

WALWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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President's Message By Jessie Keymel

In the beginning of the Walworth Historical Society our big fear was we were losing important knowledge of our history. We did lose many of the details of early Walworth. Now we have thousands of photos in our computer files - thanks to Bob Mogray. Sadly, many photos need to be identified. Thanks to many of our former residents, our collection of scrapbooks and diaries gives us a wide view of life in Walworth for the last 70 years or so.

Our collection of family genealogies is growing, as are the inquiries from people all over the country looking for their roots. Thanks to Joyce H. Smith and Doug Churchill for all they have done to make searching easier. Upstairs at our museum is a special closet that holds the quilts not currently on display and clothing items that require special storage. Kay Scott is our expert on how material should be taken care of and stored.

We have been fortunate in receiving funds from grants for special items and projects. Thanks goes to Mary Jane Devlin, Dorothy French and Judy McMillan, and Gene Bavis for their attention to details and many hours spent gathering required information that has made it possible to apply for each grant.

Our newsletter has grown with us. Bob Mogray's photography and computer skills make the newsletter exceptional. Thanks also to the members who contribute articles. If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, please do.

We are chartered by the New York State Education Department. To maintain our standing we are required to have our collections available to the public and to offer opportunities for education. There is an annual report that has to be filled out and recorded with the State.

There are also the everyday chores that must be done to maintain our building and grounds so we can be open to the public.

This is just a peek at how complicated our job has become of preserving the history of our corner of Wayne County. If there is a particular area of interest to you, the Walworth Historical Society could certainly use your help. Contact any of the officers listed on the front page of this newsletter.

Shop for a Cause By Becky Appleman

If you have not sent us your donation for our recent Shop for a Cause fundraiser, please send it as soon as possible. We asked each member or family unit to donate \$5.00. We would like to get this fundraiser finished very soon. Please take the time to do this now and send your donation to: Walworth Historical Society, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568. All donations support your museum and are tax deductible.

Letter to the Editor By Janice Wignall Mitchell

I love getting the Historical Society's newsletter. It's attractive and interesting. I'm sending you a Walworth memory: Does anyone remember the beacon (search light) that was on a tower by Evans' house – across from Covenys – on the Walworth-Palmyra Road? I believe they were positioned across the state (maybe country) to guide planes to airports. We could see it flashing at night from our house on Penfield-Walworth Road in the village.

Editor's Note: The beacon Janice refers to was part of a system created by the U.S. Post Office in 1921, according to the Reader's Digest of July 2008. The beacons or transmitters, rotated on towers.

Open House at the WHS Museum

On Sunday, October 5, we held our annual Open House at the Museum. The weather cooperated very well and the turn-out for this event was great. Juanita Matteson, wife of local author Ron Matteson, demonstrated spinning techniques and was interviewed by two local young ladies. It was interesting that she spun dog's hair from an Alaskan husky. To spin the yarn for a sweater it takes over 50 hours of work.

There was a slide show of a combination of old and new photos that was projected onto a screen with the museum's new digital video projector. Many of the slides were of local people, homes, businesses, and general scenes. Jessie and Roger Keymel brought a 1920's vintage automatic sock knitter that they purchased from E-Bay and assembled. Nancy Bel organized the ever popular refreshments.

Leighton Bel led a group of attendees on a walking tour of the village. Roger Keymel brought two of his alpacas and penned them in front of the museum for all to see up close and personal. The black 1957 Chevy convertible displayed on the side lawn belonged to Sonny French.

As most of you know, it is the purpose of the WHS to try our best to preserve local history. The Open House is a yearly event that is held usually in early October and is open to all members and the public so that we can show the museum and how we are attempting to preserve history before many of the sources are gone forever. If anyone has any suggestions or comments on better or different ways to accomplish this, please contact an officer or board member. If you attended this open house we would like to thank you and hope you enjoyed yourselves.



Caitlin Goodemote (left) and Dacey Philbrick (center) interview Juanita Matteson (right) about the art of spinning.



Leighton Bel gives a walking tour of the town to visitors at the open house.



Roger Keymel & his alpacas.



The Keymels' automatic sock knitter.

