



Walworth Historical Society



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Walworth Museum: 2257 Academy Street, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568

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Celebrating Autumn and Our Heritage

By Dorothy French

A beautiful fall day, spinning demonstrations, displays of home-canned food, antique vehicles, and music from a local band – all of this combined to make our annual Autumn on the Farm event a success on October 6.

More than 60 visitors spent an enjoyable afternoon at the museum listening to country and bluegrass music played and sung by members of the Group Therapy band who have been together for over 32 years. The Lions Club donated their tent for this musical performance. Caryn Devlin demonstrated rug hooking and Marcia Reybrouck spun wool from marino sheep. Attention getters were Roger Keymel's 1922 Model T Ford which had been converted to a tractor, Greg Hurley's scale model of a steam stationary engine, and Sonny French's 1931 Ford pickup.

Inside the museum were displays of farm-related artifacts, antique kitchen utensils, and butter-making tools. Posters displayed photos of area barns - some are no longer in existence. A miniature farm with outbuildings and animals built to scale was also on display. Cider, donuts, and an assortment of delicious edibles were available for visitors.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the announcement that Wendy DeMinck Walker was the winner of a hooked rug scene of the Tummonds Road barn. The farm belonged to her parents, Larry and Diane DeMinck. The rug was made by Caryn Devlin, Marion Town Historian, who pulled the winning name and added that the frame was made by her husband Mark from a 100-year-old barn.

Visitors included friends from Canandaigua and Greece and Williamson who were welcomed by all. It was a great way to celebrate Walworth's agricultural heritage and to welcome the Fall season.



(Color printing of this page courtesy of Reliant Community Federal Credit Union)

Editor's Note: Our series about country doctors continues; this issue features Dr. Robert R. Morris of West Walworth and Lincoln.

Dr. Robert R. Morris was born August 1848 in Ramsen, Oneida County, New York. He married Frances Peacock of West Walworth in 1880; they were parents to five children: Enid Elvira, Robert, Joseph, Rexford, and Donald. The family attended Lincoln Baptist Church.

Dr. Morris was a specialist in pneumonia cases and also performed dentistry. In the beginning of his practice, he had two offices, one in Lincoln and one in West Walworth. The doctor held afternoon office hours in a home on West Walworth Road next to Stalker's Store which was destroyed by fire in 2017.

The 4893 Lincoln Road residence was owned by his wife's family, the Peacocks. After the death of her parents, Frances inherited the farm of 88 acres and the doctor's office was moved there. The visiting room and office were located on the north side of the house. He charged \$1 a visit. In a biography of the Morris/Peacock family, Virginia Burrow Morris wrote that there were 18 rooms in the large house. Actual peacocks strutted about the lawn. Virginia wrote that, when Susan B. Anthony came to Lincoln to lecture, she stayed at the Morris home, as did a number of visiting ministers and speakers.



Undated photo of Dr. Morris; he was a dentist and physician.



Undated photo of the Peacock/Morris home at 4893 Lincoln Road, now owned by Anita Amsler.

In 2008 WHS member Joyce H. Smith spent many hours reviewing "The Physician's Visiting List" books of Dr. Morris which listed his medical services for the years 1877 – 1922. We also have his 1877 medical school book with pages of notes. Another section of the book has weekly call list; memoranda for each month; clinical, birth, and death records; and bills rendered. Using the doctor's notes, Joyce compiled a list of birth and death records for each year. Also included in the doctor's records are New York State Department of Health death certificates. There are approval forms from the Treasury Department of the United States so he could purchase opium, cocoa leaves, compounds, manufactures, salts, derivatives and preparations.

In 1877 Dr. Morris kept a record of his horse's yearly expenses: a load of straw \$2.00, barley \$3.00, and corn \$14.30. Another book contained information about his farm's accounts. On April 1, 1896, he took an inventory of his farm. He had 4 cows \$100, 2 heifers \$25, 2 colts \$50, 5 horses \$300, 21 sheep \$105, and 2 hogs \$25. Wagons, buggies, plows, harrows, cultivator and weeder \$150. One plow \$10.50, seeder and cultivator \$65, mowing machine \$40, 1 scraper \$6.50, and 1 reaper \$40.



