

# WALWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

**Volume 34 Number 2 Sept. 2009**



Roger Keymel pulls the WHS float in the "Going Green" Festival in the Park Parade

Walworth Museum: 2257 Academy Street, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568

WHS Website: [www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org)

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It is our hope that you watch the changing exhibits in the glass case in the meeting room at the museum. We try to complement our programs in this show case.

This month we are looking at Rosie the Riveter's time in history. For this we thank Anna May and the ladies of our community in the years of World War II. On the second shelf you will find the secretary's and the treasurer's notebooks from the ladies who wrote to the "Boys in the Service". Many cards and letters were mailed to those whose addresses are listed in the third notebook. Small gifts, local newspaper subscriptions, current magazines, and cookies were also mailed - just to keep them in touch with what was going on at home and let them know they were always in the thoughts of the people in their hometown.

The most precious book on this shelf is the scrapbook with pictures of the servicemen and women. Included in this book are letters and cards of thanks from the grateful recipients. There are samples of money from all over the world, post cards and other memorabilia from the travels of the "Boys in the Service." We owe Anna May a great debt for allowing us to glimpse into a corner of life in Walworth during a difficult time. We also owe thanks to Gordon Youngman who has kept these artifacts safe for many years.

We all know many people - perhaps you were one - who have served our country over the years and have come back to continue their lives in our midst. Thank you.

**The Old Bags of Wayne County...and Other Beautiful Accessories**

By Gene Bavis

The Wayne County Historical Society has produced a calendar for 2010. This one features ladies from each town in Wayne County who are posed with handbags, purses and hats from the museum's collection. To be politically correct, I must point out that the purses are the "old bags" and the ladies are the "beautiful accessories."

Some of you may recall that I was the "cover boy" for the 2008 calendar, called the "Hottest Antiques in Wayne County." In February 2009, Museum Director Larry Ann Evans called my wife. She started the conversation with "We are going to do another calendar this year featuring the ladies..." Before Larry Ann could even get the words out of her mouth, Liz replied, "I'd love to!" So, Liz became Walworth's representative as Miss May.



We have had a wonderful time embarrassing our children. In both cases we kept the fact that we had posed until the calendars came out. We then presented copies of the calendars to our family members. My son, Jeff, who is currently serving in Afghanistan, received a copy in the mail. It turns out that one of the officers working with him is a friend of Liz's daughter. So we asked her to take a picture of his reaction. We hear that it was caught on video, but we haven't seen it yet...WHAT FUN!

So...if you have a sense of humor and enjoy "off the wall" things, please support the Wayne County Historical Society by purchasing a copy of this calendar. We will have them available throughout the fall at the Walworth Museum or Town Clerks office for \$15 each. PS...Our neighbors - Marion Historian Carolyn Adriaansen and Palmyra Historian Beth Hoad - are also featured in the calendar, and the "cover girl" is former Williamson Town Supervisor Mary Ann Blienk.

**WHS member Liz Bavis posing as Miss May in the Wayne County Historical Society 2010 Calendar.**



One of the new WHS signs

Thanks to Larry Ruth and Roger Keymel, we now have four new signs that can be put at various intersections to direct people to the museum. The signs were designed in such a way so that we can slide in special event notices. When you visit the museum, be sure to take a look.

We have a special request. To protect and preserve these signs, especially when they are being transported, we'd like to have someone make some covers for them. We are thinking that an old blanket sewed into the shape of an oversized pillow case would work nicely. Any volunteers? Please contact Jessie or any of the trustees if you can help with that project (phone numbers are listed on the front cover of this newsletter).

## Flag Day at the Museum

By Gene Bavis

On Sunday, June 14, the Walworth Historical Society decided to "jazz up" our regular summer Sunday Open House with something special. Wasn't it convenient that Flag Day fell on Sunday this year? We invited Scouts from Troop and Pack 113 to take part in various ceremonies to celebrate our flag and our heritage.