In the last newsletter I introduced the farmer, Dr. Robert Morris. This newsletter we will meet the physician, Dr. Robert Morris. Dr. Morris wedded Frances Peacock of West Walworth in 1880. In the beginning of his practice he had two offices, one in Lincoln and one in West Walworth. After the death of Frances' parents, she inherited the farm and they moved his office to the farm at 4893 Lincoln Road.

At the museum we have "The Physician's Visiting List" books for his medical services from 1877-1922. In addition, we also have his 1877 medical school book (with pages of notes), and New York State Department of Health death certificates. We also have approval forms from the Treasury Department of the United States so he could purchase opium, cocoa leaves, compounds, manufactures, salts, derivatives or preparations thereof under Section 2 of the Act of Congress, approved December 17, 1914.

The Physician's Visiting List book has the following sections: doses of eclectic remedies, prediction of the day of confinements, artificial respiration, care of galvanic batteries, disinfectants, poisons and antidotes, and table of doses. Another section of the book has weekly call list, memoranda for each month, clinical record, birth record, death record and bills rendered. I am making a list of birth and death records for each year. You will find this notebook in our museum.

In 1877 Dr. Morris kept a record of his horse's yearly expenses: a load of straw \$2.00, oats \$52.00, barley \$3.00 and corn \$14.30. Plus you will find other notes in these books that will keep your interest and you will want to keep reading.

Dr. Morris' son, Don, bought a new Ford coupe when Dr. Morris was about 72 years old. Don would drive his dad to visit his patients at night and when the weather was bad. The doctor died in 1934.

To learn more about Dr. Morris and his family we have the books "History of Burroughs (Burrow), Parmenter, Peacock, Esley (Isely), Furber, Morris, Graf and Held Families" by Virginia Burrow Morris and "Historical Sketch of West Walworth" by Mrs. Charles Peters.

Still Stills in '61 By Mary Jane Devlin

According to an article published in the Democrat and Chronicle in 1961, a Walworth man was charged with having a still on Walworth-Ontario Road. State police and federal agents found a 275-gallon capacity still and whiskey mash as well as non-tax-paid whiskey after they swept down on the property.

The man had been under surveillance for about a month on suspicion of illegal possession of alcohol. State Police found a gallon of moonshine after they stopped the man while he driving his truck. A search warrant for the farm was obtained from Peace Justice Harold Reynolds and the search ensued. The man had built the still in a storage room under a cement ramp that led to his cow barn.

Police also found ten 55-gallon barrels full of mash in various stages of fermentation. Several gallon jugs of clear alcohol were on the floor next to the still. It was reported that he had been selling most of the moonshine to migrant workers.

Pictures and more information from the Democrat and Chronicle are available at the Walworth Historical Society museum.

Maple Syrup in November? Yum, Yum! By Becky Appleman

If you want to learn more about maple syrup in our area, join us on Monday, November 17, at 7:30 PM for interesting information from a local expert - Anita Amsler of Lincoln. Anita will be the guest speaker at our last general meeting of 2008, and she will have maple syrup samples to taste and containers to purchase.

How did Anita become involved with the maple syrup process? Here's the answer, in her own words:

My husband, Richard, and I had talked for years about tapping the trees in our woods. A teacher and friend from Wayne Central School gave us books, a pan to boil the sap, and the much-needed push. So, in 1996 Richard made a cooker from a 55 gallon barrel. We put the pan on top and we were in business.

The next year we purchased a "real evaporator". Our decision was that we would fire with wood and use pails. This method is being replaced by more sophisticated equipment. We were in love with the look and sound of the pails in the woods. When the sap is dripping in the buckets, to us it sounds like music – bink, bink, bink-bink-bink.

My husband died in 2006 but I decided to continue with the help of my family and a friend, Louie Bell. Maybe one of the grandchildren will want to take over some day; I can only hope so. So each year we watch for the temperatures to moderate and we head for the woods, for once again Spring is here.



Trees tapped for maple syrup

As always, our programs are open to the public. There is no admission charge, although donations are appreciated. Attendees are welcome to bring photos or information relating to other maple syrup operations in our area. The museum is located at 2257 Academy Street. For additional information, contact Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 or Becky Appleman at 315-524-3289.