Dr. Morris' son, Don, bought a new Ford coupe when Dr. Morris was about 72 years old. Don would drive his dad to visit his patients at night and when the weather was bad.

From our museum files we reprint a tribute written about Dr. Robert Morris after this death in Lincoln on June 4, 1933. "The passing of Dr. Robert Morris of Lincoln leaves that community with a feeling of distinct personal loss. He was more than the friendly, kindly doctor; he was guide, counselor, and friend to the hundreds he knew professionally and as a neighbor and friend."

Left: *Dr. Morris Auction poster from museum files*

Country Doctors to Be Continued: Next Issue Dr. Esley

Holiday Gift Suggestions By Dorothy French

With the holidays fast approaching it is not too early to think about gift giving. Items available for sale at our museum include booklets about our area, commemorative ornaments and plates, coverlets, and music CDs. Memberships at many levels are a gift that keeps on giving. Donations may be made for a memorial or for a celebration gift. We are approaching the end of 2019 and we know that many people look at their finances to consider year-end donations. For additional information, contact Jessie Keymel, president, at 315-524-9205.

Iron Mining and Manufacturing in Ontario By Gene Bavis

On Monday, September 16, nearly 40 WHS members and guests enjoyed an excellent presentation by Ontario Town Historian, Liz Albright (below right). Liz shared with us the story of a very important industry in her town, the mining and manufacturing of iron. Deposits of iron ore can be found in many places, but some significant ones were found in Ontario. In 1811, a man by the name of Knickerbocker discovered the ore while digging a well. Over the years many changes took place and the industry grew (bottom left). Following World War I, the mines and furnace closed. Liz also talked about the Paint Mill on Route 104 where iron ore was used to color paint until just after World War II.

More information about this topic can be found in [The History of the Town of Ontario 1807-1971](#). I assume that it is available in local libraries. The Walworth Historical Society also has a copy. If you have any specific questions, I'm sure Liz Albright would be very happy to try and answer them. She can be reached at historian@ontariotown.org.



A Tour of Main St.: #3700 – Walworth Hardware and NYS Sitepower - Part 6 By Gordon Youngman

Editor's Note: Our tour of the east side of Main Street continues from our last issue. The building at #3700 was the site of many businesses, eventually Walworth Hardware. Part 6 features new ownership by Marlene and Steve Hall and a new business in the south portion of the building. Thank you to Gordon Youngman and his grandson, Aaron Fernaays, for sharing their memories and for the time they spent researching and documenting the information about the stores located at 3698 and 3700 Main Street.

Walworth Hardware

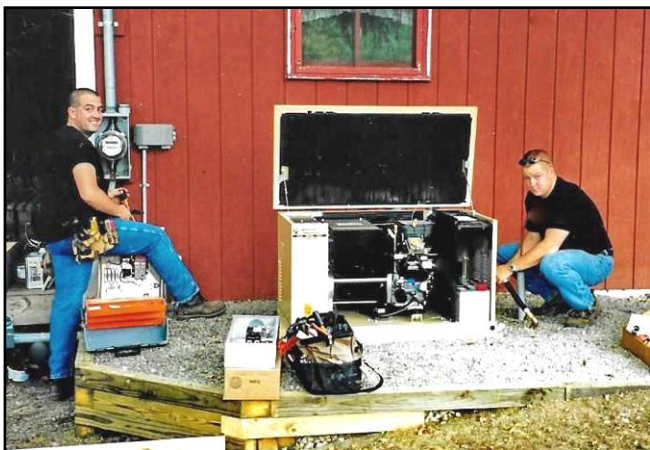
In 1990 Katie and I were honored by the Walworth Town Board for our 40 years of service in Walworth. We decided to retire and on July 1, 1990, we sold the business to our daughter, Marlene, and her husband, Steve Hall. They continued to operate it as Walworth Hardware until Marlene closed the store in 2011. The north side of the building is now empty.



