

**History of Walworth, New York**  
**FROM LANDMARKS OF WAYNE COUNTY**  
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**CHAPTER XXVI.**  
**HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WALWORTH.**

Walworth lying in the middle of the towns which form the extreme west border of Wayne county, was organized from Ontario on April 20, 1829. It is bounded on the north by Ontario, on the east by Marion, on the south by Macedon, and on the west by Monroe county, and comprises an area of 20,425 acres. It received its name in honor of Gen. Chancellot Walworth. With a surface of high, rolling upland, whose ridges run almost parallel north and south, it is one of the most elevated and picturesque parts of the county; from several points magnificent scenery is visible in all the panoramic splendor of Mother Nature. The deep valleys and lofty hills, composed of a rich sandy loam, are very fertile and easily cultivated, and to the industrious husbandman yield abundant crops of grain, hay, potatoes, fruit, etc. There are a number of large orchards which, in favorable seasons, produce enormous revenue. Drainage is afforded by several rivulets on the north and by tributaries of Red Creek on the south. There is no water power in this town.

The land was originally covered with a dense growth of timber Consisting principally of beech, maple, hemlock, ash, and basswood, all of which has fallen before the pioneer's axe, and been superseded by broad fields of civilized industry. The wild game of early times long ago disappeared, and the pretty homes of the present generation are surrounded only by domestic animals. Instead of the rude log cabins of our forefathers now stand the handsome residences made possible by their early toil and frugality; the malarial fever and ague which afflicted them so terribly, disappeared with the changing conditions of man and climate.

The town of Walworth has never enjoyed the commercial advantages granted to nearly all her sister towns in Wayne county; yet it has ever maintained a degree of prominence that

speaks well for the industry and enterprise of the inhabitants, and which has placed it in the front rank of the minor civil divisions of this State. Lacking the rapid shipping facilities afforded by rail and water, its rich soil and industrious population tend to offset the absent means of transportation. Its nearest railroad stations are Walworth and Macedon on the New York Central on the south, and Ontario and Lakeside on R. W. & O. on the north, all distant from three to four miles from the bounds of the town.

It has been impossible to obtain much accurate information concerning the early town meetings and officers. Many of the names of supervisors are noted a little further on, and many others are omitted because of the incompleteness of the records.

The settlement of Walworth began in the southeast part of the town at or near what is now Walworth village, and the first settlers were Andrew, John, Samuel, and Daniel Milet, brothers, who came hither with their families in 1799. Andrew became insane it is said from brooding over the belief that the world would soon be without wood and hung himself. Daniel subsequently removed to Ohio, where he was mistaken for a bear one evening, and shot. The other two brothers lived in Walworth until their death. A younger brother, Alexander, came in soon after his brothers and settled near them.

Stephen and Daniel Douglass came from Connecticut in 1811 and located at the four corners . at Walworth, and from them the place was known as "Douglass Corners" until 1825. Stephen erected the first frame building in the town in 1805, on the end of a log, dwelling, and opened it as the pioneer tavern. Five years later the log part was torn down and the frame part removed, and on the site he built a larger hotel, which he conducted until his . death in 1812. The structure is now (1894) used by Frederick C. Robie as a barn, its occupation as a hotel terminating in 1826. Stephen Douglass, in 1807, also erected the first frame barn in town. He was finally drowned in the canal. His daughter, Mrs. James Finley, is a resident of Walworth.

Capt. Gilbert Hinckley, a Rhode Islander, settled in the eastern part of the town in 1803, and in 1836 removed to Ohio. In 1804 Dea. Gideon Hackett and Jonathan and James Hill became settlers, as did also John, David, and Jerry Chamberlain, from Connecticut. The next year Luther Fillmore located at Walworth village and subsequently was elected to the Assembly; he died here in 1838.

Other settlers of this period was Joseph Howe, the first shoemaker, and Nathaniel Holmes and Ira Howard, the pioneer carpenters. In 1806 the settlement was increased by the arrival of Jonathan Miller, his wife, daughter, and three sons, and his aged father; and about this time Sylvester and Harvey Lee settled at West Walworth.

Among other early settlers were John, Nathan, and Enos Palmer, brothers, who became wealthy; Jonathan Boynton, from Berkshire, Mass., subsequently a member of the Legislature; and Stephen Chase, Ebenezer Trask, Abner Rawson, Joseph Randolph, Isaac Dawley, Simeon Stebbins, Joseph Day, and William Childs, all of whom settled in the

southern part of the town. Thomas Carpenter, Levi Salisbury, David Upton, a Mr. Hurley, Moses Padley, and Daniel Gould (a Canadian) located in the central part of Walworth; and John, Asa, William, and James Scott, brothers, and Peter Grover, in the western part.

