

WALWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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Walworth Museum: 20 years old



Walworth Museum: 2257 Academy Street, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568
WHS Website: www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org

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President's Message

By Jessie Keymel

Many of the stories and photos of your family are important to us - the people entrusted with preserving the history of Walworth. This proved true this summer when Gene Reynolds stopped at the museum on a Wednesday afternoon. He has been working on his family genealogy and brought us photos and information on the Lounsbury and Reynolds families. Gene's father, Harold, was a town judge for many years and his mother, Mabel, was the first town historian; both played important roles in the stories of Walworth.

Donna Stalker also visited the museum bearing gifts. She has given us a collection of political buttons. Donna has shared with us information on the Huntley and Tuttle families. Thanks to Donna and the diligence of her grandmother, Emily Tuttle Huntley, we have documents from the Walworth Grange, Walworth High School and the Walworth Academy.

Larry Ruth, a member of our museum's board, has donated his collection of school yearbooks. He was yearbook advisor for 28 years at Wayne Central School's Thomas C. Armstrong Middle School. Yearbooks are a valuable tool in family research; thank you, Larry, for contributing to our growing collection of yearbooks.

The many different gifts we receive from the residents of Walworth help our collection to grow, and the variety of items certainly keeps the collection interesting. Did you see our October exhibits? One display case highlighted a journey through seven generations of the Jacob Frowley family - from their immigration to upstate New York, through marriages, births/baptisms, and deaths - the complete "Cycle of Life." Thank you, Kathy Aeckerle for sharing them with us. Mary Earlandt shared a display of objects that marked time in her family, including a christening dress from 1910. Also on display were two wedding dresses from our own collection, one from the 1890's and one from the 1930's.

We are grateful for these donations and also to the people who loan us items for display purposes.

Photos of Walworth and Walworth People Wanted!

By Gene Bavis

Written history is GREAT, but we are also a visual society. Since Matthew Brady and other photographers made it possible for us to see images of important events, we have been taking all sorts of pictures. Most 20th and 21st century families have boxes of photos. The museum has the beginnings of a decent collection of photos of the Walworth area, but there are likely to be many more available that we DON'T have.

One category in particular that we are interested in is people. Genealogists are constantly researching family histories. It would be great if we could show them pictures of some of the people they are researching. These could be formal portraits or snapshots. You might have some of those photos. Recently Bob Mogray tried to find some pictures of the former Town Supervisors for display at the town hall; he was able to locate some but the picture gallery is incomplete. Another category is places; this could be stores, businesses, houses or barns. Buildings come and go or get remodeled; we'd like to be able to see the changes. Events are also often photographed. Do you have pictures taken at parades, street dances or other gatherings? Reminder: it is very important these photos are labeled and identified.

The good news is you DO NOT have to give up the photographs unless you want to donate them to the museum. What we REALLY WANT is to scan them into our computer. If you loan them to us for a short time we can copy them and then return them to you. We can copy them on the spot if you have the time to wait. PLEASE share your pictures with us. Digital photography has been popular for about 10 years now. If you have digital images, we'd be happy to receive them as well. Yesterday is history, too. Photos don't have to be old to be important. To share your photos, contact Bob Mogray, Jessie Keymel, or any WHS Board Member.

Cobblestone Houses: Nov. 16 WHS Program

by Judy McMillan

Cobblestone houses will be the subject of the next general meeting of the Walworth Historical Society on Monday, November 16, at 7:30 PM at the museum, 2257 Academy Street. The public is invited to this informative presentation by WHS members Ron Matteson, Gene Bavis, and Judy McMillan. Refreshments will be available.

Are you aware that:

- cobblestone houses are considered “folk art”
- from 1825 until the Civil War over 700 cobblestone buildings were built in western New York State, and
- many are still in existence and used today?

Stone houses can be found worldwide, but New York State’s cobblestone houses are unique. New York had an abundance of stones because of glacial deposits and the wave action of Lake Ontario, as well as prehistoric Lake Iroquois.



The cobblestone home of Ron and Juanita Matteson, 4625 Lewis Road



The cobblestone home of Larry and Judy McMillan, 5097 Walworth-Ontario Road

The Tuttle family has deep roots in Walworth. When Howard Triou recently donated this photo of DeWitt and Minnie Tuttle to the museum, our curiosity about the Tuttle family resulted in some research. One of the sources we checked was a booklet, Walworth, As I Remember It. It was written in 1990 by Charles H. Pembroke, long-time Walworth resident whose knowledge and ingenuity could fix almost anything. The booklet is available for sale at our museum.