Troop 113 Boy Scouts on Flag Day

Among the ceremonies were a flag raising, flag folding ceremony (while someone read the significance of each fold), some readings/poetry about the flag, patriotic music (flag-related, of course), a flag disposal ceremony (we reverently burned about 20 tattered and torn flags), and a flag retreat ceremony. The Scouts and their leaders did an EXCELLENT job...Thank you!

Thanks also to Larry Ruth who brought his restored Army Jeep to display. Liz and Gene Bavis gathered several bits of flag information and prepared two packets to hand out: one for young people and one for older children and adults. We have a few of those left if anyone would like one. Please drop by the museum when we are open or contact Gene ([gbavis@rochester.rr.com](mailto:gbavis@rochester.rr.com), 315-986-1474).

OH...let's not forget that NO historical society event is ever complete without refreshments...Thanks to those who supplied the "goodies."

## WHS Hosts WHO Meeting

By Jessie Keymel

On Wednesday, August 19, the Walworth Historical Society hosted the WHO (Wayne Historians Organization) at our museum. There were 26 members of Wayne County historical societies and historians present. This is an informal time of sharing ideas and information.

Susie Jacobs and Joyce Gumina, Walworth town clerk and deputy town clerk, shared what information is on death certificates and what is available to researchers. Also speaking on the subject of available information were Chester Peters, Williamson Town Historian and administrator and caretaker of the Pultneyville Cemetery, and Preston E. Pierce, EdD, DHP, Regional Archivist for the Rochester Regional Library Council.

The WHO meetings are held in town museums throughout the county and are a valuable source of information sharing. Walworth Historical Society is always represented at these meetings.

## **Sept. 21 Mtg. Features “Rosie the Riveter”**

By Mary Jane Devlin

Our Monday, September 21, meeting will feature Bob Marcotte speaking about “Rosie the Riveter”. Bob is a Managing Editor and columnist for the Democrat & Chronicle newspaper. His main topic for the newspaper is local history. He is a native of Kansas and came to the Rochester area in 1976.

He has done this program for the Pultneyville Historical Society, as well as for many other groups, and comes highly recommended.

More than six million women helped to build planes, bombs, tanks and other weapons during World War II. You probably know of someone who helped in this effort. The term “Rosie the Riveter” became popular during World War II to describe these women.

There is a song written by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb to honor the women.

Come to the museum on September 21 to hear Bob Marcotte discuss this era in United States history. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Meetings are free and open to the public. Donations are gratefully accepted. The museum is located at 2257 Academy Street.

## **OH! OH!**

By Mary Jane Devlin

Some people forgot to pay their dues. Time goes by so quickly that it seems we have no sooner paid our dues and they are due again. Because our year runs from May 1 to April 30 each year, our annual dues are due May 1. Dues from several members are due now. If your membership dues have not been paid for 2009-10, you will see a RED dot on the mailing label. We have enclosed a membership form for your convenience. For those who receive their newsletter via e-mail, there will be an electronic reminder sent to you. Checks may be sent to the address on the front of this newsletter. Thanks for your help in preserving the history of Walworth.

Life memberships are available from the Walworth Historical Society. These once-in-a-lifetime dues of \$150 go into our Endowment Fund.

Gift memberships are available at several levels including single, family, supporting, sponsor and life. We thank the people who have given memberships. We would encourage others to give gift memberships at any time.

If you are interested in any of these memberships or if you have any questions, please contact me at the number on the front of this newsletter, or at any of the meetings.

## **Visit Our Museum This Summer**

There's something for everyone at the Walworth Museum, and summer is the perfect time for a visit. Youngsters can check out toys played by children not so long ago. Adults interested in genealogy have access to scrapbooks donated by Dorothy Petty, Anna May, and the Walworth Chamber of Commerce. Local cemetery records have been catalogued by Doug Churchill for easy access, in addition to obituaries and wedding/engagement information.

Our museum is located at 2257 Academy Street and is open on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons from 2 – 4 PM June through September. Appointments for other days can be made by contacting Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 or Nancy Bel at 315-986-1164.