In February, 1807, Charles Finley came in from Connecticut with a large family, of whom a child died on the way and a son, Reuben, died here some years since. Another son, Lewis, resides in town. The latter married May E. Quinby, and their son, Dr. Frank Finley, born here in 1859, died in Macedon May 6, 1893, after practicing medicine there about three years.

Samuel Strickland, who died in the town some years ago, was born in Connecticut in 1790. In 1798 his father removed to Redfield, Oswego county, where he was the first settler, and built a saw and grist mill on the Salmon River. Samuel came to Walworth in August, 1807, with his mother, and died here in 1845. He was a member of the Free Will Baptist Church. and served in the war of 1812 at Sodus and on the Niagara frontier. He settled near the center of the town as did also Samuel and Jedediah Smith, brothers, Samuel Smith opened the first blacksmith shop in Walworth on land now owned by Patrick Crowley's two sons, and finally went to Ontario, where he manufactured iron from native ore.

Rowland Sackett, David Tiffany, David Foskett, and James Arnold came into this town in 1808, and Joseph Strickland, a brother of Samuel, became a settler in 1809. Capt. N. F. Strickland died in April, 1885.

About the year 1809 Thomas Kempshall removed hither from Rochester and in 1815 erected, on the northeast corner at Walworth, the first mercantile establishment in the town and village. Six years afterward he returned to Rochester and became a prominent miller.

James Benton, an idle, worthless fellow, presented himself to the settlement about this time and followed the precarious life of a wandering hunter. In the fall of 1809 he maliciously set fire to the wigwams of the Indian village at Ridge.

Dr. Huriburt Crittenden came here in 1804 and was the first physician in town, Gilmer Chase was a life-long resident of the town, and conspicuous in the Baptist Church. He died January 10, 1892. John Craggs, whose widow owns the grist mill south of Walworth, just over the line in Macedon, came here early in life and became the owner of that mill about 1862. He was a mason and an active member of the Baptist Church, died here August 1, 1889. Jacob and Asil Hossilton settled in the western part of Walworth in 1812, and William Wylie located at the east village in 1817. Jermain Andrew and J. Jay White each served several years as supervisor. Daniel M. Smith, son of George, was born in Farmington, N. Y., in 1803, married Elizabeth Herendeen in 1824, and settled in Walworth in 1825. They were Quakers, and had born to them six children.

The first death in the town was that of a man named Hopkins in 1806; soon afterward a

Mr. Green was killed by a falling tree.

It is, of course, impracticable to note the arrival of all the settlers of this town, but the foregoing covers most of those of early years who were prominently instrumental in subduing the wilderness and laying the foundations of present prosperity. Among the later generation, many of whom are descendants of the sturdy pioneers, may be mentioned the names of Hon. T. G. Yeomans (ex-member of Assembly), Daniel Hoyt, Albert Yeomans, Lewis and Julian Finley, Orvis Potter (son of Horace), Jerome Lawrence, C. P. Patterson, John Baker (a long-time postmaster at Walworth), James W. Benton and his son (merchants), Hon. Lucien T. Yeomans (member of Assembly in 1873), Frederick C. Robie (town clerk), Richard Allison (the present supervisor), George L. Lee (merchant), Frank Stoddard, Henry Dean (harness maker), John Bennett (long a justice of the peace), and Peter Arnold. Numerous others who are equally deserving of special mention are noticed a little further on and also in Part II of this work.

In 1858 the town of Walworth had 15,859 acres of land improved: real estate valued at \$578,470; and a population of 991 males and 973 females. There were 390 dwellings and 347 freeholders. In 1890 its population numbered 2,195, a decrease since 1880 of 143. In 1893 the real estate was assessed at \$861,239 (equalized \$765,522); personal property \$109,600; village and mill property \$109,715 (equalized \$121,234). Total valuation \$1,080,554 (equalized \$996,356); rate per cent. .038646. The town has two election districts and in 1893 polled 346 votes.

During the war of the Rebellion the town responded nobly and promptly to the various calls for troops, and sent to the front a total of 134 volunteers to fight the nation's battles. Of this number John Murray Hoag and Nelson F. Strickland, both of whom enlisted in Co. B, 9th Artillery, were promoted captains.

