

Walworth Station – A Look Back in Time: Part 1

By Dorothy French

Three and a half miles south of Walworth's four corners is an area divided by two railroad tracks that cross Walworth-Palmyra Road. There is no signage to indicate its history but, as early as the late 1800's, this area was a busy place that included four main railroad tracks with two switch lines, a post office, passenger and freight stations, and various buildings – all in an area of a settlement of homes. Although this area is located in the Town of Macedon, much of this activity involved Walworth residents who were able to ride the passenger trains, send or receive produce and household goods via rail, or purchase supplies.

New York Central Railroad

According to June Hamell, Town of Macedon Historian, the Palmyra Courier-Journal published a story on December 2, 1968, about the nearby Wayneport station. The newspaper story said the New York Central Company officially came into existence on July 7, 1853, when "*Ten small railroads consolidated and formed one through line across the state.*" Eventually unused tracks were torn up to avoid paying taxes on them.

An 1876 N.Y.C. railroad map noted *The company owned the world's only four-track railroad all laid with steel rails.* In 1990 Walworth resident and storyteller Charles Pembroke wrote Walworth, As I Remember It, and commented that *Walworth Station on the New York Central Railroad was the busiest spot on the rail line in the 1920's.*

Greene's Corners/Crossing

Greene's Corners (also known as Greene's Crossing) was located a short distance north of the tracks at the intersection of Walworth-Palmyra and Macedon Center Roads. According to a letter written approximately 1976 by Mrs. Leland (Lucy Boynton) Franke, Mr. Greene was the station agent and lived in the "dugway" home nearby. District School #2 was located on Macedon Center Road just east of the Greene's residence and Lucy wrote *The school has since been turned into a dwelling.* The May 27, 1909, issue of the Monroe County Mail reported that *Miss Maud Stamp has closed her school at Percyville today.*

***** North Side of the Tracks *****

The north side of the tracks was the commercial site for the post office, freight station, and a cluster of buildings. Facing west, the buildings were separated by a roadway, with the freight station on the left side adjacent to the railroad tracks and the post office and other buildings on the right side of the roadway.

Percyville Post Office

The photo shows the Percyville Post Office located in the office building of E. D. Haney. To the left are signs on the building noting Hardware, Feed, and Produce.

Fultonhistory.com website contained this information about the Post Office:

- November 2, 1898, Newark Arcadia Weekly Gazette: *Percyville Post Office at Walworth Station now open for business.* (Editor's note: Mrs. Edgar D. (Frances C.) Haney was Postmaster from September 21, 1898, to December 19, 1907.)
- January 23, 1908, Wayne County Journal: *Percyville remains on postal maps as shown by the appointment of Edgar D. Haney as Postmaster on January 19. Mr. Haney's wife was Postmaster for a time, but finally decided to give up the work and there was talk of abandoning the post office for a time.*



The Percyville Post Office served the area from 1898 - 1909. Undated WHS file photo.

- February 18, 1909, Monroe County Mail: *Edgar Haney has resigned as Postmaster at Percyville, effective February 27, 1909. Before the rural delivery, the office at the Station was a great convenience.*

The Wayne County Historian's web site listed information in a Wayne County Postal History booklet written by Emma G. Koberg in 1982. It stated that the *Green Coal Company had an office and yard beside the railroad tracks and the post*

office was located in Mr. Green's coal office. According to Fultonhistory.com website, the June 17, 1909, issue of the Monroe County Mail announced that *Rouch and Sawyer have bought the Haney store at Percyville and will have charge of P. Greene's coal yard.*

Lucy Franke: *The station agent climbed a pole high above the tracks and secured the mailbag in a special way that dispatched the mail by a New York Central train that did not stop. A mailbag iron rod snatcher picked it off and we kids couldn't believe our eyes.*

Charles Pembroke: *Walter Newberry was the drawer of the mail from Walworth to Walworth Station. He also had to deliver the mail to the families along the route. He made three trips a day.*



Looking north: freight station and milk cans lined up. Undated WHS file photo.

In 1975 WHS member Ethel Henning interviewed 88-year-old Loyde Bassage. His story, Things I Remember, was printed in a September 18, 1986, edition of the Wayne County Mail. *Frank Rouch had a small grocery store on the north side near the freight station. This was much like our mini stores today and was very convenient for all those who went to the railroad station. Sometimes the stage coach driver brought groceries from the little store.*



Looking northeast: train is headed west coming into freight station. The white building to left in photo is Frank Rouch's store. At far right end is one-time location of Percyville Post Office. Undated WHS file photo.

Freight Station

Charles Pembroke: *The freight station was located at the end of a long building where freight was unloaded from the rail cars. I have seen plows, drags, wagons, and sleighs lined up for people to call for. The freight station attendant would notify you that some freight had arrived, so please claim as soon as possible.*

Next we would come to the Scale House of Haxton and Petty Co. That was where all the wheat grain, beans, and coal would be weighed that they were buying or selling. The last man I can remember using these scales was Charles Griswold.

Going west and down a slight incline we come to the lumber yard of Charles M. Buckley. I can't say how many years Charlie Buckley ran the lumber yard and he also sold International Harvester farm equipment. Buckley used to buy all kinds of fruit and packaged them and sent them by rail to New York, Philadelphia, or Boston, wherever he had a call for some fruit.

The Wayne County Historian's Office in Lyons has a journal written by dairy farmer William C. Packard. On December 20, 1898, William wrote: *I drove on to Walworth (or Percyville as the residents are trying to change the name) and talked with the proprietor of the lumber yard about shingles. I got 173 feet of hemlock and 431 feet of pine, amounting to \$10.84 which I paid.*

Charles Pembroke: *West of Charles Buckley's place of business was a small garage. It was built to store the car of Frank Dumond, the flagman on the crossing. He used to walk from Walworth to Walworth Station every day. But in the late '20's, about 1926 or '27, he bought a Model T coupe and stored it in the garage made purposely for it. Frank did not live long after he bought the car as he did not get the exercise he was used to twice a day and 3 miles each way. He had a heart attack and it finished him.*

The next building was a square tall building where Haxton and Petty took in and sorted and bagged beans. It was run by a large one-cylinder gas engine. There were several large bins in the upper part of the building and they could route different kinds of grain into different bins. A lot of grain was shipped out by railroad cars to different parts of the country. West of the grain elevator was a long building with several compartments in it for storing coal of all grades and sizes. This was owned by Frank Rouch and in later years by Charles M. Griswold, who delivered coal for years in Walworth, Macedon, and Macedon Center.

The Walworth Historical Society's museum has receipts from businesses located at Walworth Station. The earliest receipts are from the Walworth Station Coal Yard (A. Yeomans, proprietor) dated 1902 to William Mastin, 1908 to Dick Clark, and 1909 to H. Atkinson. In 1918 the coal yard's proprietor was P. A. Greene and manager was Glenn Petty; purchases were made by Dick Clark and William Mastin. The company's name changed and a 1931 receipt to Bert Clark listed it as Walworth Coal and Lumber Co., Inc. Later the business was called Griswold's Coal and Supply Co., Inc., according to 1940 and 1948 receipts to Bert Clark.

Editor's note: *In the May edition of this newsletter, we will have the second half of the Walworth Station article by Dorothy French as well as more photos from that era of Walworth history.*