

WALWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 33 Number 5 March 2009

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Gene Bavis

Dorothy French

Joyce Finney



Nancy Bel

Larry Ruth

**Happy St. Patrick's Day
from the WHS Board of Trustees**

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WHS Website: www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org

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President's Message

By Jessie Keymel

As you know, the Walworth Historical Society is caretaker of the copper beech tree on our property. In January 2008 a wind storm damaged the upper crown of the tree. Since then we have had several people who are knowledgeable about trees examine it.

The conclusion has been that we need to get professional help to complete the necessary pruning and treatment to maintain and ensure the health of our tree. Estimates have been received and we have contracted to have the work done as soon as possible. The WHS Board has set aside \$600.00 to cover the cost. To keep the expense at a minimum, the clean up and removal of the resulting debris will be done by members of the Society.

For the people of Walworth the copper beech trees have always been a part of our landscape; however, they are not native to the area. T. G. Yeomans, the nurseryman, imported them from Europe in the 1840's and 50's. He was a well-respected nurseryman; his grafting practices were written up in technical books of the time. His nursery was the source of most of the fruit trees in the many orchards that were an important part of the growing economy of Walworth. The smooth bark of our beech tree was a perfect place to carve the initials of the true love of the youth of Walworth; many unreadable initials still scar the trunk today.

The most magnificent copper beech I have ever seen is in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester. As you come over a small hill during the tour of the cemetery, the majestic tree is the centerpiece in its own little valley. The Ellwanger and Barry Nursery owned the property that Mt. Hope Cemetery is on and many of their ornamental plantings still exist today. T. G. Yeomans was a business associate of Ellwanger and Barry.

Photo Restoration Project

By Dorothy French

Thank you to those members who responded to our request in the January newsletter for donations towards our photo restoration project. This encouraging support will enable us to start on the project, but we would like to be able to restore and repair all of these unique pictures from the Walworth High School graduation classes of 1941, 1942, 1945, 1947, 1948, and 1949. The pictures are approximately 20" by 26" and have individual pictures of the graduating class. Walworth Historical Society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization; therefore, all dues and donations are tax deductible and may be sent to the address on the front of this newsletter.

Garbage Pick-Up Service – a Bargain for 35 cents a Week!



If you lived in Walworth in November 1953 you could have garbage pick-up service for 35 cents a week! That's the price Harold Kessler charged his customers when he began his collection business. The information and photo are from the Chamber of Commerce scrapbook at the museum.

Do you have your family information still in a file folder or on notebook paper? Are you thinking of updating your files? In the January 2008 issue of Family Tree Magazine, there is an article about four programs that are available for us. This magazine is available at the Walworth-Seely Public Library.

The first program is "Legacy Family Tree Maker". You can go to the website to use their free tutorial. I would recommend you do this to see today's guidelines for entering information. The website is:

www.legacyfamilytree.com

Family Tree Maker has been around for a time. This was my first program back in 1995. It is still very popular. It has a training video online. I have upgraded my program to version 16. The website is:

www.familytreemaker.com

RootsMagic is an easy enough web site for family history people to master but powerful enough to meet professional genealogists' standards. This company has a tutorial online also. The website is:

www.rootsmagic.com

The Master Genealogist is for high-level family history research. The website is: www.woolygenes.com

All of these programs can cost you from \$40.00, online download, to \$80.00 for CD with printed manual. If you have never used a computer program, I would suggest you talk with someone who has an on-line program so you can ask some basic questions.

Next Walworth Memories: April 19

By Gene Bavis

On Sunday, April 19, the Walworth Historical Society - in partnership with the Walworth-Seely Public Library - will host Walworth Memories, Part 11...yes, that is PART ELEVEN!