Editor's Note: The Amsler family business is located at 4893 Lincoln Road. This is the same home owned many years ago by the Peacock family and then by Dr. and Mrs. Robert Morris. A story about Dr. Morris, "Genealogy Lines: Dr. Robert Morris – The Country Doctor" appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our Next Project By Jessie Keymel

The senior class photos of Walworth High School are an important part of the history of the school. There is some definite damage to two or more photos that needs to be corrected by a professional restorer. Two photos need to be framed, and one of our framed photos needs to be re-matted and framed, as it is already beginning to deteriorate. We are in the process of getting estimates and information on what is required to preserve this important part of Walworth High School history. If you would like to donate to this project, please send a check to WHS treasurer Mary Jane Devlin.

Weather Memories By Mary Jane Devlin

On a cool and rainy Sunday afternoon on September 28, 20 people gathered at the Walworth Museum to share memories of weather events in Walworth history. We shared stories of blizzards, ice storms, micro bursts, hurricanes, local floods and warm summer days. We talked about the efforts of the Walworth Highway Department to keep the roads open during blizzards, ice storms, hurricanes, and electric outages. Tobogganing and sledding, as well as being snowed in for days at a time were also discussed.

Gene Bavis was moderator; Dorothy French took notes on a laptop computer; refreshments were provided by members of the Walworth Historical Society. These meetings are a joint venture of the Walworth-Seely Public Library and the Walworth Historical Society. The next Walworth Memories will be at the town hall complex on Sunday, April 19, 2009. We hope to see you there.

Remembrance of Maple Sugar Time in Walworth By Christopher J. Pease

I read with interest the article on the old maple sugar factory in a past newsletter and thought I'd pass along the story of when I got to visit it as a kid. (At least as much as I can remember!).

Around 1963, when I was about seven or eight, a group consisting of my classmates and possibly other grades from the Walworth Elementary School on Academy Street were taken on a field trip by our teachers to the local maple sugar factory on Penfield Road to learn how maple products are made.

From what I can remember, the family who ran the business lived in the last house on the right (headed west) before Orchard Street. (This was a few years before the Schultz brothers put in the street and built the development). Behind and to the right of the house was the "sugar shack", the barn-like building that housed the cooking vats and finishing rooms. Behind the house and shack was the maple grove.

The gentleman* who owned the operation was our guide and very friendly. He took us first to the grove, and demonstrated how to tap and collect the sap into galvanized buckets. The next stop was the vat room, where the syrup was cooked down with a semi-automated system. (I believe some of the process was still hand done, but am not sure). He also showed us a few of the antique pieces of equipment the family had, the large oak paddles and one of the huge iron pots that had been fired with wood or coal. He explained what hard work it used to be to maintain the proper temperature and stir the heavy syrup. My most vivid memory of the day is the intense heat and almost overpowering sweet scent.

Then we went into the cooling room where the syrup was piped and allowed to settle. The grading was also done here - everything from the finished maple syrup to the "sludge" for candy making and the crystallized sugar.

Finally we were in the shipping room and saw the finished product being readied for the market. I don't know if any candy or sugar was made there or if the by-products were sold and made elsewhere. I also don't recall if we were given any tastes or samples!

That one visit has stayed with me all my life, but the details (except for the vat room) are pretty hazy after 45-odd years. Is there anyone else who has memories of the sugar shack, or possibly of that particular field trip? It would make interesting reading for future articles.

* Editor's Note: The owner's name was Ray Cring.

Meet the Newlyweds



Congratulations are extended to Gordon Youngman and Betty Brown on their August 2 marriage. The newlyweds, both widowed, now reside in Greece, but were long-time Walworth residents. They are members of the Walworth Historical Society and are regular attendees at our programs throughout the year.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Youngman

Local author Ron Matteson of Lewis Road has an in-depth knowledge of the Civil War – thanks to research he has done of the 10th New York Cavalry and Matteson family correspondence. This information was shared with WHS members and Civil War buffs at our September 15 meeting during a slide show about the cavalry's campaigns during the War Between the States.