1990: Gordon Youngman congratulates the new owner of Walworth Hardware - his daughter, Marlene Hall



1990: Marlene and Steve Hall. All photos this page courtesy of Gordon Youngman.



Above: 2014: Dan Hall (right) and Sean Baker (left) installing a generator

New York State Sitepower

The south side of Walworth Hardware originally was a separate store located at 3698 Main Street. It was built in 1902 by the Knights of the Maccabees (K.O.T.M.), a fraternal organization. Through the years it has been home to many groups and businesses, including the K.O.T.M., Charles Buckley's General Store, and Wick's Hardware. In 1972 Katie and I purchased this building from the estate of Jack Wick. We installed an enclosed walkway between this store and the variety store we owned to the north and combined them into Walworth Hardware. The business closed in 2011.

In 2003, Dan Hall, our grandson and Marlene and Steve's son, established his business, New York State Sitepower, in the south portion of the building. The business provides home and commercial generator service locally and throughout New York State.

Next issue: the home at 3706 Main Street

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Gene Bassage and His Walworth Connections (part 1 of 2)

By Bob Mogray and Dorothy French

(Next issue Gene's Life Story: part 2 of 2)

Meet Gene Bassage – a 92½ year-old gentleman now residing in Sodus Point. Gene is related to several well-known Walworth families, including Bassage, Sherburne, Henning, Blythe, Esley and Wignall.

Gene recently shared with us an extensive genealogy of the Bassage family compiled by Mrs. George (Gwyneth) Bassage for a 1991 family reunion.

Left: 2019 - Gene displaying his 1991 family reunion T-shirt.

The Bassage Family: Gene was born in Rochester on February 19, 1927, to Homer and Josephine (Sherburne) Bassage (1973 right photo). A sister, Barbara, died 15 years ago. His paternal grandparents were Velorous and Winifred (Henning) Bassage. They had three sons: Loyde, George and Homer.

In 1916 Homer played basketball in the Academy's gym. The gym had posts to support it and the guys played around the posts. Grandma Bassage only read German so she was able to help her grandsons with their German language classes at Walworth Academy.



The Sherburne Family: Gene's maternal grandparents were Ulysses William and Charlotte (Lottie Blythe) Sherburne. Ulysses preferred to be called U.W. and was named after President Ulysses S. Grant. Josephine was their only child.

U.W. and Lottie owned and lived on a farm on the south side of Sherburne Road, part of which is now the town park. In 1911 the family moved to 3647 Main Street and bought a large house with a big barn in back where U.W. sold cars, the start of the Sherburne Ford dealership.

Left: At age 14 daughter Josephine knew how to drive a Model T Ford. She taught people how to drive when they bought a car from her father.



As business expanded, it was time to relocate to larger facilities and in 1920 U.W. purchased the building at 235 West Main Street in Palmyra. Father and son worked together until U.W. died in 1938 and Homer took over the dealership. It was the second oldest Ford dealership in New York State. After Gene graduated from Syracuse University in 1950, he worked for his father until 1960 when he became owner of Macedon Ford on Rt. 31. Gene operated the dealership until 1980; it is now a Velero and McDonald complex.

Left: Gene's maternal grandfather U.W. Sherburne, Town of Walworth Supervisor from 1914 until 1921.

After the family moved to Palmyra, U.W. then became town supervisor and later chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors and secretary of the Palmyra School Board.





The Henning Family: Winifred Henning was the wife of Velorous Bassage. A relative, Frank Henning, married Lillian and they had one child, Ethel. The Hennings lived at 1283 Plank Road.