Since 2003, we've been holding these sessions, usually twice a year. More recently, we've picked a theme and then invited EVERYONE with an interest in the topic to come and share THEIR memories on that subject. We've talked about Walworth businesses, farming, sports, schools, World War II, weather, and various miscellaneous topics. We are calling our 11th session "*Street Dances and Such.*"



Do YOU remember when we closed off Main Street, put shavings down, and held an old-fashioned round and square dance IN the street? And what about those dances at the old fire hall? If you are a long-time Walworth resident, I bet you have some memories! Come, share them! We have pictures in an old scrapbook from the Chamber of Commerce that will be on display. Do YOU have any pictures?

In more recent years, the Lions Club took over where the Chamber of Commerce left off and has established the Festival in the Park. During the Wayne County Sesquicentennial and the national Bicentennial, we celebrated with parades

too. Do you remember those floats the Walworth Historical Society had - thanks to Joe Englert? NO tractor was needed to pull these two...the power was inside the float!

We hope YOU will come to the Walworth Town Hall at 2 PM on April 19 and share your memories on these subjects. As always, we'll be documenting the conversations so that we have a record of our collective memories. The Friends of the Walworth-Seely Public Library will provide refreshments. Bring a friend. (Photo from Chamber of Commerce Scrapbook)

Chamber Scrapbook Memories

By Dorothy French

In the past, readers have noted our frequent references to scrapbooks donated to the museum by Dorothy Petty's family and from Anna May. These women documented events occurring in Walworth and areas around the world, giving us a glimpse of life during another era. And - thanks to the time-consuming efforts of Doug Churchill - we can easily access this information.

Our treasure trove of scrapbooks includes one entitled "Chamber of Commerce" and was put together by Anna May. It documents the history of the Walworth Chamber of Commerce and spotlights many of the community events the Chamber sponsored through the years.

Anna and Elton May were charter members of the Walworth Chamber of Commerce. Anna spent countless hours keeping scrapbooks and photo albums of Walworth. After she passed away in 1974 and Elton in 1977, Gordon Youngman became the keeper of Anna's scrapbooks and photos, and recently donated them to our museum. Future newsletters will include stories taken from Anna's Chamber scrapbook. We are grateful for their foresight to save this information.

The Sherburne Road Connection by Bob Mogray

Sherburne Road is a very well-known road in Walworth. It connects Route 350 to the Walworth-Palmyra Road; it has many homes located there; it also connects to Lorraine Drive which is the home of the Walworth Town Hall and the Walworth-Seely Public Library; and the Walworth Cemetery and Sherburne Road town park are located there. Ever wonder where Sherburne Road got its name?

There have been many Walworth town supervisors. From 1914 to 1921 U. W. Sherburne held that office. His photo appears below. Recently two large black and white photos in frames were found in the basement of the Walworth Town Hall. They contained the photos of all Wayne County town supervisors for the years 1914 - 1915 and 1916 - 1917. Mr. Sherburne's picture was included in each of these photos. Evidently these items were stored at the town hall and forgotten for a number of years. Both of these pictures have been donated to the Walworth Historical Society's museum. They are great photos and in very good condition. WHS is very grateful for the town's generosity.

Currently hanging in the Walworth Town Hall meeting room are photos of the most recent town supervisors. Current Walworth Town Supervisor Bob Plant has asked if we could use these two group photos to provide a single portrait of U. W. Sherburne to be hung along with photos of other Town of Walworth supervisors. We are currently working on not only this project but also to find as many of the other past supervisor photos as possible. By using the book by Dottie DeMay, "Walworth Highway Department 1855 - 2007" located at our museum, a list of past Walworth supervisors was obtained. Research is now being done at the Wayne County Museum to obtain as many of these photos as possible.



This will be an ongoing project for several months in order to obtain as many of these photos as possible and hang them in the Walworth Town Hall. If anyone has any information or old photos of any of the past Walworth town supervisors, please contact Bob Mogray at 585-576-4156 or at email address rmogray@rochester.rr.com. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

U. W. Sherburne

Spring Is Just Around the Corner

By Jessie Keymel

Spring is just around the corner, which means spring clean up. May 2 has been set as the date for spring clean up at the museum. Last year we tried to schedule evening times, hoping to get more help, but the new time did not generate much help. This year we are setting Saturday, May 2, from 9 until noon as the time to gather to do the general clean up, indoors and outside of the museum.

