

## Memories: Ruth Kessler Weykman

By Dawn Russell

Ruth Kessler Weykman was born on May 9, 1926, in Rochester and moved to Walworth in 1927 with her family. They lived on a farm located at 331 Walworth-Penfield Road. Her parents were Howard and Alice Hoad Kessler. She had one sibling named Harold. Her father was a farmer: dairy, crops, fruits, chickens and such. Her mother helped with the farm and was a homemaker. Ruth remembers helping with the farm when she was older. She was enticed by receiving a doll if she would help.



**Ruth at 17 years old.**

Her mother told her when Ruth was a very little girl she needed surgery. While getting well at home, a neighbor, Mr. A. Fredenberg, would walk across the orchard every day to come visit little Ruth. He would bring her books, cards, and a special chocolate cup. Ruth came to call him Grandpa. To this day, she still has the chocolate cup he gave her. Inscribed on the cup, in German, it says: "Forget me Not." Ruth remembers her mother would bring the oil lamp to her room when it was bedtime and read her stories.

Ruth became friends with the Frowley neighbor girls: Marie, Carol, Virginia and Janice. Janice was her best friend while growing up. The girls would have fun playing in the hay loft. Ruth remembers every summer she and the Frowley girls would take their wagons and go into the woods and have a picnic. Halloween was a great time. Mrs. Frowley would have a party for the neighbor children; Ruth would always look forward to this. They would bob for apples, eat popcorn, and play games; this was more fun than trick or treating.

Ruth had chores while growing up, as most farm children did. When she was old enough, it was her chore to fill the reservoir in the old cook stove they had in their kitchen. She would use the hand pump to draw the water. She also would fill the wood box for the cook stove. They had no refrigerator in the early years. There was an icehouse between the barn and their home. They purchased ice from the Duell brothers, who cut ice on Mill Pond. They also purchased their sawdust from the Duell brothers and would use that to pack the ice.

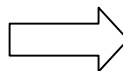
Ruth's family received electricity in 1931 when the electric company came through the town and everyone had to sign for electricity in order to receive it to their property. She remembers coming home from school and going from room to room turning on one light in each room. There were many neighbors on the road where Ruth lived: Frowleys, Darrons, Bakers, Clarks, Fredenbergs, Halls, Scotts, Pembrokes, and Ginegaws, all the way to the Dewitt Tuttle farm. The only family who had a phone was the Bakers. They were so generous with the phone, letting the neighbors use it when needed.

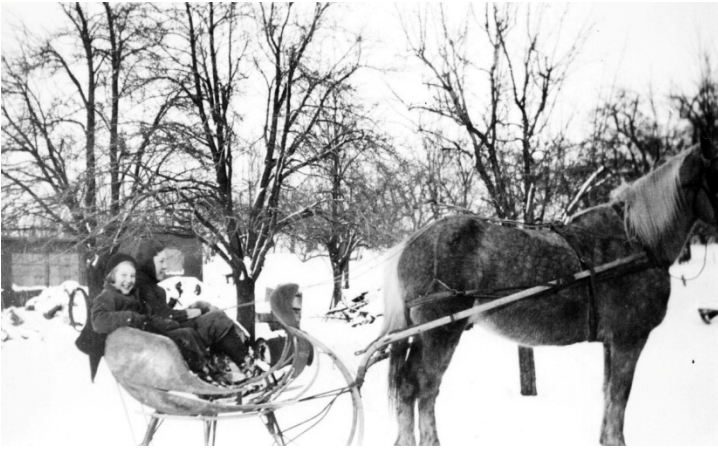
Ruth and her brother Harold used to ride in the bob sleigh to Abe Almekinder's to get feed for the animals and they would also go the Balzar Mill on Walworth-Palmyra Road to get feed. She loved riding in the sleigh. She remembers her bed was a straw mattress, and every year it was changed with fresh straw after thrashing. Ruth started school at the Walworth Academy in 1931. She graduated from this school in 1943. While in school she played the cornet,

sang in the chorus, and was involved in the camera club. She attended school basketball games. Her teacher, Mr. Fox, left quite an impression on her; she says he was a really good teacher. Ruth would cool every day. In the winter if it was very bad weather she would get a ride on the back of a truck, Mrs. Fredenberg, or her dad would start the old Model T and take her to school. Ruth worked the summers and raised enough money to buy herself a bicycle. She would then use that as a mode of transport to school.

While attending the Walworth Methodist Church; she could always count on a ride home from church with the [unclear] During her teenage years, Ruth was active in the Walworth Pioneers 4H Club. Her leaders were Emily Huntley and [unclear] Jignall. Mrs. Huntley would take Ruth to the fairs to enter her exhibits. After graduation, Ruth worked at Triou's IGA on Main Street in Walworth. She also worked for Milford Kester at the Red & White Store. This was the time of World War II, and she remembers ration tickets for sugar and other products so there would be enough for the soldiers to have food.

**Continued**





**Top: 1935: Ruth and Harold.**

**Right: Ruth with her 4H preserves and awards.**



Ruth met her husband-to-be, Larry Weykman, at a neighbor's house when she was sixteen. She says they just clicked right away. They both were brought up in similar backgrounds. They courted until Larry was to go into the Air Force. They wrote to each other almost every day and were married when he returned home in 1946. They went to New York City and the Poconos for their honeymoon. They lived in Newark for five years and then bought a farm on Armington Road in Palmyra. Larry had his own milk trucking business and Ruth was a homemaker. They have three children: Marjorie, Judy, and Ed. They also have seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Sadly, Larry passed in 2014. They were married 68 years. Ruth still lives in the same house they bought those many years ago. At age 90, Ruth enjoys reading, sewing, and especially gardening. Her fondest memories of growing up in Walworth are the friendly neighbors, the love she felt, and the small town feeling.