Left: Velorous (V.J.) Bassage, Gene's paternal grandfather

Right: Frank and Lillian Henning – 1929 photo

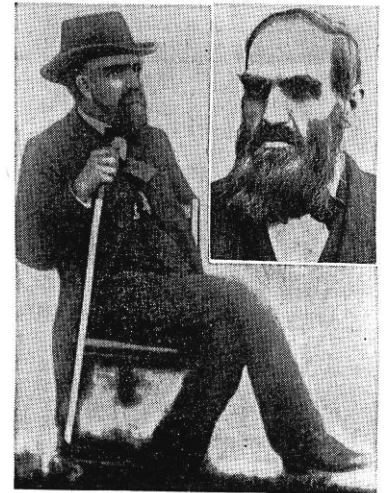


The Blythe Family: Craggs Roller Mill on Walworth-Palmyra Road in Macedon's "Huddle" was owned by Lottie's cousin, Edson Blythe. He was a nephew of John Craggs, who married Sarah Ann Blythe. Edson operated the mill from 1892 – mid 1920's.

Lottie's father was Jabez Blythe. Jabez was a Civil War soldier in the Union army and was injured by a pistol ball in his elbow. His younger brother, James Blythe, had moved south, married a southern belle, and enlisted in the Confederate Army. After the war James and his wife came north with only a horse, wagon and her piano. She taught many Walworth kids how to play the piano.

The brothers and their wives are buried in separate cemeteries in Walworth. Gene said he was told that every year someone places a Confederate flag on James' grave.

Right: James and Jabez Blythe



The Esley Family: Dr. Ernest E. and Mabel Esley were friends of both the Bassages and Sherburnes. The Esley's daughter Beth (her real name was Elizabeth) was a special friend of Gene's Mom, Josephine.

During the 1918 flu epidemic Dr. Esley made many house calls. Gene's dad, Homer, drove a Model T Ford for the doctor when he went on his house calls.

Gene said Dr. Esley drove his vehicle to visit the Bassages and Homer told the doctor something was broke under the Model T. Velorous Bassage, Gene's grandfather, offered his own car so the Model T could get fixed.

Left: Dr. Ernest E. and Mabel Esley 1935 photo

The Wignall Family: U.W. and Lottie Sherburne were friends of George and Carrie Wignall. The Sherburnes spent vacation time in Sodus Point arriving via trolley. In 1916 they bought a cottage on South Shore Road and invited good friends George and Carrie Wignall to join them.

The two couples took alternate turns living in the cottage – one family lived there in July, the other family in August. In the late 1930's they decided to flip a coin to see who had to leave; the Wignall's won the toss and stayed.

George's brothers (Fred, John, Albert) and sister Lash bought property and built near them on South Shore Road. Gene remembers George and Carrie Wignall and their son Bob and his wife Bertha. As a young lad, Gene mowed Fred Wignall's lawn and washed his boat.

Right: George and Carrie Wignall 50th wedding anniversary



Soup and Spiritualism By Gene Bavis

On Monday, November 18, at 1 PM the Walworth Historical Society will host a program at the Lodge in Ginegaw Park (Penfield-Walworth Road/3600 Lorraine Drive, Walworth). It will begin with a FREE lunch consisting of homemade soups, bread and butter, beverages and desserts. Following lunch, our featured speaker will be Tracy Murphy. Tracy is the caretaker of the Fox Sisters site in Hydesville (near Newark). She also works for Historic Palmyra. She will tell us about the Fox Sisters and their family and a little about Spiritualism. Western New York is unique in many ways, but one of those is something called the "Burned Over District." This refers to the fact that several religious and other social reform movements developed here. Spiritualism is one of them.

The program and lunch are FREE and open to the public. We have moved this event from our museum to the Lodge at Ginegaw Park because we will have more space to serve a larger crowd, SO please invite a friend and come join us for a delicious lunch and an interesting program.



The original Fox house after it was moved to Lillydale, NY



The historic marker in Hydesville at the Fox home site.