## **Status of Photo Restoration Project**

By Jessie Keymel

When you visit the museum please take a look at the Walworth High School Classes of 1941 and 1946 restored pictures. The restoration was done by the Village Frame Shoppe in Macedon at a cost of \$81.58, which was under the original estimate. The photos from the Classes of 1942 and 1948 are scheduled to be done next. This ongoing project will preserve these photos for many years

## **Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday, WHS Museum!** **Help Us Celebrate at October 4 Open House**

**Our annual fall open house will be special this year as we are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday of our museum. Help us celebrate this momentous occasion on Sunday, October 4, from 2 – 5 PM. Someone will be available to scan photos or documents so bring them with you. Weather permitting, there will be an escorted walking tour of the village; this has been a popular attraction in the past. Of course there will be a birthday cake with 20 candles.**

And now a bit of history about our museum: It was a dream come true, although it took 14 years for it to happen. “It” was the dedication of our museum building on September 17, 1989 – the culmination of hard work and enthusiastic community spirit from many people.

The dream began September 11, 1975, when the Walworth Historical Society was organized at a meeting held at Walworth Elementary School. In 1977 the Walworth-Seely Public Library offered its second floor upper front room above the library to the Society, but it ultimately proved too costly to make handicap accessible. Walworth Elementary School granted the use of one of their rooms for storage of historical properties for the school year 1979 – 80.

In 1985, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford (Emily) Huntley donated a parcel of land at the corner of Academy and High Streets across from the Walworth school. The area had been known for many years as “The Park”. Because the gift was made in memory of Theron G. Yeomans, Clifford’s great-grandfather, the WHS trustees designated the area as Yeomans Park. Fundraising began in earnest in 1987. It was estimated the total cost of the project would be \$50,000. In May 1988 enough money was raised to build the shell and finish the exterior. When the Grange members sold their building on Main Street, they pledged \$25,000 toward the new building. In return, the Grangers would share meeting space with the historical society.

After drainage issues were resolved and survey and site plans completed by Marty Aman, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board granted approvals. WHS trustees met with an architect and approved plans for a Cape Cod-style building with the second story to be used as storage. The first floor would consist of a meeting room and display area, an office, kitchenette, and two restrooms. The original design called for only one restroom, but state building codes required two facilities. General contractors were Don and Cheryl Eaton; the grading and digging were done by Joe Englert. In recent years, the second story has been finished and shelves and a small closet were added.

Groundbreaking took place on July 10, 1988. Taking part in the ceremony were Rev. Tom Fleming, Congressman Frank Horton, and representatives from the Walworth Town Board. WHS President Kay Scott turned over the first shovel full of dirt. Following the September 17, 1989, dedication ceremony at the Walworth Baptist Church, the majority of the attendees walked the short block to the museum to inspect the new facility. State Assemblyman Frank Talomie was present to extend his congratulations. We have a detailed account of the efforts required to make the museum a reality, thanks to information documented by Hazel Bassage for our organization’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2000.



**The Yeomans Park sign was painted by Larry Ruth and erected by John Traas and John Scott.**



**1988: The site of the soon-to-be Walworth Museum.**

**2009 Walworth Festival in the Park** by Judy McMillan & Bob Mogray

This year's Festival in the Park, sponsored by the Walworth Lions Club, was held on July 24 and 25 at Ginegaw Town Park. The theme for this year was "Going Green". Being a rural community, Walworth has always been green. Theron Yeomans established one of the first nurseries in the area and supplied orchard stock as well as ornamental trees and shrubs. The magnificent copper beech trees of the area (Walworth has nine of them, including the one that stands next to the museum) are from Mr. Yeomans' stock from around 1850. Walworth town historian Gene Bavis also has one of these trees in front of his home on Main Street.

The WHS Festival in the Park parade float demonstrated the "Going Green" theme by displaying shrubs, lilacs, blue spruce trees, Douglas firs, and other local greenery borrowed from WHS member Jim Hamman of Plank Road. This year's float was mostly designed and constructed by Jessie and Roger Keymel. Roger, as he has done for many years, pulled the float in the parade with his tractor and is shown on the cover of this newsletter. Many thanks to both of them from all of us for working so hard this year and every year to get the floats organized and built. Without Roger and Jessie working on this at their home, it would be very difficult for the WHS to have a float in the parade every year.

