

# WALWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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[Walworth Museum: 2257 Academy Street, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568](http://www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org)  
[WHS Website: www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org)

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## **President's Message** By Jessie Keymel

Like the rest of the world's population, the Officers and Board of Trustees of the Walworth Historical Society have laid out some goals and activities for 2009.

- We look forward to purchasing a laptop computer to use with our new projector for meetings and demonstrations.
- Bob Mogray is planning on scheduling a day, probably on a weekend, to invite you to bring in photos of people, events or buildings important to the history of our township. With our scanner and computer it is possible to copy and store photos and return them to you all in one visit.
- The project of restoring and maintaining our Walworth High School class photos is a top priority this year. An expert has examined them and will be restoring them as soon as we can afford to start this project.
- We are trying to come up with a fund raiser to help with the costs on some of the restorations that need to be done. Do you have any ideas?
- The copper beech tree is in need of some attention and loving care. We are consulting with experts on historic trees and hope to be addressing its problems very soon.
- The spring Walworth Memories is scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2-3:30 PM at the town hall meeting room; the subject is Street Dances. The fall Walworth Memories will be held on Sunday, October 18, 2 – 3:30 PM at the museum; the subject is Weddings and Funerals. These events are co-sponsored with the Walworth-Seely Public Library and are a wonderful source of information about the past.
- As usual, we will have our four meetings on the third Monday of March, May, September and November. If you have suggestions for future programs, let us know. We are always looking for new and interesting speakers.
- We would like to have input from more people on the selection of the recipient for our Community Service Award. Last year the award was presented to the Walworth Food Pantry. In the past we have given the award to individuals, but the Food Pantry is indeed an outstanding example of community service.
- May will bring spring clean up and odd jobs to be done at the museum.
- During June, July, August, and September the museum is open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 2 – 4 PM. There is always someone available to help with genealogy questions.
- We look forward to participating in the Festival in the Park activities this summer.
- Our annual open house at the museum will be held on Sunday, October 4, from 2 – 5 PM.

We have a full year of events scheduled and would like to have you, our members, join in as many activities as possible. Thank you for your participation.

## **Wanted** By Mary Jane Devlin

Wanted: A person or an organization suggested by our membership to receive our Community Service Award in May 2009. Among previous honorees have been Bill Boyd, Stuart Huntley, Elwood Baker, Kay Scott, and Lorraine Finley. Last year for the first time, an organization was honored. The Walworth Food Pantry received the award for their dedicated and continuing service to our residents in need of a helping hand. This award was started in 1990 to honor Walworth residents who have given of their time to enhance the quality of life in Walworth. Our past honorees have been active in many organizations and have served the community in other ways as well.

If you know of anyone or organization who is deserving of this award, please contact someone whose name is on the front of this newsletter by February 15. We appreciate your help.

## **History of our Town Hall** By Dorothy French

*Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the February 1992 newsletter of the Walworth Historical Society. Seventeen years later the growth of our town is again causing space constraints at the current town complex.*

The Walworth Historical Society is interested not only with history in the past but also with history in the making, so we call your attention to the new town hall-library complex being built on Sherburne Road. It is historically significant because it is the first time the Town of Walworth has built a structure specifically for its town hall.

Not too many years ago, board meetings were held in individuals' homes. Large gatherings were accommodated in school auditoriums or fire halls. Later some space was rented in the former Grange Hall. (1) Then the current town office building was purchased. (2)

This building was originally a garage (3) for a grocery which was located at the corner where Walworth Washland (4) now stands. In the intervening years, it was remodeled and used as a beauty salon, TV repair shop, and a lawyer's office. The town built a major addition and has made other changes, but with the growth in the town and need for additional services, more room was desperately needed.

Our new complex is taking shape which will house a town hall meeting room, town offices, a larger library, separate justice court and state police facilities. Completion is anticipated this fall.



**The Walworth Town Hall as it appears now.**

### **2009 Update:**

- (1) *American Pool Supply moved from this location last year.*
- (2) *The site referred to is 2248 Walworth-Marion Road, across from the U.S. Post Office. The building now houses Wee People Nursery School.*
- (3) *The garage was located on property owned by Ray Pembroke, who lived in the house where the Walworth Gun Shop is located. A parking lot on Walworth-Marion Road was created between the town hall and the adjacent Walworth-Seely Public Library.*
- (4) *The Walworth Washland site is now occupied by Cleary Insurance Agency at the four corners. It previously was Ray Pembroke's Red and White Store.*

We recently applied for an Antique Dealers' Association grant, which we did NOT receive.