Ron's great-grandfather, Justus Matteson, lived near Cortland, NY. He was mustered in at Elmira, NY, as a member of Company L and received his basic training in Gettysburg, PA. The 10th Regiment, organized in 1861, recruited in upstate western New York; many recruits were young farmers from Wayne County. Justus served in the cavalry for three years and two months.



Ron talked about the regiment's participation at Gettysburg and the pursuit of General Lee's army after its defeat. The 10th was also involved in battles at Richmond and Appomattox. All of this information is documented in a book Ron has written, "Civil War Campaigns of the 10th New York Cavalry". He presented a signed copy of the book to the museum to add to our collection of local authors.

He referred to another book he has authored, "Why Write Another Civil War Book?" It includes details of finding letters written between Justus and his future wife, Mary Hatch. After their marriage, Justus and Mary moved to Syracuse, where he worked as a carpenter.

President Jessie Keymel and author Ron Matteson

A Trip Down Memory Lane By Lois B. Ouzts

Editor's Note: Excerpts from a letter we received last year from former resident Lois Ouzts are printed below. Look for additional memories from her in a future issue.

Dear WHS Personnel and Contributors:

Your interesting newsletter arrived today (February 2007). I'm Lois Ouzts, formerly Lois Marjorie Wing, then Lois M. Bulterman after I married George in August 1932. He died in May 1982. I moved to South Carolina when grandson Allen Beale called for a grannynanny for an expected daughter. That great-granddaughter is now 12 and I've been married almost 6 years to Stacy Ouzts. Did I mention I'm 93?

Our folks moved to town in April of 1922 and in September my brother Ralph and I matriculated at Walworth Grade School downstairs in the Academy building. The 7th and 8th grades were upstairs in the first room on the right, the high school was in the second room. A long flight of stairs on the left led to the auditorium and stage used for basketball games; the attendees were seated on the stage. The laboratory was over part of the flight of stairs. After school was over, boys could stay and play basketball if they were old enough.

As a school girl I sold Liberty Magazine, a weekly. I think it sold for 15 cents in the middle 1920s. When I was old enough I could tour the hamlet and sell my supply of magazines for spending money. I got acquainted with very nice people, among them Jay Seely and his dear little wife. Jay always bought a magazine, then played his violin for me. When I was in high school we had a teacher by the day from the Eastman School of Music. Because of Jay, I took violin lessons on a violin we inherited from my grandfather.

I came back to Walworth when my father was ill in 1939 and eventually we moved to the farm and sold our property in Rochester. We should all keep journals or scrap books as Dorothy Petty did.

I've enjoyed a wonderful ramble down Memory Lane.

Special Thanks to the Newsletter Committee By Bob Mogray

This is the last newsletter for the year 2008. I would like at this time to thank the rest of the WHS newsletter committee: Dorothy French, Mary Jane Devlin, Jessie Keymel, and Gene Bavis. Every two months they write almost all of the articles that appear in the newsletter. A lot of time and very hard work is spent by these members in order to produce interesting and factual stories. For each of the newsletters there are at least two meetings and a lot of emails, phone calls, and hours of work needed to make them happen. Special thanks also to Judy McMillan who actually does the color printing of the WHS newsletter covers for those members who get their newsletter in the mail. Without these gifted individuals, I would never be able to put forth a single newsletter. What a great job they do!

2008 WHS Events Calendar

Save these schedules and mark your calendar for this year's last general meeting at the museum, 2257 Academy Street. All programs are free, although donations are gratefully accepted.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Mon., Nov. 17	7:30 PM	General Meeting; Anita Amsler of Lincoln will discuss the maple syrup process.

2009 WHS Events Calendar

<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.
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
Sun., Oct. 4	2-5 PM	Open House
Sun., Oct. 18	2-3:30	Walworth Memories, co-sponsor with library. Location: museum
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.

November 2008 WHS Newsletter Bonus e-mail Photos



All photos on this page are from the WHS Open House on October 5, 2008.



Walworth Memories meeting in October of 2008 at the museum.

Walworth veterans assemble at the cemetery on Sherburne Road a few years ago.



The second Walworth Fire Department building.