The parade judging results are as follows:

Best Parade Float.....Walworth Recreation Dept.	Best Classic Car.....Sonny French
Best Marching Unit.....Towpath Volunteers	Best Auto.....Norm Dill
Best original entry.....Two Cylinders Club	Best Tractor.....Jim Airy

This year's Festival did not include any carnival rides but there were other options such as inflatable rock climbing, the Velcro wall, and a bungee trampoline. The Lions Club and Recreation Department combined to show the movie "Hotel for Dogs" on an outdoor screen.

This year the WHS again shared a booth with the Friends of Walworth-Seeley Public Library at the Festival tent where photos, calendars, and many other items were on display. Thanks to the volunteers who sat at the festival booth this year. Next year we will be looking to come up with new ideas for items that we could sell not only at the festival but at our open house and meetings. Please call Jessie Keymel at 315 524-9205 or Bob Mogray at 585-576-4156 with any suggestions.



**From left to right:  
Nancy Bel, Kathy Aeckerle, and Mike  
McEwen in the WHS booth at the  
Festival in the Park.**

Although World War II was fought on foreign soil, there was a need for observation and security procedures on the home front. Area volunteers stepped up to the challenge, as noted during conversations at our March 2007 Walworth Memories program.

Leighton Bel remembered a tower built on hilly property owned by Bob Halm, approximately one mile north of the village, on Walworth-Ontario Road. Spotters would watch for airplanes and identify them. They would then call the next tower in Fairport to tell them what aircraft was headed their way. Nancy Bel (Leighton's wife) said her dad, Cliff Nortier, was a fruit farmer and exempt from serving in the military. However, he volunteered to be an air raid warden and was assigned to Walworth-Penfield Road.

Several attendees remembered having to turn off all lights when an air raid siren was activated. They sat in the dark, with shades and drapes drawn, until the all-clear whistle sounded. The wail of the siren was a scary noise, they added. And we have learned about a second facility where observers watched for planes. Nelson Schommer, formerly of Lincoln but now of Palmyra, recently visited the museum and mentioned a little building located behind the Lincoln Baptist Church on Lincoln Road. He described the building as a shed with a phone; the observer called in the type of plane and the time it flew overhead.

These buildings were manned 24 hours a day by volunteers. There are several certificates in the museum from the Army Air Force Aircraft Warning Service that were given to people who took on this important mission of Honorable Service. Howard and Pearl Billings received certificates in May 1944, as did Mrs. Howard (Hazel) Bassage.

Also in our archives is a May 16, 1944, letter from the United States War Department, announcing that the aircraft warning centers would be closed in the near future. The Aircraft Warning Service would soon be operating on a reduced scale and its facilities would be absorbed into installations used for training of fighter pilots. Volunteers were requested to maintain a high level of secrecy and not discuss their volunteer work. WHS is aware there were at least three observation spots in the town. The third location may have been on Kuttruff Road. If you have any information about this location, contact any WHS officer or trustee; names and phone numbers are listed on the front cover of this newsletter.

**Next Walworth Memories: Sunday, October 18** By Dorothy French

The cycle of life – from cradle to grave. How did families celebrate these special events? What customs were followed during these occasions?

Were you born at home when doctors made house calls, sometimes arriving in a horse and buggy? Did you participate in a horning or shivaree, when friends - armed with pots and pans and other noisemakers - visited the newlyweds on their wedding night? Do you remember receiving a letter and an envelope edged in black, informing you of someone's death?

Come to the museum on Sunday, October 18, from 2 – 3:30 PM and share your memories. This semi-annual event is co-sponsored by the Walworth Historical Society and the Walworth-Seely Public Library. Jay Taber will be the facilitator. Refreshments will be provided. The museum is located at 2257 Academy Street. This program is free, although donations are accepted. If you have questions, contact Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 or Mary Zingerella at 315-986-1511.