We want to restore several composite pictures of Walworth High School graduation classes. These pictures are approximately 20" by 26" and have individual pictures of the graduating class. The condition of the pictures varies but most of them need to have work done to them to preserve them for future generations. They need to be cleaned, have various preservation techniques applied and then reframed using anti-reflective, acid-free glass.

We need your help to accomplish this goal. Would you please send a donation to help us preserve these unique pictures from the classes of 1941, 1942, 1945, 1947, 1948 and 1949? Our collection lacks class photos from 1943, 1944, and 1946. We are wondering if any pre 1941 class photos exist. Donations may be sent to the address on the front of this newsletter.

Walworth Historical Society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, therefore, all dues and donations are tax deductible.



**Above: Walworth High School photos in museum hall.**

**Right: Close-up of above photos showing water damage and other stains.**



**Where the Heck is Walworth?** By Jessie Keymel

Do you remember when that phrase made the newspaper and even showed up on T-shirts? Now we can say: "Walworth is on the web". The Town of Walworth's web site is [www.townofwalworthny.gov](http://www.townofwalworthny.gov) and there is a link to the Walworth Historical Society web site [www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org).

Check it out - other people have. We know this for a fact as we have been contacted by people from across the country searching for their family roots. Information from our files on Anna Yeomans Reed, the daughter of Susan and Lucien Yeomans, has been sent to someone doing research in Seattle. Anna lived in Seattle from 1902-1918 and, like her mother, was in education.

Just last week a former Walworth resident in the state of Washington emailed us inquiring about the membership fee. The membership of Walworth Historical Society is spread over ten states and even the UK. The last life-time member who joined WHS lives in Tennessee.

Thanks to the power of information technology, anyone can now locate Walworth.

## **November 17: What a Sweet Meeting** by Bob Mogray

On November 17, 2008, Anita Amsler was the guest speaker at the WHS meeting. Her topic of discussion was really sweet. It was all about maple syrup. She and her family have been involved with making maple syrup for many years. Anita told members that she grew up here in this area and remembers the Pancake House at the foot of the hill on Walworth-Penfield Road near the corner of Orchard Street. She also remembers the many maple trees on Penfield Road and Main Street. The Amslers use buckets to collect the maple syrup from the trees and not pipelines that are sometimes used today for very large-scale operations. She says that to her, there is nothing prettier than a bucket hanging on a tree.

In 2008 Anita tapped 311 trees. Usually sugar maples or black maples are used and it takes as many as 25 to 30 gallons of maple tree sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup. This is clearly a lot of work to get a small amount of the final maple syrup product. In 2008, she ended up with 48 gallons of maple syrup. She said that 1997 was her best year when 56 gallons of syrup were produced.

At the November meeting, she brought samples of her maple syrup for all to taste. Early season syrup was clear in color and the sap has a higher sugar content, mid-season syrup was a little darker, and late season syrup was darker still. I can speak from experience when I say that they all tasted very good. Anita presented a slide show of the entire process that was very interesting. She said that early spring with cold nights and warm days signals the start of the process.

Pressure inside the maple trees causes the sap to flow up the trunk and to the branches. Trees are tapped with multiple collection buckets and the sap is transported in a timely manner for the boiling down or concentration process. Maple tree sap is like milk: it will sour if left in the sun too long. Much skill, technique, and experience are needed to produce a batch of maple syrup which could be ruined if the boiling temperature is off just a couple of degrees. The final maple syrup has a sugar content of about 66 to 67 percent.

The trees have gone to sleep now but soon they will be ready for tapping and the entire process starts again in the early spring. As the weather turns warmer and spring arrives, the collection process stops for another year. There is a very small window of opportunity, just a few weeks, for collection of the maple tree sap that will produce a whole year's worth of maple syrup. The Walworth Historical Society wishes to thank Anita for a very informative, interesting, and tasty presentation.



**Above: Anita Amsler at the Nov. 2008 WHS meeting.**



**Left: Anita harvests the maple tree sap to make maple syrup.**

## Tidbits from the Past By Joyce Finney

*These tidbits are from a scrapbook of information compiled by Dorothy Petty and donated to WHS by her family following her death. We are grateful for Dorothy's foresight to preserve this information.*

**September 28, 1946:** Death claims Dr. E. E. Esley of Walworth. Dr. Esley, 76, was the practicing physician here in Walworth since 1902. A Walworth native, Dr. Esley graduated from Cleveland, Ohio Homeopathic College in 1901 and came to Walworth to practice medicine. He took his internship in Highland Hospital in Rochester. He was a member of the Walworth Methodist Church.

