

Walworth Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 29

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April 6: Learn and Share About the Past

September 20 Program Walworth History, Part 2

We will be continuing our 3-part series of Walworth History in celebration of Walworth's 175th birthday. The May program was about the Early History of Walworth. This program will focus on the period from the Civil War until World War I. In November, we will finish the series with World War I until the present.

The September 20 meeting will be held at the Walworth Historical Society Museum beginning at 7:30 PM. We hope that all members will invite a guest to join us.

Since members of the Walworth Historical Society tend to have a "sweet tooth" you can count on the fact that refreshments will be served! Don't miss out!

Dues were Due on May 1

The Walworth Historical Society operates on a May 1- April 30 fiscal year. Your dues were therefore due on 5/1/04 (unless you are a Life Member).

Dues categories are as follows:

Individual \$6, Joint or Family \$10, Student \$3, Corporate/Business \$25, Life \$100, Supporter \$25-39, Sponsor \$40-99, Patron \$100-149, Benefactor \$150 or more

Please pay at the meeting or send your check to the Walworth Historical Society at PO Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568.

Can you afford to be a Supporter, Sponsor, Patron or Benefactor? Please consider it.

Have you paid your dues yet?

If not, please send them in; or better yet, bring them to the meeting on September 20..

Our Calendar Project

The Walworth Historical Society will be producing a 2005 Calendar. Thanks to the leadership of Dorothy French, this project is has exceeded our original expectations! We recently saw the final proof from the printer and it's going to be NICE! This will be a great keepsake! Not only will it have interesting pictures, but the "tidbits" of history will be worth reading each year. We hope to make this a yearly project with new pictures and events each year. If you haven't ordered one for yourself and others for gifts, DO IT NOW! Deliveries will begin in October. At that time, they will also be available at Walworth Hardware and at the Walworth Town Clerk's Office. Only 500 copies are being printed. When they are gone, they are gone! Don't miss out!

Our 175th Birthday!

The Town of Walworth celebrated its birthday on April 20, 2004. It's been 175 years since the Town was established.

The Walworth Historical Society was honored to have won first prize for our Float in the Festival Parade in July.

October - Calendars Go on Sale

October 17 – WHS Fall Festival

November 15 – Walworth History, Part 3

The Website is coming...really! We apologize for the delay. Now that the calendar is finished it will be a priority this fall. Our address will be:

www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org

Ice on the Mill Pond

by Arlene Duell Suwijn

In the wintertime my dad, Louis Duell, and his brother, Ernest, made their living by cutting ice from the Mill Pond, which was located south of town behind the feed mill on Mill Road, off Walworth-Palmyra Road. They also ran a sawmill on Church Street between Uncle Ernest's house on Church Street and our house on Penfield Road in Walworth village.

When the ice became several inches thick on the Mill Pond, it was time to harvest it for the warm months. Not having the electricity for milk coolers, the dairy farmers built ice houses where they stored ice which had been layered with sawdust from Dad's sawmill. The square ice house had an opening in the front with boards to hold in the sawdust and ice. As the ice was removed, the top board would be taken out to reach the next level. Thus, they had ice to keep their milk cool until it could be sent to the pickup station and also fill the iceboxes in their homes.

At the pond a platform was built at road level with steps down to the ice. Under the platform was a compartment that held a gasoline engine which operated an elevator that would take the ice up to the platform and drop it off, where it was picked up by wagons or trucks.

The first step was to clear the ice where it was to be harvested - that provided areas where the neighboring children would soon appear with their ice skates. First there was a channel cut through the ice leading to the elevator and then the process began. The ice was scored and cut into floats of several cakes that would travel through the channel to the foot of the elevator, where a man with a large metal tool resembling a crowbar with a sharp edge would tap the cakes to break them into handling size. The

cakes progressed up the elevator and into the waiting vehicles. There were occasional times when the man who was breaking off the cakes would lose his grip and the tool would end up in the pond.

When I was a child I loved to accompany my father and he would let me ride the floats of ice before they had been separated as they traveled through the channel. I imagine before the farmers picked up their ice that they had already visited the sawmill for their supply of sawdust to pack around the ice. It was a cold, laborious task, but a necessity at that stage of life. It also afforded us at home with ice for the icebox and several sessions of homemade ice cream after someone had used a wheelbarrow to retrieve a cake of ice and cleaned off the sawdust. This operation went on for many years until electricity provided dairy farmers with better cooling devices and homes with electric refrigerators.

Sadly, later the dam broke, draining the pond that had provided power for the large nearby feed mill which used water instead of electricity. It was also an area where local fishermen could idle their time and a place where people learned to swim. Feed mill owner Annie Balzar Young wanted to restore the dam when it broke, but the state regulations were so restrictive that it proved to be too expensive to build just for pleasure.

Editor's Note: The Walworth Historical Society will be publishing a 2005 calendar this fall. The January photo shows workers harvesting the ice. We are indebted to Arlene for sharing her memories of life as a young girl in her native Walworth.

5 Generations of Weddings

As a part of our 2005 Calendar, you will see 5 wedding photos from 5 generations of one family. Our Treasurer, Mary Jane Devlin brought us the photos from her family. Those of us who worked on the calendar think this is a very special page.