The first school house in town was built near the site of the present public school building in Walworth village in 1804. It was of logs and was replaced in 1812 by the pioneer frame school house,, in which Louis McLouth was the first and only teacher, for it burned before the first term was concluded. The next school house was a brick structure erected in 1815, half a mile north of the village, which was soon afterward torn down and a frame building was put up west of Walworth. The Walworth Academy was legally incorporated May 21, 1841, and a stone building was erected at a cost of \$4,000. The first principal was Prof. E. B. Walsworth, who opened the school in the fall of that year. A new brick structure (the present school house) was built in 1857 at an expense of \$8,000. It is three stories high and with slight repairs is still used for the academy. The old building was converted into a dwelling and later into a hail, and is now the meeting place of the local grange. The academy employs two teachers and is comparatively well patronized. The present trustees are Hon. T. G. Yeomans, Lucien T. Yeomans, Elon Yeomans, Warren Hall, Albert Yeomans, Alonzo Crane, Lewis Finley, Jerome Lawrence, and Orvis Potter.

The town now has eleven school districts, taught by as many teachers, and attended

during the school year of 1892-93 by 477 scholars. The value of school buildings and sites is \$6,950; assessed valuation of the districts \$1,132,000; public money received from the State \$1,424.95; amount raised by local tax \$1,688.91.

Nathan Palmer erected and operated the first saw mill in town about 1810. It was situated on the little stream southwest of West Walworth, and the dam which supplied the power caused such an overflow on adjacent lands that the inhabitants, considering themselves wronged, assembled one night and tore it down and burned the mill. Mr. Palmer began a litigation and recovered damages and costs.

As early as 1803 the first burying ground was laid out a quarter of a mile south of Walworth village on the present Stephen A. Tabor farm. A second burial plat was selected in 1816, near the center of the town, and is known as the Baker cemetery. To this nearly all the remains originally interred in the pioneer graveyard were ultimately removed. Another pretty cemetery is located on elevated ground a little south west from Walworth village.

**WALWORTH VILLAGE.**- Until 1825 this place was known as "Douglass Corners," from the Douglass brothers, Stephen and Andrew, who were among its first settlers. The former built here the first hotel and Thomas Kempshall the pioneer store in town, which were the substantial beginnings of the present pretty village. Two other early settlers here were Andrew Millett and Luther Fillmore, the latter of whom became prominent in public affairs. The post-office was established in 1823, with Henry Moore, postmaster; the present incumbent is Copeland Morse.

Among the various merchants who have carried on trade in the village were Theron and Veniah Yeomans, on the site of F. C. Robie's store, in an old building recently burned; Lewis Eddy, where is now the Masonic hall; and Tucker & Sweeting, Benjamin Billings, Nathan Lusk, Uriah Hoyt, a Mr. Richmond, Philip Lawrence, John Sebring, and Edward Kent. The present hotel was erected by Hon. T. G. Yeomans. Among the landlords was John Sweeney, whom many will recall with interesting recollections. The village now contains three general stores, a jewelry store, hotel and livery, a millinery store, one harness shop, a shoe store, a tin shop, two cooperages, two physicians, an academy and public school, two churches, and a population of about 450.

**WEST WALWORTH.**- The site of this village was originally settled and improved by Joseph Howe in 1805, and from a few log houses and a blacksmith shop it has steadily grown into a thriving rural hamlet. The first store was opened in 1835 by William Freeland in a building subsequently occupied by S. L. Miller. The Johnson Brothers began the manufacture of grain threshers here in 1838, but the business proved unprofitable and it was soon abandoned. The post-office was established and William D. Wylie was appointed postmaster, in 1840. The present occupant of the office is Thomas Payne. The village now comprises two general stores, a hardware store, two blacksmith shops, wagon shop, dry house and evaporator, a millinery store, two churches, and about 150

inhabitants. Lee and Harvey Miller, brothers, were prominent and long-time merchants, as also was Nathan Reed. West Walworth in late years has been an important center for handling dried fruit, which has proved a profitable business.

**LINCOLN.-** Situated in the northwest part of the town, the little hamlet of Lincoln affords the inhabitants there nearly all the advantages and privileges that either of the above described villages could offer. In 1853 N. F. Strickland erected and started a mill here and in the fall of that year a store building was put up and business opened. In 1866 Mr. Strickland obtained a post-office for the place and was appointed the first postmaster. The hamlet now contains a store, a cheese factory, wagon and blacksmith shops, two churches, and about a dozen dwellings.