Charlie wrote about DeLass and Mary Louise (Maria Knapp) Tuttle, who lived east of town. DeLass was a farmer and financier and would loan money to people. Their children, DeWitt, Frank, and Mary (also known as May), followed in their father's financial footsteps as adults. When the new school on Academy Street was built in 1930, the three offspring each loaned \$30,000 to come up with \$90,000 – the price of a new school.

According to Charlie, "DeWitt was honest and always lived up to his word. He would furnish folks with cows and horses and put them on a farm of his and all he got was half of the milk check."

DeWitt married Minnie Reynolds and they had one daughter, Emily May (Mae). She married Clifford Mason Huntley and they had two sons, Stuart Tuttle Huntley and Clifford Donald Huntley. In 1985 Emily and Clifford donated the property at the corner of High and Academy Streets to the Walworth Historical Society, enabling the community to build a museum which would house artifacts and memorabilia from this area.



Editor's Note #1: Donald's daughter, Donna Huntley Stalker, has been researching the genealogy of the Tuttle and other related families – a huge task when realizing the number of families who are related to one another. She told us that DeWitt's first name was Allen, although it was seldom used, and his father's name was actually Loyal DeLos Tuttle (not DeLass). Donna also mentioned that Frank Tuttle was a twin; his sibling died at birth.

Editor's Note #2: Charlie Pembroke spent many hours documenting his memories about local residents and events so they could be published for posterity. Do you have stories to tell about DeWitt or others from Walworth? The mission of the Walworth Historical Society is to preserve the past for the present and the future. These memories are lost unless they are documented in a journal or scrapbook. Take the time to begin this project now, and then share them with us.

Left: Minnie and DeWitt Tuttle

A Review of 2009 – and an Opportunity to Help

By Jessie Keymel

This year is coming to an end very fast. We have only one more meeting scheduled (the November 16 program on Cobblestone Houses) and then we go into our winter hiatus. Work on our collections will continue, and we welcome new additions at any time. If you have family coming in during the holiday season and would like to have them visit our museum, please call a board member - we will gladly open the museum for show and tell time.

Thank you for your help in keeping the museum open during the summer months. A special thanks to the members who served more than one time. Next year we hope to have more volunteers spend Sunday afternoon hosting visitors. The two hours at the museum pass quickly when you start opening scrapbooks or browsing through the historical photos and articles we have collected. We need someone to help with the scheduling of this important part of our society. A coordinator would ensure we have Sunday coverage at the museum during the summer months (June through September). This is a task that can easily be handled via phone or e-mail from home.

Once again thank you for your support throughout the year. I hope to see you at our November 16 meeting.

Remembering the Gypsies

By Gordon Youngman

I first remember the gypsies coming to town when I was four or five years old. In 1932 our family lived in the second house beyond what is now the Walworth Post Office on the Walworth-Marion Road. One day, when brother Billy and myself were playing on the front porch, we heard a lot of singing and music. We looked up the street to the west and saw a large group of people heading in our direction. This was very exciting for us, as there was not much going on in our little town. To say the least, we were very fascinated with all the clamor.

There must have been close to 30 or 40 people – men, women, and children – in the group. The women and children were dressed in very colorful clothing with equally colorful head scarves. Some of the men were on horseback and several men were driving old trucks. The women and older children were on foot. They were playing music, banging on pots and pans, singing to the tops of their voices and more or less dancing down the street.

About the time Billy and I were caught up in the action of everything, mother came out the door and pulled us inside the house. We could not understand what we had done wrong, as it was not uncommon for us to be in trouble. Mother explained to us that the people were gypsies and would steal anything they could put their hands on, including little white children. This scared the devil out of us, so we watched from inside of the house until they passed. We found out later that the group had set up camp on the big hill just west of Huntley Road in the town of Marion. Each family had their own campfire for cooking meals and a tent for sleeping. After their evening meal, they would gather and play their music and dance. People from town would walk or drive over to enjoy the show they put on. After it was about over, the gypsy children would pass among the crowd and take up a collection.

The following day they would leave and head for another town – traveling from town to town and state to state – finally ending up in the warmer states for the winter months. This became an annual event for a few years. When people in town heard them coming, they would rush outside and grab any brooms, tools, or other items of value and bring them inside. I never heard of any children being taken. I guess mother used that just to scare the be-gee-us out of Billy and myself.

My next encounter with the gypsies came many years later at the time my wife Katie and I operated a variety store in Walworth. In the late '50s or early '60s a group started coming around to the small towns. They traveled in a couple of cars and there were only women. About eight or ten would enter the store at one time and – while two or three would keep the clerks distracted – the rest circulated the store. This gave them a free hand to pick up what they wanted and out the door they would go. After the first time this happened, the merchants wised up and the next time they came to town some quick phone calls were made. As soon as possible the store doors would be locked until they left town. We even made calls to other towns alerting them that the gypsies were on the way.

