriate books to honor the season.

Wanted: Program Suggestions

The WHS board has approved the 2010 calendar of events and dates (see back page of this newsletter). Program suggestions are needed for our September and November meetings. Contact any of the officers or trustees listed on the front cover with suggestions.

Scrapbook Memories

By Joyce Finney

The many scrapbooks donated by Dorothy Petty's family are a wonderful resource at our museum. The years 1959 and 1962 are featured this issue.

August 6, 1959: An interesting news article: Rumors of a mountain lion are exciting the imaginations of neighbors in the Boynton Road area. The Floyd Pettys have heard the animal scratching night after night with an agonizing cry. They have never seen the animal. Stanley Allaart also has heard the animal but has never seen it. Richard Baker has been after the animal with a gun as has Gene Stockwell. Mr. Stockwell has taken a shot at it and drawn blood. It left a trail through Petty's muck. Mr. Stockwell says the animal, about the size of a bobcat, has a tail. Two other hunters have seen it and agree it is yellow in color. The animal's description matches the encyclopedia's description for a mountain lion. How about that?

August 19, 1962: The new library opened in Walworth at 2256 Walworth-Marion Road. Two little girls (Kathy Duell and Kathy Triou) held the ends of a gold ribbon across the gold-enameled door of the Walworth-Seely Public Library. Miss Bessie Seely snipped the ribbon and stepped over the threshold. The library, conceived in a workshop and born of the imagination, sweat and ingenuity of a whole town, was open for the crowd of booklovers.

Mrs. Joseph Finely, a member of the library board, introduced the speakers. In introducing Miss Seely, the lady with the shears who gave access to the Golden Door, Mrs. Finley explained the reason for the choice of color; the door to any library represents the golden opportunity for knowledge.

Writers and Memories

Past issues of our newsletter have contained stories written by Gordon Youngman, Jay Taber, Rev. Verne Schattner, Bob Wignall, Kay Fowler Schweers, Christopher J. Pease, and Lois Wing Bulterman Ouzts – among others. These writers have shared memories of their life in Walworth, either as a child growing up in simpler times or as an adult who chose to live here.

How about you – would you be interested in writing a memories story for our newsletter? For more information, contact one of the WHS members listed on the front cover.

Christmases Past

By Dorothy French



During the 1950's the Main Street area of our village was transformed into a winter wonderland of holiday decorations, thanks to the Walworth Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of this annual event was to tell the story of Christmas and the holidays in lighting and display formats. Various decorating themes were used by residents who competed for prizes. The project began in 1955 with one large tree on display at the Four Corners. Chamber members who helped to erect this display in 1957 are, left to right, Mrs. Anna Youngs (Chamber President), Elton May, George Duell, Gordon Youngman, Don Brockman, and Jack Wick.

We Are On Facebook! By Gene Bavis

If you have a Facebook account, please join the group called Walworth Historical Society on Facebook. You are welcome to post comments or pictures there that would relate to Walworth history or WHS programs.

Hoffman Grant Received

By Mary Jane Devlin

Walworth Historical Society recently received a \$600 grant from the Augustus and Jennie Hoffman Foundation for converting Charlie Pembroke's 8-mm movies to DVD. Charlie was a prominent local businessman who took more than 135 8-mm home movies in and around Walworth from 1956 to 1973. They depict former residents who have since passed away and places that no longer exist. These films give us a living history of life in our community in the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's. The films were donated to us several years ago. There are approximately 50 which will be preserved as a documentary of Walworth history.

Some time in the future we will use these DVD movies at one or more of our program meetings. There will be open discussion after the films to add to our oral history of the Walworth area.

Walworth High School Class Photo Project Update By Gene Bavis

To date, the Walworth High School class photos from 1941, 1942, 1946 and 1948 have been preserved. Photos from 1945, 1947, and 1949 have yet to be worked on. Thanks to those who made donations to help with this project. We have used most of that money and will need around \$100 to \$150 more to finish the last three. So, donations will be happily accepted. Also, we are still looking for the class pictures for 1943 and 1944. Can you help us find them? We would also be interested in earlier class photos if they exist.

Cobblestone Architecture Program By Gene Bavis

At our November 2009 meeting, three scheduled speakers and a couple of "impromptu" speakers told the story of Cobblestone Architecture. I had the privilege of starting off the program by giving some basic facts about this unique building material and by showing photos of all of the existing cobblestone structures in Walworth as well as a few from neighboring communities.

I discussed the fact that this style was popular between 1825 and 1860 and that there were three phases of development. Early structures had "field cobbles" that tended to be larger and not as smooth. Later structures used more uniform stones that were mostly "lake washed cobbles." Often these stones were selected not only for size but also for both shape and color.