In Memory of Pam Bavis

By Gene Bavis

Pam Teeter was born on May 10, 1947 in Canandaigua, NY. She was the third of 4 children born to Kelsey and Viola Teeter (yes, it is "Teeter" because her Mom and Dad legally changed the spelling of their name when her Dad got his birth certificate in preparation for retirement and found he had been spelling his name incorrectly all these years.) Pam graduated from Pal-Mac in 1965 and took a job with the FBI in Washington, DC. Then she worked for the US District Court there. In the spring of 1966 she returned home. Pam and I were married at the Second Baptist Church in Walworth on September 10, 1966. Pam worked as a secretary making \$65 a week helping to support us, and I worked summers at Kodak. Our first home was an 8'X36' trailer that I had bought a year earlier. Later we traded it in on a 10'x50' model. When I graduated from college in January 1969, I was offered a job at Wayne Central, so we moved our trailer (I guess we should call it a "mobile home") to Wallington. We bought our first house from my mother and totally remodeled the inside. That was in the fall of 1970. Our first child, Angela was born on April 2, 1971. Pam became a stay at home Mom and did some baby-sitting to supplement my teacher's pay. Jeff came along on October 16, 1974. In the fall of 1975, we bought the house we live in now in partnership with my mother. She moved in with us the following year and lived with us until she passed away in 1998.

Pam went to cosmetology school in the 1970's. She opened a shop in our home. In 1978 I got a real estate salesman license, and Pam got hers the next year. We both were associated with Wilbur Reybrouck at first ,but later joined Pultney Land Company in Williamson. While with them we got Broker Licenses and later moved to the Property Shop in Ontario. After a couple of

years there we decided to go out on our own, so we became "Bavis Associates." When Angie and Jeff no longer needed a full-time mom at home, Pam went to work for Attorney Paul Rubery in Palmyra. She worked there until we opened "Walworth Washland" on the 4 corners of Walworth in 1987. She ran the laundromat until 1998, but in 1997 she also went back to work for Paul. Her real estate knowledge from both a sales and legal point of view was very much respected by clients and attorneys.

Along the way in the late 1970's and 1980's we purchased several parcels of real estate and remodeled many of them. Pam was always my partner in those sometimes pretty messy jobs.

Our son got married in 1996 and in 1998 and 2000 gave us our first two grandchildren. Our daughter married in 1999 and had her first child in December, 2003. Pam adored her grandchildren: Matt, Emma & Luke.

In December, 2002, Pam was diagnosed with colon cancer and had surgery on December 17. Unfortunately, the cancer had spread to her liver, so in January she began chemo. At first, tumors shrunk, but by the fall of 2003, the treatments no longer helped and the cancer began to attack her lungs. In June, 2004 after a valiant battle, she said "enough!" and waited for the Lord to call her home.

On September 10 (our 38th anniversary), she left this world. I am thankful for those wonderful years. After she left, I removed the ring that I had placed on her left hand 38 years ago and placed it on my little finger next to the one she gave me that day. That was my small tribute to her love.

The Apple Dryhouse

By Jessie Keymel

Since the beginning of Walworth, apple orchards have been a big part of the economics of our town. Apples were shipped from Walworth on the railroad, on the ships of the Great Lakes and I am sure on the Canal. Fresh apples were shipped in Barrels. Apples were also dried in dry houses and shipped that way.

On the Float, for the 2004 parade for the Festival in the Park, we presented an apple dry house. Apples were peeled, sliced and laid to dry on the slatted loft of the dry house; heat from a firebox rose and dried the apple rings. The workers were on twenty-four hour watch to turn the apples and stoke the fires. There were dry houses on most apple farms in our township, some very large, employing many people during the season. As in any farm community, at harvest time everyone worked in some area of this important apple industry. One bushel of apples produces about 7 pounds of dried apples. They were stored in a dry cool place and guaranteed you apple pies all year.

There are still a few former dry houses in area, but many burned. One of the larger dry houses in West Walworth is featured in the *2005 calendar, printed by the Walworth Historical Society.

The peeler/corer on the float, operated by Nancy Bel, was from a dry house on Walworth Ontario Rd, and will be on display at our fall gathering in October. G and S Orchards on Lincoln Rd provided the barrels, apples and other items. The farm at G and S Orchards is run by Gary and Stephany Craft

There is a display at Heritage Square in Ontario in a dry house that gives a good understanding of the apple drying industry in our area. Many of the apple peelers and other equipment used in dry houses were invented in Wayne County. As the saying goes, "out of necessity comes many inventions". Another by-product was cider, but that is another story.

*2005 calendar will be available in mid October at a cost of \$6.50. See other information in this newsletter.

Our "new" old desk

The Walworth Historical Society is extremely fortunate to have received a gift from the family of Anna Youngs. It's a BEAUTIFUL desk made by Mr. Fehr who ran a woodworking shop in the house once inhabited by Charlie & Bertha Pembroke. We are told that the tree from which it was made grew in Walworth, too. Peter Balzar, who ran the mill, is believed to be the original owner.

Fall Festival - October 17

Our Annual Fall Festival will be on Sunday, October 17 from 2 to 5 PM. Our museum will be open and there will be extra displays in the lawn to learn about life in the past. This is part of our on-going celebration of our local heritage on this 175th anniversary of the Town of Walworth. As most of you know, we at the Walworth Historical Society simply CANNOT have an event without refreshments, so this will be no exception!

Join us for an interesting afternoon!

Coming soon: www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org