Holiday Gifts and Other Ideas

By Jessie Keymel

The holidays and the end of another year are fast approaching. Perhaps this is a good time to remind you that gifts to the Walworth Historical Society are tax deductible as we are a 501(c)3 organization. Our mission is to preserve the past for the present and the future; your financial help is required and appreciated to help us achieve this goal.

We pride ourselves on being good financial stewards with the money that is given to us, whether it is in the form of dues, donations, memorials, or from the sale of items listed below. Sales tax is included in each price. Contact any officer or trustee listed on the front copy of this newsletter for additional information.

- Books:
 - “Walworth, As I Remember It” by Charles Pembroke: \$5.50
 - “Walworth – From Douglas Corners to Gananda” by John Traas: \$4.50
- Calendars: 2005 and 2006: \$5.00 each
- Coverlet (4x6) Washington blue or cranberry: \$46.00
- Ornaments: \$7.50
- Wayne County History Book: \$25.00
- 2010 Calendar, “Old Bags of Wayne County”, published by the Wayne County Historical Society: \$15.00

A gift of membership to WHS is easy to obtain – no crowds or parking lots to deal with at a mall. Memberships are available for Student \$5; Individual \$10; Joint or Family \$15; Supporting \$25; Corporate or Business \$30; Sponsor \$50; Patron \$100; Life Membership \$150; and Benefactor \$150.

As the holiday season draws nearer, we have much to be thankful for, especially the continued support we receive from everyone – those who are Walworth residents and those who fondly remember the area although they no longer live here.

Walworth Museum is 20 Years Old By Gene Bavis

On Sunday, October 4, the Walworth Historical Society celebrated the 20th birthday of our museum building. It was built in 1989 and has served us well ever since.

Displays showed pictures that captured the history of our building – from the empty lot at the corner of High and Academy Streets, to a dedication ceremony, a bulldozer preparing the ground for construction purposes, a work-in-progress structure, and finally the long-awaited open house signifying the building’s completion. All of this work was accomplished through the efforts of many people who shared a dream of having a museum to house Walworth-related memorabilia. A group of black and white photos, taken in 1977, showed boxes of items belonging to the Walworth Historical Society that were temporarily being stored on the second floor of the Jay Seely building.

This year’s annual open house also included a walking tour of the hamlet. And, of course, a birthday party is not complete without the traditional cake and candles.



Walworth Museum as it looked 20 years ago



Walworth Museum as it looks today

Walworth High School Senior Class Pictures By Mary Jane Devlin

Walworth Historical Society has been slowly restoring the Walworth High School Senior class pictures that have been donated to us. To date we have had four pictures restored: 1941, 1942, 1946, and 1948. We will be restoring at least two more in the near future. The pictures have been cleaned, debugged, and reframed with matting and spacers, using conservation glass.

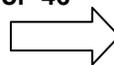
They look wonderful hanging in the hall. Fortunately, we have received donations to cover most of the work. You may still donate by sending a check to the address listed on the front of the newsletter. We hope you stop in to see the restored pictures.



Left: Class of '45 photo is scheduled to be done



Right: Class of '46



The October 18 Walworth Memories program at our museum was a sharing of stories ranging from humorous to sad recollections of births, marriages, and deaths in the “Cycle of Life”. This semi-annual event is co-sponsored by the Walworth Historical Society and the Walworth-Seely Public Library.

Items from seven generations of the Jacob Frowley family were on display, including clothing, photos, documents, and other memorabilia. These were shared by Jacob’s descendant and WHS member Kathy Yuker Aeckerle. Also admired was the wedding dress worn by Kathy’s aunt, Dorothy Yuker, when she married Floyd Petty on April 9, 1938.

Many of the attendees said they were born at home. Someone would contact a doctor when delivery was imminent. An attendee said her father drove his horse and carriage to bring Dr. E. E. Esley to her parents’ home to deliver her. Full-length christening gowns were worn by girls and boys, a custom that still exists today when heirloom clothing has been passed to succeeding generations.



Mary Zingerella, Dorothy French, moderator Jay Taber, and Arline Taber at the memories meeting at the museum.

The marriage portion of the program brought abundant laughter when stories were told about cars being “sabotaged” and hornings held for unsuspecting newlyweds. “Friends” would attempt to locate the car the couple would be using on their honeymoon and decorate it, let the air out of the tires, or remove the battery. Other “friends” would wait until a couple returned from their honeymoon and visit them in the wee hours of the morning, banging pails together, blowing a fire horn – anything to create a noise so the newlyweds would be forced to invite them inside. Then the mischievous merrymakers would remove light bulbs, short sheet the bed, hide limburger cheese behind the radiators, or remove labels from canned goods.