**CHURCHES.-** From traditionary evidence gathered from old settlers, it appears that a Presbyterian Society once flourished in the village of Walworth. but definite data concerning its organization existence, or disappearance cannot now be obtained. On land now owned by T. G. Yeomans there once stood a stone church edifice reputed to have been used by this Presbyterian Society as a place of worship, but it was long ago torn down and its history and the history of the society are veiled in the misty past.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Walworth was the pioneer religious organization of the town, and their first house of worship was a primitive structure built three-fourths of a mile west from the village prior to 1809. With rude slab seats, with an ancient elevated pulpit, and with a gallery on three sides that was reached by a ladder, it housed the little band of worshipers until 1815, when a union edifice with the ownership vested in the Methodists was erected in Walworth. Although never formally dedicated, it was used as a meeting place until 1872, after which it was transformed into a dry house. February 27, 1826, the society was legally organized with I. R. Sanford, Luther Fillmore, Levi Leach, Thomas Brown, and A. H. Howland, trustees. The present fine brick edifice was built under the pastorate of Rev. L. F. Congdon in 1872, and cost about \$17,000. The society has 150 members, Rev. John H. Stoodly as pastor. The present frame parsonage south of the church was built on the site of an old one, removed, in 1884, and cost \$1,400.

The Second Baptist Church of Walworth was organized by Rev. R. Powell, on July 11, 1832, with the following constituent members: Deacon Bancroft, Dr. and Mrs. L. D. Ward, Miss Palmer, Deacon and Sophia McLouth, Benjamin Mason and wife, Freeman Wood and wife, Benjamin Wood and wife, R. Wood, Mrs. L. Burr, Mrs. Agnes Crandall, Gideon Hackett and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, James Rice and wife, Asil and Rhoda Hoyt, Lewis Potter and wife, and Barney Corey. The union church was used for worship until 1834, when the present stone edifice was erected and dedicated in September of that year. It was repaired and re-dedicated in December, 1887, at a cost of some \$6,000. The society has about seventy members and is now supplied by Walter B. McNinch, a student at Rochester. The Sunday school was organized May 1, 1842, with Levi Hicks, superintendent.

The First Baptist church of West Walworth was organized with fourteen members in 1815 by that active missionary of Western New York, Rev. Jeremiah Irons. The first pastor was Rev. Daniel Palmer, in 1816, and until 1832 meetings were held in the school house. In that year their stone house of worship was built and dedicated January 8, 1833, by Rev. Mr. Palmer. It has since been extensively repaired. The present pastor is Rev. R. P. Ingersoll. The first Sunday school was organized in 1815 and had fifteen members.

The Evangelical Association (German Lutheran) of West Walworth was organized with thirty members by Rev. David Fisher, in 1857, and until . 1866 held its meetings in private houses. In that year a stone building formerly used for school purposes was purchased, repaired, and dedicated in the fall. The Sunday school was formed in 1855, with John Lotze superintendent. The society has about sixty members, with Rev. A. Schlenk as pastor.

The Free Will Baptist church of Walworth, located at Lincoln, was organized in 1816 by, Rev. Thomas Lewis, with these members: David Salisbury, Mrs. Robbins, Joseph Strickland and wife, James, Andrew, and Pamela Strickland, Ephraim Holbrook, and Sarah Lyon. Rev. Mr. Lewis was installed the first pastor and a stone edifice was erected near the center of the town in 1834 at a cost of about \$2,000. It was dedicated by Rev. D. M. L. Rollin, January 18, 1835. It was long used for worship and for several years past has been occupied as a dwelling. In 1876 a frame church was built in Lincoln; since that year the society has worshiped therein. Rev. A. D. Loomis is pastor. The society's property is now valued at about \$4,000.

The Methodist Episcopal church of Lincoln had its inception at a meeting held at Lincoln hail by Rev. Charles Hermans. An organization was perfected in 1872 by Rev. Mr. Benson, with twelve members, and Rev. Mr. Hamlin became the first pastor. He was succeeded by Rev. John Irons, under whom in 1874 their frame church was erected at a cost of about \$3,000. It was dedicated December 2, 1874, by Rev. B. I. Ives. The society now has eighty members, under the pastoral charge of Rev. William C. C. Cramer. The Sunday school was organized in 1872 with 100 scholars, under E. K. Boughton, superintendent.

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