



Walworth Historical Society Newsletter

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

Color front cover courtesy of Reliant Community Federal Credit Union.

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down..... **Walworth High School: From Construction to Destruction** By Dorothy French

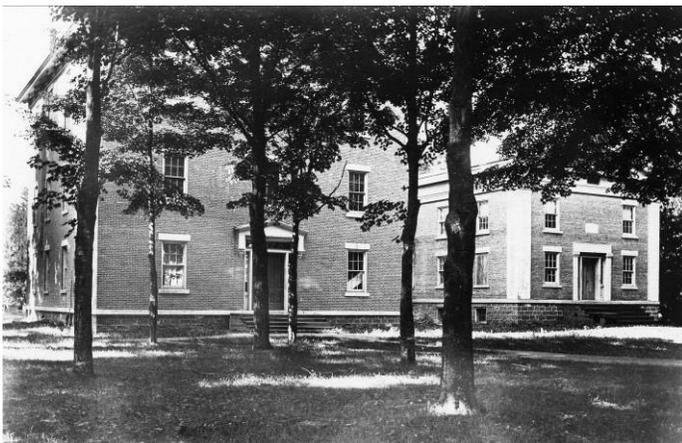
The September 8, 1930, opening of the newly-completed Walworth High School on Academy Street was a reason to celebrate. Students in the Walworth area could eventually be housed under one roof in a new facility designed to last for many years. Sadly, this 84-year-old building met its demise during the April 11-14, 2014, weekend when a wrecking crew and equipment began demolishing the once-proud structure. The final years had not been kind to this edifice.



Above photos: April 11, 2014 Demolition

A Glimpse Into History

The building's history is scattered with milestones. In 1804 residents saw the need for a school, and a log schoolhouse was built on the north side of Center Street where a tennis court is now. Several other replacement schools were built at other locations, but it soon became apparent that a larger building was required.



The Two Academies: prior to 1930



Historic Marker on Academy Street

In 1842 the first Academy was built of cobblestone at a cost of \$4,000 near the southeast corner of Academy and High Streets. A historic marker on the property notes the Academy was incorporated in 1842; however, this date may be incorrect based on museum records noting an 1841 date. The building was divided into two departments with a qualified teacher in each area, accommodating a total of 100 students. Professor E. B. Wadsworth was in charge.

A second Academy – a brick building three stories high - was erected east of the first Academy in 1857 at a cost of \$8,000. The original building was then used as a boarding hall, church, residence for the principal, and the Grange Hall for Patrons of Husbandry. The majority of the students lived nearby or were “basket boarders” who brought food and resided with a family in town during the school week. Children who lived in the outlying areas attended the many district school houses that dotted the countryside.

Additional information about the two Academies and the school bell will be published in a future newsletter.

Construction of Walworth High School: 1930

When the area’s population continued to grow during the 1920’s, the need for a school to house grades kindergarten through 12th became evident. On March 18, 1929, the voters of District No. 1 approved a bond issue of \$80,000 for the purpose of erecting a new school building. On February 19, 1930, the District bonds were sold to F. H. and A. D. Tuttle of Walworth for \$80,056.63. On March 1 the two Academies were torn down to make way for the 2½ story Walworth High School. During construction classes were held at the Grange Hall on Main Street (originally the Pacific Hotel and recently American Pool Supply).

The new school opened on September 8, 1930. The program for the October 3 Dedication Exercises stated the building was planned so that additions could easily be made. There were four grade rooms, two high school rooms, laboratory, shop, recitation room, office, teachers’ room, music room, and library. A spacious auditorium/gymnasium would seat 240 pupils. The kitchen was located in the basement with a dining hall accommodating 100.

Enrollment during the 1930-1931 school year totaled 182 students. The first students to graduate from WHS were 11 seniors of the Class of 1931.



***Aerial view of Walworth High School
and south addition: Post 1956***



Photo: Walworth High School: 1985

Through the years teachers shared their love of education with their students. The school day could also include visits by a medical doctor for physicals, dance lessons, sports (especially basketball and softball), school band, chorus, talent shows, and class photos (some taken on the front lawn by the flag pole).