When you come, please bring your own cleaning and landscaping tools. There are also some general maintenance needs that should be addressed. It is difficult to get everything accomplished in a morning; the more help we receive the more chores will be accomplished.

We will be passing out a "to do" list at the March 16 meeting. It is our hope that you will take on a chore that you can do at a convenient time for you. As with any property, constant maintenance keeps costly repairs at a minimum. Thank you for your interest and your help in keeping our building and grounds respectable and a pleasant place to visit.

Letter to the Editor

Thanks again for the Historical News items. Sorry we are not able to get to many of the meetings, but am always interested in reading of the events, the people and other things that are being done for the area.

I was interested in the letter from Janice Wignall Mitchell. I, too, remember the beacon light that she wrote about. We often went by it on our way to Palmyra. We also could see it from our home on most every evening if we cared to look in that direction. We were always told it was for the airplanes that were flying from east to west, as well as for safety reasons.

Rev. Verne Schattner

Chamber History

By Dorothy French

The Walworth Chamber of Commerce was organized by a small group of local business people in 1952 and incorporated one year later.

Charter members and their businesses for 1952-53 were: A. H. Almekinder (feed store), Don Brockman (IGA Store), Bud Ennis (IGA Store), Joseph Finley (variety shop), Lorraine Finley (variety shop), Ralph Gangarosa (veterinarian), Charles Griswold (coal and lumber), Wallace Joslin (excavating), Elton May (florist), George Perkins (electric repair), Charles Pembroke (electrician and plumber), Ray Pembroke (Red & White Store), Elizabeth Schenk (shoe store), Stanley VanHoover (gas station and garage), Claire VanHaneghem (electrical repair), Jack Wicks (hardware store), Gordon Youngman (variety store), and Anna B. Youngs (feed and grist mill). Although Gordon Youngman was in the military at that time, upon his return the following year he was granted charter member status.

According to a 1956 newspaper story, the Chamber was "organized by a group of businessmen who wanted to improve the community by promoting civic projects and to increase business activities." The geographical area to be covered included the businesses in the hamlet, although their efforts and achievements were designed to benefit the entire community.

Noteworthy of these accomplishments were the following:

- Helping to secure the services of Dr. W. H. F. Newman to establish a medical practice here in 1954.
- Sponsoring a clambake in 1956, a Gay 90's Show in 1957, Minstrel Shows in 1955 and 1959, and a Musical Calendar show in 1960.
- Organizing the annual Community Christmas Decoration program, where many homes, businesses, and utility poles were decorated with colored lights and Christmas scenes.

- Sponsoring the annual Street Dance as a youth recreational program beginning in 1955. Local civic groups erected fund-raising booths and refreshment stands around the Main Street dancing area.
- Removing dead trees and planting new ones along village streets in 1964.
- Sponsoring the Bicentennial Ball and Weekend in 1976.
- Promoting formation of a Sesquicentennial Committee in 1979 to celebrate Walworth's 150th birthday.
- Spearheading successful efforts to bring a Reading Room to Walworth to be housed in the Chamber building previously owned by Jay Seely on Walworth-Marion Road. This included hosting a pancake breakfast to raise funds to renovate the building.
- Building a meeting center and community hall at 2014 Walworth-Penfield Road, east of Ginegaw Park, in August 1970.
- Establishing a Youth Council, which met in the Chamber building basement, called "The Cellar".



August 1970: Turning the first spade full of earth for Walworth Chamber of Commerce's new meeting center and community hall is New York State Assemblyman Joseph C. Finley of Walworth. Looking on are, from left, Chamber secretary Dominick Marrella, vice-president Bill Frenz, president Ronald Buyck, Don Brockman, Assemblyman Finley, former Town of Walworth Supervisor Charles Hack, and Mrs. Anna Youngs. Following the groundbreaking, Finley spoke briefly, congratulating the group for their "pioneer efforts as a rural Chamber for launching a building project of this nature."