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**Membership Information for Fiscal Year May 1, 2009 – April 30, 2010**

**Check the appropriate category:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$ 5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$ 50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$ 100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint or Family	\$ 15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership	\$ 150.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$ 25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$ 150.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate or Business	\$ 30.00		

*Thank you for helping us to continue our mission of preserving history for the future.  
(see reverse side)*

## Scrapbook Memories By Joyce Finney

The year was 1996; these events were recorded by Dorothy Petty in her scrapbook.

- January 2** Freewill School marks 40th Year. Present at the ceremony were many Board of Education members and well wishers. Eight teachers who have been at Freewill since the January 1971 opening are still teaching at the school.
- February 2** Harold and Virginia Ginegaw celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.
- June 20** Walworth Town Historian is given award. At the annual meeting of the Walworth Historical Society John Traas received the Community Service Award.
- June** Olympic Torch, on its 47th day of its 84-day trek across America, made its historic run through Wayne County. Many came to Palmyra and Macedon to watch and greet Olympic torch runner Brian Miner of Rome.
- August** Prince Charles and Princess Diana divorced. Decree for the royal pair receives its final stamp. The couple had been married 15 years.

### Walworth Historical Society 2009 Events Calendar

Save this schedule and mark your calendar for meetings and activities planned during the remainder of 2009. All events will be held at the museum, 2257 Academy Street, unless otherwise specified. All programs are free, although donations are gratefully accepted.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Mon., Sept. 21	7:30 PM	General Meeting. Program: "Rosie the Riveter" by Bob Marcotte, <u>Democrat and Chronicle</u> columnist.
Sun., Oct. 4	2-5 PM	Open House to celebrate museum's 20 <sup>th</sup> birthday. Escorted walking tour of the village.
Sun., Oct. 18	2-3:30	Walworth Memories, co-sponsor with library. Location: museum. Theme: "Births, Weddings, and Funerals" – the cycle of life.
Mon., Nov. 16	7:30 PM	General Meeting. Program: "Walworth's Cobblestones" by Ron and Juanita Matteson, Larry and Judy McMillan, and Gene and Liz Bavis

**Board of Trustee Meeting, 7:00 PM:** November 2

**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.

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Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Make check payable to: Walworth Historical Society and mail to P. O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**September 2009 WHS Newsletter Bonus e-mail Photos**



**Top:** This year's WHS Festival Parade float.

**Left:** Roger Keymel pulls the WHS float in the Festival in the Park Parade.



**WHS board member Larry Ruth in his restored Jeep in the parade.**



**Walworth Fire Department fire truck in the parade.**



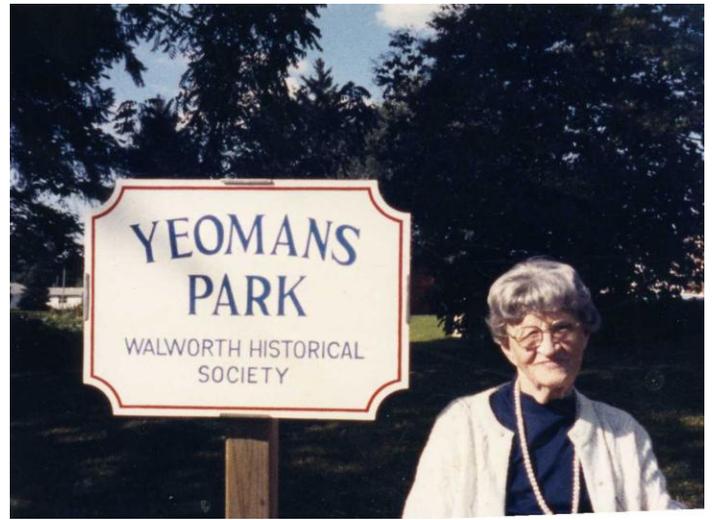
**Friends of the Walworth-Seely Library and kids in the parade.**



**Dorothy and Sonny French in the Friends booth at the park.**



Preparing float in a previous Festival Parade



Emily Huntley at Yeomans Park before the museum was built



An early museum photo after the bell was installed  
Left: John Traas Right: Roger Keymel



The museum just after it was built



Top: Early photo of the museum, copper beech tree, and the bell installed

Left: Rosie the Riveter poster from World War II