

Walworth Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 27

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May, 2003

Our Annual Meeting & Pot Luck Dinner
May 19 at 6:00 PM Please Join Us!

Penny Frederick will be our featured speaker and her topic will be Burial Grounds. This will be a kick off for a series of programs on the topic of cemeteries, tombstones, and burial customs. While it sounds a little morbid, the topic is actually very interesting.

The evening will begin with our Pot Luck Dinner which has been a WHS tradition since the beginning. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Beverages will be provided.

Following the dinner, a BRIEF business meeting will take place and we will elect officers for the coming year.

About 7:15 or 7:30 our speaker will present her program. We hope you will attend.

Our fiscal year begins with this meeting, so dues may be paid at this time.

A Common Inscription

AS YOU ARE NOW,
SO ONCE WAS I;
AS I AM NOW,
SO YOU MUST BE.
SO PREPARE FOR DEATH
AND FOLLOW ME.

Learn and Share About the Past **Rescheduled** for Sept. 28

Do you have memories to share about the Walworth area? Would you like to learn more about this community you call home? Here's your chance.

Last month's ice storm resulted in the cancellation of the April 6 "Walworth Memories", the event co-sponsored by Walworth-Seely Public Library and the Walworth Historical Society. It has been rescheduled for Sunday, September 28, at 2 PM in the Town Hall

This program is of interest to newcomers, as well as to those who have lived in the area for many years. People are encouraged to bring photos or other memorabilia that tell a story. Or just come to listen to others reminisce about the good old days. If you have an item that you know is old but don't know what it is, perhaps someone can help

THANK YOU!

On a bright but cool Saturday May 3rd, 13 WHS members gave up their morning to spring-clean the Museum. Thanks to them everything inside is spic and span. Our windows are washed, the curtains are freshly laundered, we are ready for Summer guests! Our gardens have all been edged, weeded and mulched. Our curb appeal gets top marks; we are ready for a busy season. Thank you all. It was a morning well spent.

Everything that happened yesterday (and even today) is HISTORY! Be an historian.

Memories of Walworth

By Radah Wing Wascenski

I remember my childhood as being a happy one. We moved to the farm in Walworth when I was 18 months old. I don't recall much about the Hamlet of Walworth until I started school, except that we went to Second Baptist Church. One of the special memories is going to church in the sleigh in the wintertime, complete with sleigh bells.

Mother used to say that once I started school I was no longer content playing alone and pestered her to let me visit my friends, all of whom lived miles away and the only way to get there---"shoe leather express". We all walked to school. The farm was just a mile from the "village" but many students lived farther to the east, Youngs and Cramers on Hall Center Road, Blankenburgs at the top of the big hill on Huntley Road, DeNagle's on Maple Avenue. It was always a plus when I was ready to go when they came along, and I didn't have to walk alone. My sister Lois and my brother Ralph were 7 and 8 years older than I was, and I suppose they walked with me when I started school. They graduated from Walworth High School in 1930 and 1929 when I was in 4th and 5th grade. I got a bike when I was 12, and that made the trip to and from school a little quicker and a good deal more exciting. The hills between our house and school were awesome and the road was dirt. When I was in high school, I got into gravel at the corner of Marion Road and High Street (?), skidded and lost control and skinned one knee badly in the gravel. That happened on my way to school and I returned home to have Mother treat it, I suppose because there was no school nurse in those days and I had no idea whom at school could help. Continued top of next column

Got a story about Walworth to share? We are looking for interesting tidbits to put in this newsletter. Contact Gene Bavis, Editor. 315-986-1474 or email gbavis@rochester.rr.com

Memories, continued

Going to school in the "old" building is still fresh in my memory at least some aspects. The trip up two flights of stairs to the auditorium was always a welcome break. Mrs. Fredenburg taught first and second grades. Burnice and Eleanor Duell were both in second grade when I was in first. The story is that Eleanor was so unhappy when Burnice started school and cried so much that Mrs. Duell let Eleanor go to school a year early. One of my vivid memories is of Mrs. Fredenburg urging Eleanor to stop watching the first graders and do her work. Burnice, Eleanor and I were good friends while we were in school and Sunday School class together and have kept in touch over the years. Eleanor and I communicate much more frequently now than in years past via email.

We had an hour for lunch at school, which left time for various activities. Kenneth Pembroke challenged me to a race on our bicycles and I bit. What was I thinking?!!! He beat me badly but deigned to advise me afterward that I shouldn't brake so hard—slow down slowly so as not to "burn rubber," though I think that was not the term he used.

Many of the teachers I had made good impressions on me and I remember them fondly. Only one left me with a "bad taste in my mouth" – Nevada Morse taught fifth and sixth grades and she sticks in my mind because I never saw her smile. I think now that couldn't have been possible, but that's the way I recall it.

Save these Dates

Mon., Sept. 15, WHS meeting. Program: TBA

Sun., Sept. 28, Walworth Memories at Town Hall, 2 PM

Memories, continued

Miss St. Germain who taught seventh and eighth, Miss Nester who taught HS French and Miss Crellin who taught History are some of the bright spots in my recollections. Mr. and Mrs. Bookheim made their tenure an interesting time. She taught Music and one always knew when she was coming—her high heels heralded her approach. Mr. B. taught math and he was good at it. Later Mr. Klix taught math. One day Helen Billings asked him to demonstrate a problem on the board. When he finished and asked her if she understood, she replied, “yes but that isn’t the problem I don’t understand”. I laughed. Mr. Klix sent me to the principal’s office where I spent the rest of the period when Mr. K came to the office and gave me a dressing down for a lack of courtesy (or something). Why does one remember things like that?