A wall of photos of the high school graduates always is a focal point for visitors at our museum, where we also have an extensive collection of school yearbooks. We recently converted a 16 mm video into a DVD; it shows the children studying in their classrooms and participating in other indoor and outdoor activities. We hope to show the DVD at a future program at the museum.

Centralization: 1949 and Its Effects

In 1949, a vote was taken to centralize the schools in Walworth and Ontario and merge to become the Wayne Central School District. The last graduating class from WHS consisted of only 13 students in 1949. According to the 1977-1979 Principal, Vincent Dellarocco, the Walworth grade students would remain in their building. All students in grades 7-12 would be housed in the Ontario High School on Ridge Road, Ontario.

To alleviate the overcrowding that resulted from this merger, in 1953 a new junior/senior high school for grades 7 – 12 was built on Route 350 in Ontario Center. In 1967 the Thomas C. Armstrong Middle School was built. The school district was reorganized in 1975-76 with levels 10-12 in the James A. Beneway Senior High School and levels 7-9 in Thomas C. Armstrong Middle School; both schools are located on Route 350/Ontario Center Road. Levels K-6 were housed in one of four elementary schools. Freewill Elementary School opened in 1969 on a 47-acre site on Canandaigua Road, Walworth. Gananda Central School District was formed in 1972 and serves the southern part of Walworth township.



South Wing: 1956



South Wing: 2010 – Weeds and neglect

Walworth Elementary School: 1930 – 1980

In 1956 Principal Roger Pembroke declared there were 300 students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Due to a lack of space the kindergarten was housed in the Christian Education Building of the Second Baptist Church on Main Street. Enrollment continued to increase in the elementary school, and a 7,540 square foot south wing was added facing High Street in 1956. The 60's and 70's were periods of population growth in the Walworth area, but it soon was apparent that registration numbers were dwindling.

In January 1980 Wayne Central School District officials proposed closing the Walworth Elementary School at the end of the current school year.

50 Year Celebration: June 8, 1980

A "Farewell to Walworth High School, 1930 to 1980," Open House was held on June 8, 1980, at the elementary school. More than 150 persons attended the ceremonies in recognition of the years of service by the structure. Rogert Wignall, senior Walworth citizen and sole surviving member of the 1930 Board of Education, noted that a total of 315 persons had graduated from Walworth High School in the years of 1912 (when it was a union free school district) to 1949. Roger Pembroke, principal from 1950-1977, as well as former student and trustee of Walworth Elementary School, spoke of the history of education and the school buildings in the Walworth area. Dr. Gerald Greenstein, Superintendent of Schools for Wayne Central School District, stated the district would work to find uses for the building which would be "fitting to its heritage."

Mrs. Becky Appleman and Mrs. Marcia Standera, co-chairpersons of the Walworth Elementary Parents Guild, presented a plaque with names of each of the children and employees in the building during this final year. The building's 1930 dedication plaque and portrait of Principal Roger Pembroke were presented to Walworth Town Supervisor Frank Guelli, who noted the items will be preserved for the history of the Town of Walworth. Larry Ruth, president of the local teachers' association, presented a single stem rose to each of the teachers at the school. A cake, made by Mrs. Bea Holcomb of Walworth and designed in the model of the school building, was a highlight of the refreshment table.

No Longer Used as a School: 1980 and Beyond

After the Town of Walworth declined the offer to take over the building, it sat empty for five years until it was taken over by C.A.S.H. (Community Action in Self Help, Inc.) in 1985 and rehabilitated into 26 low-income apartments. The project eventually failed and the building was again abandoned, beginning a slow deterioration. It was again offered to the Town of Walworth and the suggestion was made in 2005 to turn it into a community center. Voters defeated the referendum and the building continued its downward spiral. The property then went to Wayne County for back taxes.

Through the succeeding years the structure was neglected; vandalism was frequent and extensive, and the building was condemned. Several businessmen individually purchased the building, hoping to resurrect it into something usable. Bruce Carey purchased the building (then known as the Academy Street Apartments) in the spring of 2006 at a county tax auction, but sold it several months later when it was bought at auction by Alex Tamoutselis. The neglect of past years became evident when the walls and part of the roof facing the west collapsed in March 2010. The windows and doors were boarded, the building was declared unsafe for occupancy, and the parking lot was chained off.



