

Cheese Factory and School: Part 4

By Robert L Wignall

Editor's Note: The recent stories in our newsletter about area cheese factories prompted Robert L.. Wignall, WHS member residing in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to share his memories about the Marion Cheese Factory located just east of Walworth.

The 1927 obituary for my great-grandfather, Robert Wignall, says he was "superintendent of cheese factories in Walworth, Cazenovia, Macedon, Williamson, Marion, and Blandford, Massachusetts (the latter in 1879-80)." He was a professional musician, but I guess for those early years (the family immigrated in 1867), cheese-making was his means of financial support. In 1881 he moved to Fairport and was thereafter employed by the Deland Company, while managing their band.

The foundation ruins were on the road to Marion and I remember them clearly. However, before they put the "straight" road through from Walworth to Marion, the directions for anyone going to Marion were as follows: from Walworth go east to the end of the road (at Hall Center Rd/Maple Ave.), turn left, and take the first right; then go to the end of the road again (Cory Corners Rd/Parker Rd), turn left and take the first right; follow that into Marion!!! I'm not positive which intersection the ruins were on, but I think it was Hall Center/Maple Ave. In any case, the ruins were on the southeast corner of the intersection. When the straight road was finally put through, the ruins were obliterated.

Just a short distance north from that same intersection, there was an old barn on the left side of Hall Center Road and next to it were the remains of an old district schoolhouse (with front door and bell tower). That was where George R. Wignall and, I suppose his siblings, went to school while living in the nearby cheese factory. That was as far as his schooling ever took George. We understood that all the cheese factories had living quarters - similar to a house with a cheese-making shed attached.

After their deaths, one of the old implements we found in George and Carrie Wignall's attic was a fairly large wooden cheese press. I remember playing with it as a youngster and I think we must have donated it to the Lyons Museum, as there was no Walworth Museum at that time.