Following my introductory remarks, Judy McMillan and Ron Matteson gave the "genealogy" of their respective houses. Both speakers showed us photographs of the interior as well as the exteriors. One of the especially interesting aspects of their presentations was the fact that they shared the "human history" of the homes by telling us about some of the former residents of their homes. Larry and Judy McMillan live in the cobblestone home at 5097 Walworth-Ontario Road, while Ron and Juanita Matteson live at 4625 Lewis Road. Both the McMillans and the Mattesons prepared booklets about their homes. Copies of these are available for you to see at the Walworth Historical Society's museum. WHS also has the photographs that were shown that evening in digital format.



Gene Bavis, Judy McMillan, & Ron Matteson

Following the "formal" presentation, members of the audience were asked to share information about cobblestone houses. Jay and Arline Taber talked about living in their cobblestone home at 2203 Penfield Road for about 50 years. Dr. Neil Smith spoke about his home 2427 Smith Hill Road. Thanks to the Tabers and Dr. Smith for adding yet another dimension to the evening.

In addition to the documents at the museum, you can find an interesting article about cobblestone architecture by a Hobart & William Smith College professor on line: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~springport/pictures40/cobblestones.pdf>

Also, Rich and Sue Freeman (Footprint Press) have a book entitled *Cobblestone Quest*. It has 17 driving tours in Western New York that highlight cobblestone structures.

March 15 Program Preview By Gene Bavis

Following up the program on Cobblestone Architecture, I will join forces with my former teaching partner at Wayne Central Middle School, Dick Poulsen, to present a program entitled “An Introduction to Architecture and Reading the Landscape” at our March 15 meeting at 7:30 PM.

Dick and I taught together for about 15 years and took our seventh grade students on a field trip where they explored architecture and other historic features. Together we were known as “B-P” and we have fond memories of those days. We have invited as many former students as we can find (mostly on Facebook) to attend. We hope you will be there, too.

A Puzzlement By Mary Jane Devlin

When Peter Evans, Wayne County Historian, visited our museum recently, he was looking at Walworth High School senior class pictures. He noticed that in 1945 there were 5 girls and 10 boys in the picture; however, in the 1946 senior class picture there was only 1 boy and 11 girls. Does anyone know why there was only one boy in the Class of 1946? Did some of the boys graduate early or go into service? Would anyone be willing to enlighten us on this? Thanks for your help.

Answer to 2009 Museum Attendance By Jessie Keymel

How many people signed in during their visit to our museum in 2009? **The answer: 547.** It is a busy place. (See story about Helping and Volunteering at the Museum elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Walworth Historical Society 2010 Events Calendar

| Date | Time | Subject | Location |
|----------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mon., Mar. 15 | 7:30 PM | General Meeting: Program “Introduction to Architecture and Reading the Landscape” by Gene Bavis and Dick Poulsen | To be announced |
| Sun., April 18 | 2-3:30 PM | Walworth Memories: “Childhood Memories” | Town Hall Mtg. Rm. |
| Sat., May 1 | 9-noon | Spring clean up | Museum |
| Sat., May 8 | 9-noon | Spring clean up | Museum |
| Mon., May 17 | 6:15 PM | Annual meeting, pot luck supper, election of officers, community service award. | Lodge at Ginegaw Park |
| Tues., July 20 | 6:30 PM | Decorate float for Festival parade | TBA |
| Fri., July 23 | 7:00 PM | Festival in the Park: parade and booth | Parade route to Ginegaw Park |
| Sat., July 24 | Noon – 8 | Festival in the Park: booth | Ginegaw Park |
| Mon., Sept. 20 | 7:30 PM | General Meeting: Program TBA | Museum |
| Sun., Oct. 3 | 2-5 PM | Open House. Subject TBA | Museum |
| Sun., Oct. 17 | 2-3:30 PM | Walworth Memories: Holiday Memories | Museum |
| Mon., Nov. 15 | 7:30 PM | General Meeting. Subject TBA | Museum |

Board of Trustee Meetings: Mondays: 7:00 PM at the Museum. February 15, April 19, June 21, August 16, and November 1

Open House Hours: The museum is open June, July, August, and September on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM. Contact Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 for an appointment for other times.

January 2010 WHS Newsletter Bonus e-mail Photos

Cobblestones in the Walworth Area



Zion United Methodist (cobblestone) Church



The Matteson family cobblestone home



The McKee Family cobblestone home



The McMillan family cobblestone home



The former Pembroke family home



The former Taber family home



Bill Suwijn, Walworth resident: passed away Nov. 20, 2003



Herland & Nelly Wray (1978)



Robert Wignall & Janice Wignall Mitchell (1987)



Blue Heron Hills Country Club



Former smoke house located on Larry & Judy McMillan's back yard.



Sky view of Walworth Fire Hall circa 1980