

Memories from Arlene Duell Suwijn By Dawn Russell



Arlene Suwijn was born on March 23, 1924. She grew up in Walworth on Walworth-Penfield Road near the old firehouse, which later became the medical loan closet. Her father, Louis Duell, and his brother, Ernest, were multi-businessmen. They did thrashing and custom baling, in addition to operating a saw mill and cutting ice on the mill pond off Walworth-Palmyra Road. Her mother, Gertrude, was a very busy homemaker.

Arlene had two siblings, Burnice and Eleanor. She remembers her childhood as a good one and being in the center of most activities. As a youngster she rode the ice floes in the mill pond before they were broken apart and sent up the conveyer, and she didn't know how to swim. She was quite the daring child. She recalls jumping from the rafters in a barn into the hay mow below. She and a friend, Johnny Shoales, would make their own newspaper out of ink stamps. In the winter, Arlene and her friends would slide downhill in the middle of Walworth-Marion Road. She remembers buying a pair of skis for 75 cents and, without poles and only straps to hold the feet, she would ski down the big hill east of the 4 corners. A fond memory she has is of all the maple trees lining the roads in Walworth; she reflected it was almost like a canopy effect.

Arlene in high school in 1941)
children

other children marched to the new Walworth High School. Arlene graduated from Walworth High School in 1941 with the biggest class of 21 students. Arlene was very active in school and participated in sports, cheerleading, chorus, band, newspaper and school plays. She worked on the muck for 20 cents per hour and picked berries. She recalls saving her money to buy a used bicycle for \$5.00; it had to be a boy's model so as she could always ride two people on it.

She met her future husband, Bill Suwijn, at the Friday night dances held at the Walworth firemen's building. Bill may have not been the best dancer, but he was pushed along in the square dances. Later in life Bill and Arlene would take dance lessons from Bernard Hill and became good waltzers. Bill was drafted into the Army before World War II and spent 5 years becoming a captain. Arlene graduated from school and went onward to study nursing. For graduation day, Bill had a corsage of sweetheart roses sent to her from where he was stationed in the Army.

Arlene attended the old Academy in Walworth for first grade. There was no kindergarten at that time. While the old Academy was being torn down, the attended school in the Grange Hall. As a second grader, she and the



1984 photo in Gordie's store



Arlene and Bill: prior to 2003

Arlene and Bill were wed in 1943 and were married for years. They have two children, Betty and Paul; granddaughters, Kamaren Adriana; and one great-granddaughter, Hana. war, Arlene followed Bill, short while in Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Eventually, they bought a with 40 acres on Walworth-Palmyra Road, and settled

with their children.

Bill worked for a seed company, and he and Arlene grew many flowers; she remembers pansies and perennials being most of their flowers. Through the years Arlene was a very active volunteer with the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and read to primary students. She is a life-time member of the Second Baptist Church of Walworth. Her very special close friend was Charlotte Webben. At church, Arlene taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, and held various other functions including clerk. Arlene and Bill were married in this church and she was baptized there also. Arlene was very active with the Fairport Baptist Home. She volunteered on the Women's Service Board for 20 years. Arlene has made many toys for this organization. I had the pleasure of seeing some of these dolls, and I must say she is very talented. She also volunteered to transcribe books into Braille for 13 years.

Later in life Arlene and Bill moved after 42 years to a small ranch house in Ontario and Arlene now lives in Penfield. Arlene lost the love of her life, Bill, in 2003. She says that her life has been a good one and knows she is very blessed.

She loved growing up and continuing on to raise a family with Bill in Walworth. Arlene has the best of memories of the many years spent in the Town of Walworth.