Attendees agreed today’s bridal showers and weddings are very different from those held decades ago. Now a theme is selected, a gift registry is available, and gifts are no longer the practical items that were given years ago. Weddings often occurred at the church parsonage or the home of the bride, with receptions held at home and neighbors and relatives providing the food.

Death and burial – the final cycle of life – could take the form of an Irish wake that seemed to last forever or a gathering at the family home for several days. At the family home the deceased was laid out in the front parlor, a room reserved only for special occasions such as a visit from the church pastor. Photographs of the deceased were often taken as a remembrance. Death announcements took several forms: Envelopes and letters edged in black were an omen of sad news, a wreath was hung on the door of the deceased, or death notices and perhaps a photo were posted in the front window of a store or Post Office.

Someone told the story about a family who bought a house and then discovered little boxes on the pantry shelf. They called the former owners and told them they forgot their relatives.

Bob Marcotte Was Here By Mary Jane Devlin

Bob Marcotte, a features editor for the Democrat and Chronicle, was our speaker for the September meeting. Bob spoke about “Rosie the Riveter” of World War II fame. Women took over many jobs that had previously been held by men. The men were off to war so the women had to step in and work in the factories. World War II changed the long-standing belief that women belong at home taking care of the kids, cooking and cleaning.



Bob Marcotte

Many factories were re-tooled to make parts and products that were used in the war effort. Odenbach Shipping Corp. in Rochester made tanker ships. Kodak, Bausch & Lomb, Gleason Works, Consolidated Machine Corp., and many other factories in the area contributed to the Allied victory.

Bob opened the meeting for people to share their memories of World War II. Some of the discussion centered on milkweed pods, War Bonds, blackouts, rationing, airplane spotters, German immigrants, and German prisoners of war.

The display case contained items from Anna May and donated by Gordon Youngman. Included were a scrap-book and address book that had information about local servicemen and women. Military apparel and a Purple Heart awarded to Lloyd Ginegaw were also on display. Refreshments were served and enjoyed by all.



Jacque Ruth shows off her Rosie the Riveter shirt

Walworth Historical Society
2009 Events Calendar

November marks the last of our scheduled meetings and activities at the museum this year. We have begun to plan events for 2010 and welcome program ideas. Contact any of the officers or trustees listed on the front cover of this newsletter if you have a program suggestion.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Mon., Nov. 16	7:30 PM	General Meeting. Program: “Cobblestone Houses” by Ron Matteson, Judy McMillan, and Gene Bavis

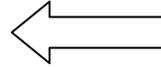
Board of Trustee Meeting, 7:00 PM: Nov. 2

Open House Hours: Although summer has ended and the museum is now officially closed, tours or visits can be arranged anytime during the year by contacting Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 for an appointment.

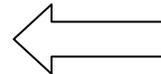
November 2009 WHS Newsletter Bonus e-mail Photos



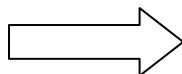
Photo of Walworth Memories meeting for October 2009. Left to right, Helen Triou, Claire and Joyce Van Haneghem.



Left to right, WHS treasurer Mary Jane Devlin and September meeting speaker Bob Marcotte.

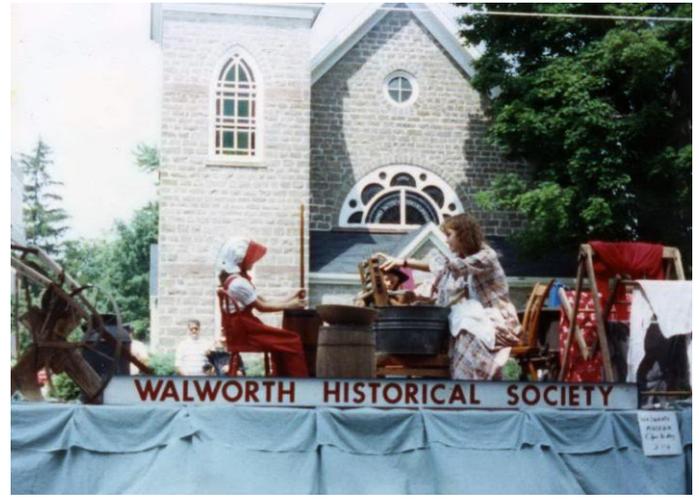


WHS members attend the September meeting at the Walworth museum.





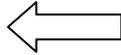
Walworth citizens



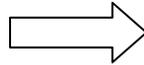
WHS Festival in the Park float: July 1992



**Left: Bessie Seely
85 years old (1966)**



**Right: Louis and Gertrude
Duell: 1965**



Legendary Walworth snowplow: the Linn



Katie Youngman at the Walworth Fire Hall