West Side: 1985



WHS Immortalized in Concrete

Destruction of Walworth High School: April 11-14 Weekend, 2014

According to the April 13, 2014, issue of The Times of Wayne County, Alex had hoped to raze a portion of the building and possibly construct an apartment building. However, his insurance company notified him in early April that the building was in such bad shape they would be pulling their coverage. The decision to raze the building was inevitable.



All that now remains is an empty lot at the corner of Academy and High Streets. Alex plans to give the museum the 1930 concrete cornerstone (left photo) to the Walworth Historical Society, along with concrete sections of the school's name that graced the front of the building. Thank you to Kathy Aeckerle, our genealogist, for rescuing some of the bricks as keepsakes for our museum, and to people who donated pictures of the demolition process.

The faculty and staff at Walworth Elementary authored a poem as a tribute to the Class of 1979, prefacing it with these words:

Long after the halls of Walworth are empty, they will echo with the delightful memories of students' past. It is memories, not mortar, that make a building what it is.

In time, memories fade but recorded thoughts remain for posterity. Let's not let this school fade from us.

Editor's Note: Information and photos for this story were obtained from our museum files. Additional information is reprinted with permission from The Times of Wayne County.

Memories of Walworth High School

By Dorothy French

During the April 11-14 demolition of the high school, many people stopped to watch as word spread throughout the area that the school would soon be history. Photos were taken and memories were shared. Alex Tamoutselis, the owner, said he didn't realize the sentimental value of the old school until people told him. He hopes to erect a memorial on the site, using the original flag pole.

Several former students recalled their days at WHS. Lyle Bassage pointed to where his sixth grade class room was now exposed to daylight, waiting for the shovel to crumble the walls. Molly Ebert Hill, Class of 1948, fondly remembered the years she spent there, after transferring from the two-room District School #10 on Lincoln Road.

The Walworth Historical Society would like to compile comments from you about memories of the school, whether as a student or someone who knew it as part of the community. There will be ample time at our Monday, May 19, annual meeting for you to write these memories (see May 19 meeting story below).

If you can't join us on May 19, write your recollections and:

- Send them to Walworth Historical Society, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568 or
- E-mail to Dorothy French at dfrench5@rochester.rr.com or Gene Bavis at gbavis@rochester.rr.com or
- Call Dorothy at 315-986-1098 or Gene at 315-573-2768

May 19 Annual Dinner Meeting, Community Service Award, and Program

By Gene Bavis

Please join us on Monday, May 19, at 6:15 PM at the Lodge in Ginegaw Park for our annual pot luck dinner followed by a brief annual meeting (including elections) and the presentation of the Community Service Award.

The evening will conclude with a short slide show called "Walworth, Then and Now" presented by Bob Mogray and Gene Bavis. The basis for this show is a series of professional photographs made around 1907 of homes, churches, businesses, agriculture and street scenes. The photos were commissioned by a company that was proposing a spur railroad for Walworth. Bob and Gene have attempted to "re-take" those photographs from the same spot the original photographer stood. Some of those sites will look much the same and others...well, not so much. Come see for yourself!

Those planning to attend should bring a dish to pass and their own table service. Ham, rolls, and beverages will be provided by the Historical Society. The meeting is open to members and friends of history, so invite your friends to join us. We plan to have you on your way home by 8:30 PM.

Honoring Debbie Germaine

By Jessie Keymel

This year's honoree for the Community Service Award is Debbie Germaine. Debbie was a native of Walworth and throughout her life she gave 1,000 fold to our community. We would like to take some time to reflect the joy of her many accomplishments during her short life. Please come and share your memories with her family and neighbors at our annual meeting on May 19.

Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal

By Gene Bavis

On Saturday, June 7, (9 AM to 4 PM), I will be leading a BUS TRIP departing from the Walworth Town Hall to visit several sites of historic interest along the Erie Canal between Lyons and Macedon. This event is being sponsored by the Walworth Recreation Department. Included in the \$25 per person fee is transportation, lunch at Historic Palmyra's Coverlet Museum, and guided tours of the Lyons Dry Dock, the Hotchkiss Museum and the Phelps General Store. We will stop at several other sites to view other aspects of Erie Canal history. Registration details will be in the Spring Town Topics or you may contact me at gbavis@rochester.rr.com or 315-573-2768.

