

Ginegaw Park – Walworth’s Pride By Dorothy French

Soon after crossing Route 350 headed east towards the village, a level span of carefully manicured grass is visible on the south side of Penfield-Walworth Road. The sign by the side of the road (shown below) proclaims the area as Ginegaw Park. This town park boasts a picnic shelter, the new all-season lodge, vast athletic fields, tennis court, play areas, hiking trails, and much more. It is also the location of the annual Festival in the Park, where folks will gather on July 24 and 25 to enjoy the special events and other attractions that have been planned.

The park’s history began prior to its dedication as a town park in 1967. Between three and four acres of cropland had been donated earlier by Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Ginegaw. Clarence was born in Walworth and became a fruit farmer. He also had dairy cattle on the farm, which was located at the northwest corner of Routes 441 and 350. Later their farmhouse became a nursing home operated by his second wife, Jean. The Walworth Chamber of Commerce subsequently purchased adjoining land from the Ginegaws to bring the total park area to 25 acres. The Chamber, represented by president Norman Soucy, then turned the deeds over to Charles Hack, Town of Walworth Supervisor, on May 3, 1967.

Supervisor Hack signed the final Greenspan papers with Bernard Porray, chairman of the Wayne County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Services, and reported “This is the first federal grant ever awarded this town.” The town received a check for \$1,681 from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Greenspan Project; Ginegaw Park was the first project to be undertaken in Wayne County.

According to a May 4, 1967, story in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, the Federal government, under its conservation program, would finance work on 14.2 acres. This area would be developed under the Greenspan program, which returned money to the municipality who expended funds in accordance with government approval. The efforts of past Chamber president Donald Brockman, who had worked on the project since its inception in 1957, helped secure the land and the grant from the Greenspan Project Fund.

Dredging of the natural drainage ditch was accomplished to form a small pond. A bird sanctuary, nature trails, picnic facilities and a camping area were originally planned, according to the newspaper story.

Dedication ceremonies were held July 6, 1967, with Bernard Porray as master of ceremonies. A newspaper account reported that “Two C of C members helped make the ceremony seen and heard. Donald Huntley supplied the farm wagon which served as a platform. Charles Pembroke operated the Walworth Fire Department ambulance, which provided power for the PA system.” A photo shows Stuart Huntley operating a backhoe tractor during the ground-breaking ceremony.



Ginegaw Park increased in size during the 1990’s and now stretches from Penfield-Walworth Road to Sherburne Road via Lorraine Drive. In 1992 Joe and Lorraine Finley sold their Sherburne Road homestead to the town as the 58-acre site for the new town hall/library complex. The Finleys put all the monies paid for the property into a trust fund to be used for educational purposes for the benefit of the Town of Walworth residents.

Fast forward to 2009: As the population of our town grows, so has the need for recreational areas. We are fortunate to have several town parks that offer a multitude of uses. These parks are under the jurisdiction of the Town of Walworth’s Parks and Recreation Department. Jackie VanLare is the Department’s Director.

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