The year we went to school in the Grange Hall, which stood next to it, was memorable. My father was a member of the Board of Education and the time and it was a source of pride to see his name on the plaque that hung near the westernmost front door in the “new school.” When I had occasion to visit the building during its second reincarnation as a elementary school I was impressed at how well-kept it was. It pained me to read of the depths to which it sank in its later incarnations as a senior apartment building and then as apartments for the general public.

My husband and I and five children lived in Walworth for three years—1951 to 1954 and my children attended school in that building. By that time busses picked the students up and returned them home. Walworth-Marion Road had been paved and the hills were all cut down to gentle rises. A week after we moved to Ontario our 6th child was born and all six of them graduated from Wayne Central.

Bob still has Dan’s horse blanket – green and red plaid with fringe, and keeps it in his car to use on such occasions as picnics.

A Horse Named Dan

This is a story that Bob Wignall’s father, Robert W. Wignall, once told him.

During the early 1900s, George and Carrie Wignall had a favorite carriage horse named Dan, who faithfully pulled their carriage, buggy, and sleigh wherever they needed to go. Then the time came, with the advent of the automobile, that Dan was no longer needed, but he was so well-loved that they kept him on in the barn, almost as a family friend. The years passed and he grew old and feeble, but no one could bear to put him down.

In the summer of 1923 when George and Carrie were in Europe, Robert, probably with help from the hired men on the farm, saw to it that Dan was disposed of. His body was taken on the road past the woods, then around a left turn along the north end of the woods, and a right turn up to the place where farm equipment was kept in a three-sided shed. Good old Dan was buried in the field by the shed.



Ready for a Fourth of July Parade

Dan (the light colored horse in the foreground) was a favorite of George and Carrie Wignall. The photo was taken at the Wignall residence, 2119 Walworth-Penfield Road, prior to the start of a Fourth of July parade, sometime before 1923. The driver is George Millens.

Submitted by Janice W. Mitchell

Brownies Visit the Museum

Fifteen Brownies and three leaders visited the Walworth Museum on April 23 for a program presented by our Curator, Kay Scott. The program was entitled "Listening to the Past" and it was focused on how tasks were accomplished in the days before television and computers. Children, as we know, were needed to help out with the many tasks around the home. Today with our modern conveniences, tasks for children are minimal.

In memory of Charles Pembroke

Charlie Pembroke passed away on May 2 in Florida. His wife, Bertha as well as 2 sons, Burton and Vaughn as well as several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, survive him. He was cremated and his remains will be brought back to Walworth. A memorial service will be held on June 8 at the Walworth Fire Hall. Details are not known at this time. The location for the service is fitting in that Charlie put so much of himself into the Fire Department over the years.

Charlie was an institution in Walworth. If you needed heat or electrical or plumbing repairs at any time whatsoever, Charlie was there in a moment's notice.

Our sympathy to all of his family.

More about Charlie in the next issue.

Community Service Award

to be presented to Elwood Baker

Typically, this award is a "surprise" presentation to its recipient, but because Elwood is in a Nursing Home now, we had to make other arrangements. The Award will be formally presented at the meeting on May 19, but then taken and presented to him at the Nursing Home at a later date.

School Principals

Hazel Bassage has compiled a list of Principals of the Walworth Academy and the Walworth School. In addition she has pulled together lists of graduates from 38 classes. These lists have been turned over to Kay Scott, so they are available at the Museum for anyone who wishes to see them. Hazel, as many of you know, is a retired teacher, so education in Walworth has always been near and dear to her. She began her teaching career at the old Freewill School on Atlantic Avenue.

Hazel has also donated some papers from World War II related to the Draft. As I recall, her late husband Howard was associated with Wayne County Draft Board at one time.

Hazel is a Charter Member of the Walworth Historical Society, and was our Treasurer for MANY years. We appreciate all support she has provided to this little organization.

Museum Renovations

Thanks to the gift we recently received from the Walworth Masons, we are in the process of doing some renovations to the second floor of the museum building. When we built it, we only insulated the upstairs, which is used for storage. We are now adding more electrical outlets and drywalling the ceiling and walls. We will hopefully improve the climate control there to better protect the artifacts that we have stored there. As soon as the drywalling is completed, we will be building a cedar closet to store textiles in. The funding for the cedar closet is from the Dorothy Welker memorial gifts.

At the moment, preliminary electrical work is done, and hopefully, the dry wall will be hung this week. After the finishing is done, I'm sure some volunteers could be used to paint and put things back upstairs. Jessie or Kay would be happy to hear from you if you have some spare

It's time to pay your Walworth Historical Society Dues for this year. We can only continue to operate when we have the support of our members and friends, so please bring your dues to the meeting, or mail your check to the Walworth Historical Society at PO Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568. Also, please consider asking a friend to join as well.

Dues categories are as follows:

Individual	\$ 6.00
Joint or Family	\$ 10.00
Student	\$ 3.00
Supporting	\$ 25.00
Corporate/Business	\$ 25.00
Sponsor	\$ 40.00
Patron	\$100.00
Benefactor	\$150.00
Life Membership	\$100.00

Please consider becoming:

A SUPPORTING member for \$25.00

OR

A SPONSORING member for \$40.00

OR

A PATRON for \$100.00