National Register of Historic Places

By Gene Bavis

I've been working on an inventory of historic places in Wayne County and I made a startling discovery. Walworth has NO listings on the National Register of Historic Places! As a result, I began making inquiries, and learned that for whatever reason nobody has applied. We have many homes and other buildings that SHOULD be listed, so I have invited Cynthia Howk of the Landmark Society of Western New York to do a presentation at the Walworth United Methodist Church at 7:30 PM on Monday, October 20, 2014. The meeting is open to anyone, but we hope that those who own eligible properties will attend. Please put this on your calendar. I'm sure you will find it interesting.

Churches of Wayne County

By Gene Bavis and Jessie Keymel



On Monday, March 17, we had the opportunity to see photos of and hear the history of several of Wayne County's churches from former librarian and researcher, Loreen Jorgensen. She has been working on this project for around 4 years and eventually plans to write a book.

The WHS would like to thank the following churches for lending us items to fill our display case during Loreen Jorgensen's presentation. We displayed two original pen and ink drawings, one by Marge Esley of the Walworth Methodist Church and another by Rev. Tom Fleming of the Lincoln Baptist Church, with Freewill Church in the background. The Second Baptist Church gave us an 1861 Sunday School song book. A quilt came from the First Baptist Church of West Walworth; it has the names of many of the families who were important to its church's history.

Loreen Jorgensen

April 6 "Memories" Meeting

By Bob Mogray

On April 6 another meeting was held at the WHS museum on Academy Street. This was another in the very successful "Memories" series. If you are unfamiliar with these, all members and non-members are invited to attend these bi-yearly meetings and we discuss different topics that may be interesting to Walworth-area people. Everyone is encouraged to relate their experiences and opinions on this topic and we all learn a great deal. This information is recorded and filed for anyone to access. One of the main purposes of the Walworth Historical Society is to preserve the past and these meetings are one way in which that is accomplished. Previously many subjects have been addressed from farming, sports, and Walworth-area characters to births, deaths, and funerals. To date, 21 of these "Memories" get-togethers have been held.

The subject of this latest meeting topic was "Walworth Cemeteries, Funerals, and Burial Customs." There were a dozen people who participated in the discussion. Many of the personal experiences of the passing of relatives, childhood memories of funerals, and information about cemeteries were shared. Past memories of friends, grandparents, parents, and other family members were talked about and recorded. It is important that these memories are not lost forever. This information is available to everyone and please feel free to attend any of the "Memories" meetings at the museum. Your participation is vital to sharing and preserving this information for the future. Thank you for your support in not only this but all of our projects.

Mural Mania Update

By Gene Bavis

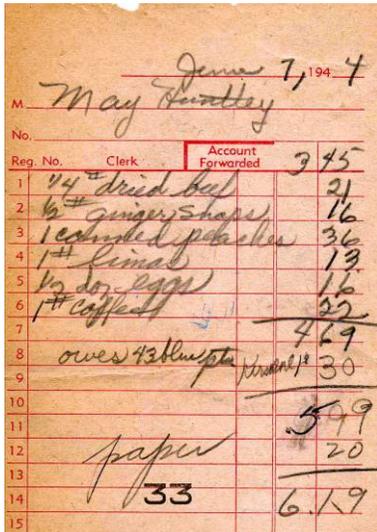
WOW! I have been involved with Mural Mania for just a little over a year. I can't believe how much interest has been generated. Liz and I took our annual vacation to the southern states in February. While we were there we visited two incredible towns with murals: Lakeland, GA and Lake Placid, FL. Both get many visitors each year just to see their murals, and both emphasize history with their mural art. I've been making mural presentations to various groups in our area, and hopefully we'll be seeing several more murals in the next few months. In addition to Walworth projects, I think we'll be seeing more murals in Sodus, Ontario and Marion this year.