Tracy Murphy

Wreath Laying at the Freewill Cemetery By Gene Bavis

The Lodema Strickland Tent #56 of the Daughters of Union Veterans (bottom right) held a wreath-laying ceremony at the Freewill Cemetery (bottom left) on June 22 to honor their namesake, Lodema Strickland. Her husband was Nelson F. Strickland, a Captain in Company B, 9th NY Heavy Artillery. He was wounded during the war and discharged. Their son, D. Sherman Strickland, was a Private in Company A, 111th NY Infantry. He was killed July 2, 1863, at Gettysburg. Lodema performed a great deal of patriotic work in her lifetime. She is buried at the Freewill Cemetery along with her husband as is their son who was killed in battle. According to the records at the Walworth Historical Society, there are 16 members of the Strickland family buried at Freewill Cemetery. The cemetery is located on Atlantic Avenue.

Town Supervisor Susie Jacobs and Gene Bavis, Walworth Town Historian, were invited to participate in the ceremonies. Following the ceremony at Freewill, a tea was held at the Immanuel United Church of Christ in Ontario. It was quite elegant.



From Your President By Jessie Keymel

This is the time of year when I thank everyone who has helped keep our museum going all year. Thank you to the:

- Summer museum sitters for making it possible to have our collections available to anyone who wants to learn more about the history of our town.
- Everyone who designed and built our float for the Festival-in-the Park parade.
- Team who keeps the town hall display case filled with interesting history.
- Volunteers who will be participating in "Light the Night" at Ginegaw Park with a decorated tree representing our Historical Society.
- Members who help to publicize our museum via our web site, Facebook, and various publications.
- Interviewers and our members who have shared their memories with us.
- Newsletter Committee who works hard to ensure we have a first-class publication.
- Members who tend our gardens, mow the lawn and snowplow because those responsibilities show we take pride in our museum.
- Hospitality Committee and others for providing refreshments for our events.
- Those who maintain membership records, answer genealogy questions, and accession donated items.
- Board of Trustees and Officers who unselfishly donate their time and talents in the governing of our historical society and museum.

Thanksgiving is truly a time for expressing gratitude to all who help us to preserve the past for the present and future.

Our Collection Continues to Grow By Jessie Keymel

The tables in the middle of the main room at our museum often have a clutter of Items - scrapbooks, papers, photographs and other items. There currently is a metal agriculture sign which was donated by the Strang family. The sign was located on the front of Cragg's Roller Mill which is located on Walworth-Palmyra Road in the area called the huddle; the Strangs also donated the accompanying history of the mill.

Other items on the table were donated by Ray Welker, Jr. and include a postcard mailed from West Walworth in 1906, a thermostat advertising C. Bean's store and a 70's photo of Ray Welker and his son Ray Jr. sitting on a snowplow and truck from the highway department. Several items have been donated by Dick Roland, including a January 15, 1841 Incorporation paper for the Walworth Academy, an American Citizen newspaper dated October 4, 1842, that referred to the anti-slavery movement here in Walworth, a photo of the 1936 Fillmore family reunion and a newspaper article and picture celebrating the 50th anniversary of George and Carrie Wignall. There was also a song book from the Marion Grange that we have donated to the Marion Town Historian with Dick's permission.

The table holds a lot of pertinent information that all must be recorded in the computer, accessioned, filed in the appropriate location, and made available for future use. Thank you to the filing committee for your ongoing task keeping up with the many items we receive and for sending the thank you letters to all the donors.

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Mission Statement: The Walworth Historical Society is a volunteer organization established in 1975. Our chartered purpose is to collect, preserve, and display items and artifacts of historical interest and importance to the Town of Walworth and its environs. We are a not-for-profit organization with 501(C)(3) status; donations are tax deductible.

November 2019 WHS email edition extra photos



All photos on this page are from our October 8, WHS Open House "Autumn on the Farm" and were taken by Gene Bavis.

All photos on this page are from the Liz Albright show about iron ore mining in Ontario, NY