**June 1949:** Commencement of the Class of 1949 of Walworth High School

Robert Bassage	Kathryn Luke	Homer Sass
Joyce Goebert	Marilyn Lynn	Joan Sellers
Barbara Hennessey	Ethel Provost	Beryl Whitmire
Larry Kier	Phyllis Rowell	Norma Willis
Willard Koester	Richard Ryan	

**January 25, 1950:** Walworth Grange celebrates 75th anniversary. Ladies of the Baptist Aid Society will serve a banquet at the fire hall. Harry L. Graham, Director of New York State Grange, will be the guest speaker. The officers are Charles Hack, Master; George Hyman, Overseer; Mrs. Carl Dayton, Secretary; and Floyd Greene, Treasurer.

**June 1952:** Just 100 years ago this week, the Walworth Masonic Lodge received its charter. Officials in 1952 were Charles Pembroke, Master of the Lodge; Harold Reynolds, Secretary; and Clifford Huntley, Chaplain. The anniversary dinner was held at the Walworth School. An old set of by-laws printed in 1860 states that the meetings shall be held on Saturday "preceding the full moon in each and every month." The hour was designated as "six hours after meridian."

**November 1953:** "Walworth to Fete New Physician". Walworth township residents will stage a community reception for Dr. W. H. F. Newman at the Walworth School. Co-chairmen of the affair are Mrs. Clifford Huntley and Mrs. Joseph Finley. The new doctor, who will be the first doctor the town has had since the death of Dr. Ernest Esley, is a graduate of Queens University in Ontario, Canada.

**January 1, 1957:** Joseph Finley of Walworth assumes duties of Wayne County Clerk. He was elected in November, replacing Clarence Huckle of Clyde.

## Genealogy Lines: Recapping the Year By Joyce Smith

In 2008, 14 people contacted our genealogy person - ten by e-mail, one by phone, two by mail and one in person. Some of these people are from Kansas, Michigan, Illinois and New York. What questions are they asking? They are looking for information about early settlers living in the area, and records of births, marriages, and cemetery burials. One person wanted information about circuit rider records; I am still working on that answer.

I am looking forward to this year to see what information I need to look-up to help these people. If you have any information you can share about your family, we would like to receive the family history for our records

## Hoffman Foundation Grant Received By Mary Jane Devlin

The Walworth Historical Society recently applied for and subsequently received a Hoffman Foundation Grant of \$900. The grant is for a laptop computer, which will be used with our recently acquired DLP projector and for our Walworth Memories meetings, as well as for other projects at the Museum.

Augustus and Jennie Hoffman were prominent Wayne County residents, who left some of their estate to be used for the preservation of history in Wayne County. Scholarships have been presented in their names to high school students who have written about some historical event or building in Wayne County. There is a Hoffman Clock Museum in Newark. We look forward to using the new laptop computer.

## Looking Back on Winter Memories By Dorothy French

There is something magical about a new snowfall. Children see it as a possible day off from school so they can build snow forts or go sledding. The highway department workers know they will be on call to keep our roads open. And the older residents reminisce about the Linn snowplow and its distinctive noise as it struggled to work its way through what seemed like a mountain of snow.

There is no doubt our winters are milder than they used to be. This was evident by the snow storm stories told at our September 28, 2008, Walworth Memories program.

**December/January 1946-47:** School was closed for a week. The area on Ontario-Walworth/Finley Roads was plugged; dynamite was used to clear the road.

**February 1958:** Lloyd and Mildred VanHoover were visiting Jay and Arline Taber and found the door blocked by snow when they were leaving, requiring them to stay with the Tabers for several days until the roads were passable.

**January 1966:** “The storm of all storms” is how Dan Keyes, former Walworth Highway Superintendent, described the blizzard which dumped 31.5 inches of snow in three days. Schools were closed for more than a week. Some snow drifts were higher than second story windows. The conventional snow plows weren’t able to open some of the roads and bulldozers and finally the Linn was called into service. The Linn was a large Town of Walworth 1937 truck with tracks on the back and a box for the workers. It took four men to run it: the driver, one man on the front plow, and a wingman on each side of the back. It is now on display in the Tired Iron Museum in Cuylerville, NY.

The snow blanketed and paralyzed the area. Mary Jane Devlin’s parents, Pete and Esther Cauwels, lived on Route 21 in Marion. They offered housing to two Brinks’ employees whose armored car was stuck in the snow. The employees abandoned the vehicle, but brought the bags of money with them to the Cauwels’.

**December 1977:** Isabel and Sam Kaplan said they had just closed on their new home on Finley Road when the storm began. They and their two-year-old toddler were stranded in the house and the moving van couldn’t get their furniture to them because the long driveway was packed with snow. A smaller truck drove back and forth, delivering a few of pieces of furniture at a time.

**Other Stories:** Dan Keyes recalled that in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s people would stop the plow the next morning and serve breakfast to the grateful workers – in the middle of the road.