There are three projects going in Walworth. The first is the one I announced at our dedication ceremony last fall. It will depict the wedding of Anna and Nellie Yeomans in 1891. Uncle Grover Cleveland was in attendance. The second project will be a full-color rendition of the Walworth Historical Society's coverlet for the north wall of the Walworth Town Hall. It will be painted by Samantha Bush, a Wayne Central High School student as a Girl Scout Gold Award project. The third project came about as a joint project among the Walworth Lions Club, the Friends of Ginegaw Park, the Walworth Recreation Department and Mural Mania. It will be "Mural Camp," a 2-week program open to high school art students. A mural for the south wall of the Lions Club barn will be created by the kids under the direction of James Zeger, mural artist and art teacher. We hope to hold a dedication ceremony for both Samantha's mural and the Mural Camp mural on July 26 during the Festival in the Park.

Lastly, the Mural Mania Advisory Committee is working on a proposal to host the Global Mural Conference in the Finger Lakes Region in 2016. If we are successful in securing the hosting opportunity, we expect to have several hundred people visit us to see our murals.

Grocery Shopping in 1944 vs. 2014

By Dorothy French



Donna Huntley Stalker recently donated several grocery receipts dated 1944. They include items and their prices which were purchased by Mary (nickname Mae) Huntley, a customer at Howard Triou's IGA Store on Main Street. Mae Boynton was the second wife of Alson H. Huntley, who is Donna's great-great-grandfather. Gordon Youngman, Walworth knowledge expert, reported Mae died in October 1944.

Here's an interesting price comparison spanning a 70 year period.

Item	1944	2014	Item	1944	2014
Celery	\$ 0.13	\$ 1.99	Lettuce	\$ 0.10	\$ 1.99
1/2 lb. butter	\$ 0.25	\$ 1.74	Bread	\$ 0.12	\$ 2.99
1# tomatoes	\$ 0.32	\$ 1.99	Canned peaches	\$ 0.36	\$ 2.79
Cabbage	\$ 0.10	\$ 0.89 lb.	1# coffee	\$ 0.22	\$ 6.79

Left: One of the several actual 1944 Triou's IGA store receipts.

From Your President

By Jessie Keymel

Academy Street and High Street was the most visited corner in Walworth on April 11, 2014. Many people gathered to take photos and to watch the demolition of the remains of Walworth High School. There have not been any classes in the building since the 1979-80 school year when the elementary school closed. We not only lost a school in 1980 but also the center and heart of our town. My children went to school there, Roger and all his siblings attended, as did his mother; Roger's Grandmother Molner/Bliek must have attended the Academy on that same spot. This is the story of many of the families in Walworth, a vital part of our history.

Another landmark was violently destroyed that same weekend. On April 13 fire swept through a dairy barn on the Walworth-Ontario Road. Thanks to the many volunteer firemen and local farmers, the herd was saved and transported to other farms. This farm and barn has also been a vital part of many families in our community. Joyce VanHanehem's dad, Lawrence Goebert, worked there for Charlie Lawrence before he served in WW II and after he returned from Germany. Over the years many young men have earned gas money doing chores in this barn that has "always been there." It is our hope that the Worthington family will be able to bring their cows home and will once again be a "Dairy of Distinction."

Membership Dues Are Due

By Mary Jane Devlin

The Walworth Historical Society operates on a May 1 to April 30 fiscal year. Your membership dues are due May 1 unless you are a Life Member or have paid in advance. There is a red dot on your address label if you owe dues as of May 1. Members who receive their newsletter by e-mail will receive a separate notice. If you have questions about when your membership expires, please contact the treasurer at 315-986-1512, or check your membership card.

There are several categories of membership in WHS: Student \$5, Individual \$10, Joint or Family \$15, Supporting \$25, Corporate or Business \$30, Sponsor \$50, Patron \$100, Life \$150, Benefactor \$150. By choosing to join at a higher level of membership, you will enable us to continue to expand our program presentations and add to our collection of historical items, as well as restore and preserve the items that are already in our collection.

Please pay dues at the annual meeting in May or send your check to the Walworth Historical Society at the address listed on the front of this newsletter. Thank you for your continued support.