The new structure measures 24 feet by 30 feet and will, on the first floor, house Chamber offices, a meeting room and kitchen facilities. The basement level will house a large meeting room. All of these facilities will be available to community groups for meetings and other events, according to Chamber president Ron Buyck.



**2014 Walworth-Penfield Road
Now a private residence.**

After the building was sold in October 1981, scholarships were given for a number of years, based on interest from the principal; Lowell Twitchell was treasurer at that time. When Dollars for Scholars was started, some of this money helped establish the program and is still a part of the scholarships given through this program.

In 1992, the Chamber hosted a dinner at which time they presented checks to representatives of numerous local organizations. The \$30,000 divided among these recipients was the principal amount remaining of the profit the Chamber realized from the sale of their property.

The Chamber organization eventually became dormant. Three years ago it was re-organized and its by-laws were changed to reflect town-wide interests and businesses, while continuing to maintain its incorporation status.

Current officers are Bill Baker, president; Charles Clark, vice-president; Kelli Craig, secretary; and Marlene Hall, treasurer. According to Bill, members of the local Chamber are currently in the process of merging with the Macedon/Palmyra Chamber of Commerce; this will ensure the continuation of the Chamber philosophy of promoting and encouraging local businesses.

We are indebted to this fine organization's membership for their vision and support through the years.

Information for this article came from several sources:

- Chamber of Commerce scrapbook compiled by Anna May, given to Gordon Youngman after her death, and recently presented to the Walworth Historical Society by Gordon.
- 1979 Walworth Directory published in honor of our town's 150th year and Sesquicentennial celebration. The booklet was a united effort of members of the local Chamber of Commerce, advertisers and residents. Thanks to Louise Frenz for sharing this and additional information.
- Information from Lowell Twitchell.
- Conversations with charter member Gordon Youngman and current president Bill Baker.
- Records available at the Walworth Town Hall.

Scrapbook Memories

By Joyce Finney

The headlines below were taken from Dorothy Petty's 1991 scrapbook:

- Jan. 20:** George Burns turns 95 and looks forward to his 100th birthday.
- Jan. 22:** Floyd Petty, 78, dies. Mr. Petty was a rural mail carrier in the Town of Walworth. He is survived by wife Dorothy and daughter Elaine Hay.
- Feb.:** A Walworth house at 4394 Boynton Road was declared a complete loss. The home was owned by Dorothy Petty of 4427 Boynton Road and was occupied by Kevin and Leon Merlin.
- Feb. 3:** Starting today, first-class charge to mail a letter weighing one ounce or less increased from 25 cents to 29 cents.
- Mar. 2:** A spring-like day breaks record. At 4:15 pm the temperature reached 68 degrees. The former high record was 58 degrees in 1874.
- Mar. 3:** Ice Storm Cripples Area. An ice storm, called the worst in the century, swept through the area leaving the ground cluttered with uprooted and downed trees and electrical and telephone wires. A state of emergency was declared and authorities closed all roads in Wayne and Monroe Counties and several surrounding counties.
- Apr.:** Walworth Town Board is expected to approve a \$1.25 million dollar town office complex at its April 11 meeting. The complex will include town hall, town court, library, police station and meeting room.
- May:** Stuart Huntley honored for his 50-year anniversary as a Walworth volunteer fireman.
- June 15:** John and Doris Traas celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. They met while John worked summers on the farm of John Keymel.
- July:** Lincoln Baptist Church celebrates its 175th anniversary.
- Oct 13:** Joe Finley, New York State Assemblyman, dies in North Carolina at the age of 75. Joe was the former Walworth Supervisor and Wayne County Clerk.
- Dec.** Walworth Town Hall work underway. Walworth officials hope structure will be finished by September 1992.

