

A Tour of Main Street: #3697 - Masonic Lodge and More

By Dorothy French

Editor's Note: This is the 6th in a series of stories spotlighting the businesses and homes on Main Street. The tour begins on the west side of the four corners and travels south. The November 2016 issue featured the Baptist Community Center. The story continues with the Masonic Lodge previously located on this site and its history.

A "History of Walworth Masonic Lodge #254 F&AM 1852-2001" was compiled by Howard Bassage, Past Master and Lodge historian, and completed by others after Howard's death in 1986. His painstaking research of old Lodge minutes illustrates the many years this fraternal organization has served the Walworth area.

A Masonic Lodge existed in Walworth as early as 1819, but eventually disbanded; a fire in 1852 destroyed those records. That year the present Lodge was formed; and members met at the home of Brother Jones Findley. Because of the load of work, meetings were held at six o'clock. Six spittoons were purchased and placed in the home of Brother Findley.

Feb. 17, 1844: Building was sold to Benjamin Billings of Palmyra. (This is the first record of this building.) Title to the structure was transferred to a new owner about every two years.

Jan. 23, 1864: 127 members were present at a supper paid for by the Lodge at a cost of 38 cents.

Oct. 1, 1878: Building was sold to Sam Ingraham. On that same day, he sold the second floor to the Walworth Lodge and the first floor to James Benton. At that time the deed stated the Lodge had perpetual right of way to the rear of the building by way of the lane to the north, where there was a stairway leading to the second floor. There were 465 Lodge members.

Sept. 1902: James sold the lower part to John Rosencrans for \$925. James had operated the first floor as a grocery store for 24 years.

Mar. 30, 1906: John sold the first floor to the Lodge for \$950; he had used the area as a pool room for four years. For many years the first floor was rented to several tenants. In the mid 1930's a store was operated by the Conant Bros. An undated winter photograph shows a Tinsmith sign hanging over the front door.



Photo courtesy of Eugene Reynolds family

1940's: IGA Store: Gordon Youngman Photo

1942 – 1951: From 1942 to 1951 Howard and Ethel Triou operated an IGA grocery store on the site. The Trious purchased the business from Joe Finley and in 1952 sold it to Don Brockman and Bud Ennis.

1952: Walworth Lodge #254 observed its 100th anniversary at a banquet held in the Walworth High School auditorium for several hundred people.

Aug. 2, 1968: The Lodge and two buildings to the south were razed to make room for the new Lodge. A story about the small store and house will be detailed in our next issue. Money for the Lodge's building material was donated by many of its members, in addition to a small loan from Clifford Huntley. The loan was repaid in 1977 by putting on dinners and running a food booth at the Wayne County Fair in Palmyra.



Piano being removed from 2nd floor meeting room

(Photos courtesy of Gordon Youngman)



Demolition of Masonic Lodge

1968-1969: Construction of the new Lodge, built by the labor of many members.

May 29, 1971: Dedication of the new Temple: Through the years the Lodge, Order of Eastern Star, and Amaranth hosted blood drives for the American Red Cross, put on pancake breakfasts for the benefit of Mercy Flight, and rented the dining room to the Town of Walworth for use by senior citizen groups as a meeting place



Left: **1991: Hanging the new Lodge sign over front entrance are Ed Lonneville on left side of ladder and Norman Vane on right side. Bottom of ladder is Bill Youngman.** *(Photo courtesy of Gordon Youngman)*

Dec. 6, 2001: Due to declining membership and a need to unite Masons at one location in this area of Wayne County, a consolidation of Palmyra #248, Walworth #254, and Macedon #665 Lodges was approved and the organization became known as Drumlin Square Lodge #1180. Meetings are held at the Palmyra Masonic Hall, which is located in the village on Main Street/Route 31 on the ground floor.

Aug. 15, 2002: Walworth Lodge was sold to the 2nd Baptist Church of Walworth for \$26,000. The Walworth Masons decided to donate \$5,000 each to three local organizations: Walworth Historical Society, Walworth-Seely Public Library, and Walworth Cemetery Association. This was their way of returning something to the community that had meant so much to the Masons. The building continues its new life as the Walworth Baptist Community Center.



Recipients of the Walworth Mason's check are front row, left to right: Gordon Youngman and Jessie Keymel (WHS), Joanna Lynch and Mary Zingerella (WSPL); back row: Bob Houghtaling (WSPL), Dorothy French (WHS and WSPL), Ellen Dietterick (WSPL), and Rick Darron (WCA).

Next buildings to be featured:
The small store and house south of #3697 Main Street

If you have information about these buildings, contact Dorothy French at 315-986-1098. We are always looking to update our museum files about people and places in the Walworth area.