Help from the Boy Scouts

By Gene Bavis

We are again indebted to Boy Scout Troop 113. The Scouts have volunteered to clean-up the grounds at the museum on Saturday, May 10, from 9 AM until noon. Last year the Scouts, parents, and Scoutmaster Kevin Baraci arrived with rakes, shovels, and energy. They spread mulch, pulled weeds, picked up debris left from winter, and raked the lawn – leaving our museum grounds in showplace condition. We are grateful for their help.

Museum Sitters Needed

By Jessie Keymel

With your help, our museum will be open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays from 2:00 until 4:00 pm from June through September. This is your opportunity to spend some time browsing and getting to know more about our collections. We have put together a three-ring binder of helpful suggestions, including phone numbers, if you have questions while you are sitting at the museum. To sign up for the day you choose, call Judy McMillan at 524-4219 or Jessie Keymel at 524-9205. Thank you for your interest in keeping our history available to the members of our community.

Walworth Historical Society 2014 Events Calendar

Date	Time	Subject	Location
Sat., May 10	9 - 12	Grounds clean-up by Boy Scout Troop 113	Museum
Mon., May 19	6:15 PM	Annual mtg., pot luck supper, election of officers, Community Service Award. Program: "Walworth - Then and Now"	Lodge at Ginegaw Park
Sat., June 7	All Day	Trip sponsored by Walworth Recreation Dept. "15 Miles on the Erie Canal".	Wayne County areas
Tues., July 22	6:30 PM	Decorate parade float	Keymel's
Fri., July 25	7:00 PM	Festival in the Park Parade and Booth	Line-up Main St.
Sat., July 26	TBA	Festival in the Park booth	Ginegaw Park
Mon., Sept. 15	7:30 PM	General Meeting: Program - Edith Farrington: "Life on a Farm 1870-1890"	Museum
Sun., Oct. 5	2 - 4 PM	Open House: Autumn	Museum
Sun., Oct. 19	2 - 3:30 PM	Walworth Memories: Walworth School	Museum
Mon., Nov. 17	1:00 PM	General Meeting: Dennis Bielewicz - "Heroes in the Attic"	Museum

Board of Trustees Meetings: Mondays, 7:00 PM at the Museum: June 16, Aug. 18, and Nov. 3.

Open House Hours: The museum is open June, July, August, and September on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM. Contact Judy McMillan at 315-524-4219 or Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 for an appointment for other times.

Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairs

President	Jessie Keymel	(315) 524 - 9205	Town Historian	Gene Bavis	(315) 573 - 2768
VP/Newsletter	Robert Mogray	(585) 576 - 4156	Publicity	Joyce Finney	(585) 377 - 9535
Secretary	Judy McMillan	(315) 524 - 4219	Genealogy	Kathy Aeckerle	(315) 597 - 6864
Treasurer	Mary Jane Devlin	(315) 986 - 1512	Hospitality	Liz Bavis	(315) 802 - 0380
WHS Trustee	Becky Appleman	(315) 524 - 3289	Hospitality	Nancy Bel	(315) 538 - 8605
WHS Trustee	Gene Bavis	(315) 573 - 2768	Grounds	Judy McMillan	(315) 524 - 4219
WHS Trustee	Nancy Bel	(315) 538 - 8605	Grounds	Becky Appleman	(315) 524 - 3289
WHS Trustee	Dorothy French	(315) 986 - 1098	Collections	Jessie Keymel	(315) 524 - 9205
WHS Trustee	Larry Ruth	(315) 524 - 7936	Bldg. Maint.	Stan Weller	(585) 545 - 9434
WHS Trustee	Marlene Slocum	(585) 520 - 2312			

Membership Information

Student	\$ 5.00
Individual	\$ 10.00
Family	\$ 15.00
Supporting	\$ 25.00
Corp. or Business	\$ 30.00
Sponsor	\$ 50.00
Patron	\$ 100.00
Life Member	\$ 150.00
Benefactor	\$ 150.00

Mission Statement: 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. We are a not-for-profit organization with 501(C)(3) status and donations are tax deductible.

May 2014 WHS E-mail Newsletter Bonus Photos:
(All photos on next two pages are of the school demolition)