Hometown Portraits by Bob Mogray

The next meeting of the Walworth Historical Society is Monday, March 16, at 7:30 pm at the museum on Academy Street. This is our regular March meeting and the program will consist of two featured speakers. The program is "Hometown Portraits", and will feature photos and stories of many of our Walworth citizens.

The first speaker will be Gene Bavis, Walworth Town Historian and WHS board member, who will comment on and show an 8 mm movie taken by his father, Ray Bavis, of local people. The movie has been transferred to DVD and we will use our new laptop computer. The second speaker is Gordon Youngman, long-time WHS member. We will also use the laptop computer to show pictures taken by Gordon when he owned the Walworth Hardware Store. They include black and white and color photos of some of his friends and customers over the years.

Other sources will be used to present other photos of Walworth residents. The format will be such that anyone can comment on the movie or photos shown. This should be a very interesting program. Gene and Gordon are both excellent sources of Walworth information and lore.

We are hoping for many of our members to attend and bring their own stories and photos. This presentation will also give the WHS a chance to showcase our new video projector and SONY laptop computer. This is a laptop with a wide screen, built-in CD and DVD player and burner, and it even will play blu-ray disks. It has a 250 gig hard drive and 4 extra USB ports. We will probably obtain an external mouse and keyboard for ease of use. The video projector and laptop were obtained with just this type of presentation in mind; we are grateful to the Hoffman Foundation for awarding us grants to purchase this equipment. Hopefully, this equipment will make it easier for our speakers with group presentations.

So, please attend this meeting. It should be very entertaining. As always, refreshments will be provided.

NOTE: From 7 – 7:30 PM and immediately after the meeting, we will be able to scan photos to our computer. Large numbers of photos may be left with us and will be returned promptly after they have been scanned.

Walworth Historical Society 2009 Activities

All events will be held at the museum, 2257 Academy Street, unless specified otherwise.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Mon. Mar. 16	7:30 PM	General Meeting: "Hometown Portraits" by Gene Bavis and Gordon Youngman
Sun., Apr. 19	2 – 3:30	Walworth Memories, co-sponsor with library. Location: town hall meeting room. Theme: Street Dances and Such
Sat., May 2	9 - noon	Spring Clean-Up: volunteers needed for inside and outside work
Mon., May 18	6:15 PM	Pot luck supper, annual meeting, election of officers, Community Service Award. Program: A Glimpse of West Walworth.
Sun., June 14	2 – 4 PM	Flag Day celebration and open house at the museum
Tues., July 21	6:30 PM	Meet to decorate parade float. Location: TBD
Fri., July 24	7:00 PM	Festival in the Park parade; booth at Ginégaw Park
Sat., July 25	Noon - 8	Booth at Ginégaw Park
Mon., Sept. 21	7:30 PM	General Meeting: "Rosie the Riveter" by Bob Marcotte, <u>Democrat & Chronicle</u> columnist.
Sun., Oct. 4	2-5 PM	Open House
Sun., Oct. 18	2-3:30	Walworth Memories, co-sponsor with library. Location: museum. Theme: Births, Weddings, and Funerals
Mon., Nov. 16	7:30 PM	General Meeting

Board of Trustee Meetings: Mondays, 7:00 PM: Jan. 19, Feb. 16, April 20, June 15, Aug. 17, Oct. 19

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

March 2009 WHS Newsletter Bonus e-mail Photos



The West Walworth Fire Hall



The Lincoln Baptist Church



The Old Walworth Grange



The former ME Church and later Grange in Lincoln



White's store in Lincoln



Stuart Huntley 2004 Festival in the Park Parade



**Copper Beech tree at the WHS Museum
Taken after a January 2008 storm**



Dick Roland's pond



**Monnie Churchill (seated) & Jessie Keymel
(standing) May 2005**



Gananda Lake seen from Route 350