Gordon Youngman remembered driving the Walworth ambulance on several tough runs during snow storms. He had to drive with his head out the window to see the road - then would have to thaw out his ears.

Helen Schultz Triou said her father, Leigh Darron, would take them to school on the bobsled drawn by two horses. He would sometimes have to lead the horses through the fields because the snow was so deep the horses had a hard time walking on it. Helen and her brother, Carlyle, were covered with a bearskin blanket and had a soapstone at their feet to keep warm.



Gordon Youngman said his father, Ezra Youngman, and other workers would get credit on their town taxes if they had to dig out the hills when the Linn couldn’t get through.

*Editor’s Note: Walworth Memories is a program co-sponsored by the Walworth Historical Society and the Walworth-Seely Public Library. The next get together will be Sunday, April 19, 2 – 3:30 PM, at the town hall meeting room. The theme centers around the Street Dances held at the four corners area and also dances held at the building formerly owned by the Walworth Fire Department across from Orchard Street. Look for more information in a future newsletter.*

## A Story About the Seely Family By Lois B. Ouzts

*Editor's Note: The November 2008 newsletter contained excerpts from a letter we received from former resident Lois Wing Bulterman Ouzts of South Carolina. This second installment of memories is about the Jay Seely Family. Thank you, Lois, for sharing these.*

I remember Jay Seely moving out of that beautiful little white house on Church Street and into his workshop on Walworth-Marion Road which provided room for all sorts of jobs that farmers couldn't do themselves. My father took advantage at least once of Jay's superior knowledge, equipment, and supplies.

After Jay's wife died, he moved equipment over to make room in the rear of the building for his cooking and sleeping arrangements. I can't remember when Miss Bessie Seely arrived, but she made use of those arrangements so it must have been after her father died. I remember her helping out in the variety store operated by either Joe Finley or Gordon Youngman.

I had a son, David, age 3 or 4, with me one day in either 1943 or 1944 and he helped himself to some marbles while I was engrossed in shopping at the store. I heard the clink of the marbles as we went out the door. David showed me what he had and we went back in to see Miss Seely and tell her we were sorry we helped ourselves to something that didn't belong to us. Dear Miss Seely was so consoling and said "Oh, that's all right." I had to assure David when we got home that it wasn't all right; it was wrong.

*P.S. Additional information about the Seely family can be found in the book, Walworth, As I Remember It by Charles H. Pembroke. The story appears on pages 44 – 47 and is one of many that Charlie wrote about local residents and interesting events. The book is available at the Walworth Historical Society's museum for \$5.50, including tax, or by contacting one of the members listed on the front page of this newsletter.*

### Walworth Historical Society 2009 Events Calendar

Save this schedule and mark your calendar for meetings and activities planned during 2009. All events will be held at the museum, 2257 Academy Street, unless otherwise specified. All programs are free, although donations are gratefully accepted.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Mon. Mar. 16	7:30 PM	General Meeting
Sun., Apr. 19	2 – 3:30	Walworth Memories, co-sponsor with library. Location: town hall meeting room. Theme: Street Dances
Sat., May 2	9 - noon	Spring Clean-Up (volunteers needed for inside and outside work)
Mon., May 18	6:15 PM	Pot luck supper, annual meeting, election of officers, Community Service Award.
Dates to be announced		Festival in the Park activities
Mon., Sept. 21	7:30 PM	General Meeting "Rosie the Riveter"
Sun., Oct. 4	2-5 PM	Open House
Sun., Oct. 18	2-3:30	Walworth Memories, co-sponsor with library. Location: museum. Theme: Weddings and Funerals
Mon., Nov. 16	7:30 PM	General Meeting

The Board of Trustees will meet on Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Apr. 20, June 15, Aug. 17, and Oct. 19. These meetings are held on a Monday and begin at 7 PM at the museum.

The museum is open during 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 2009 WHS Newsletter Bonus e-mail Photos

More photos from Anita Amsler's Maple Syrup presentation (November 14, 2008)



**Left: Becky Appleman (right) introduces Anita Amsler (left) at the November 2008 WHS meeting.**

**Right: Anita Amsler distributes samples of her maple syrup to the guests of the WHS at last November's meeting.**



**Right: Members and guests enjoy a slide show presentation by Anita Amsler showing the steps of maple syrup processing.**



**Other miscellaneous photos around and about Walworth .....**



**Walworth High School class of 1945 at the museum.**



**Walworth "Douglas Corners" marker in town.**



**Walworth Town Park building 2.**



**Mercy Flight Central helicopter lands at Walworth Fire Hall.**



**Greystone Golf Course on Atlantic Avenue**



**Howard Bassage (left) and Stuart Huntley (right) at Gordon Youngman's Hardware Store April 28, 1981.**