



# Walworth Historical Society



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Walworth Museum: 2257 Academy Street, P.O. Box 142, Walworth, NY 14568  
WHS Website: [www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org)



## Walworth 2020 Memorial Day Parade

By Bob Mogray

Memorial Day is a day set aside to honor and recognize the sacrifices made by those men and women who have lost their lives while serving in the United States military in order to protect our freedom. It is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May. Years ago it was called Decoration Day but in 1971 it became an official federal holiday.

In 1915 John McCrae wrote the poem "In Flanders Field" that started the notion to make the red poppy a symbol of tribute to all those who died in wars. The red poppy remains a symbol of remembrance to this day.

Each year on Memorial Day at 3:00 PM local time, a national moment of silence is observed. Here in Walworth, on Monday, May 25, after this moment of silence was observed, a short parade followed. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no marching units in this parade. It was a short parade but it was important that this holiday was celebrated. It also honored the healthcare heroes who are working to keep everyone safe.

**Photos**- top left: Western Wayne Ambulance Inc. (formerly the Walworth Ambulance Inc.), top right: the Walworth Fire Department, bottom left: the Ontario Fire Department, and bottom right: the West Walworth Fire Department.

Thank you to those who organized and participated in this event.

**A Tour of Main Street: #3712 – Home, Liquor Store and Gun Shop** By Dorothy French

*Editor's Note: Our tour of the east side of Main Street continues. The building at #3712 was the site of a home and later several businesses, including a liquor store and a gun shop.*



**1950's: Ray and Frances Pembroke home**



**1967: Parking lot installation**

**Early Owners:** Thanks to his warranty deed, current owner Dave Dentico was able to provide information about previous owners and dates. 1840: Andrew Case; 1846: Silas Jones and Caleb Knapp, Jr.; 1854: Frederick Robe; (no date); George and Amretta Kent; 1905: James and Helen Camp; 1909: George and Cora Patterson; and 1910: Addie and William Clark sold to C. H. and Elizabeth Bean.

**1936:** Property purchased by Ray and Frances Pembroke who also owned the Red & White store on the southeast corner of Main Street and Walworth-Marion Road. For many years the Pembroke's front yard was landscaped with trees and shrubs, including a large pine tree which was annually decorated for the Christmas season by local residents.

**1964:** The Pembrokes sold their home to Keith Hartung. In 1967 the front yard and shrubbery were removed to make way for a parking lot. Keith converted the building into a multi-use facility. A pizza shop was located in the front area; later it became a liquor store. (*Editor's Note: Walworth was a dry town until 1971.*) An apartment was located in the rear of the building and also on the second floor.

**1970:** Property owned by K-Wal, Inc., a corporation owned by Keith Hartung.

**1985:** Gene and Pam Bavis purchased the building from Keith Hartung. Gene did extensive renovations to the building including ripping out the second floor apartment and completely upgrading it. He also added the large front porch which included a handicap ramp on the south side of the building.

**1989:** Gene and Pam Bavis sold the property to Dave Dentico, who owns and operates The Custom Shop/Gun Shop at that location. The business provides guns, ammo and firearm cleaning supplies for sale, as well as expert gunsmithing.



**1987: Renovation**



**2020: Current photo**

**Next: The properties located at the southeast corner of Main Street and Walworth-Marion Road**



**1910 Stalker's Store**



**2017 Lawnmower Shop**

Residents in the hamlet of West Walworth were awakened early Sunday morning on December 10, 2017, by fire sirens – a warning of impending danger and destruction. Multiple area fire departments were called in for assistance. According to the Times of Wayne County, when the day ended, several buildings in the 4000 block of West Walworth Road were declared total losses and several nearby residences had been damaged.

Gone forever was the building known as Stalker and Son store, a mainstay in the West Walworth community for many years. It was located on the east side of Main Street, several structures north of the former West Walworth Fire Department's building. For 24 years the general store had been operated by Charles Stalker and also served as a post office. Charles was postmaster from 01/04/1907 – 05/08-1922 when the family moved to Macedon. His son, Earl, succeeded him as postmaster, serving from 05/09/1922 to 11/22/1924. The West Walworth Post Office was established in 1840 and closed 03/31/1934; at one time it was located in the nearby Bills Block.

At the time of the fire, the building was a lawn mower shop owned and operated by Richard Stalker. Also destroyed to the north was a vacant house that was being remodeled and the source of the fire, according to the West Walworth Fire Department.

**Walworth Memories Program:** Howard Triou mentioned on 06/11/2009 that in the late 1920's the business was operated by Garfield Wilson as a hardware and variety store. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson lived in the house to the north. Later a Mr. Lotze owned the store.



An automobile dealer sold Packard cars at the building; a Packard sign was painted on the structure. There was a second floor apartment and stairs were located on the outside of the building.

**Sources: West Walworth Fire Department, Times of Wayne County, and WHS files.**

**2017: fire photo courtesy of the West Walworth Fire Department.**

**Next Issue: The Life of Charles Stalker**

*Editor's Note: Our series of country doctors continues with some interesting facts about Dr. Ernest E. Esley who served this area for 44 years.*

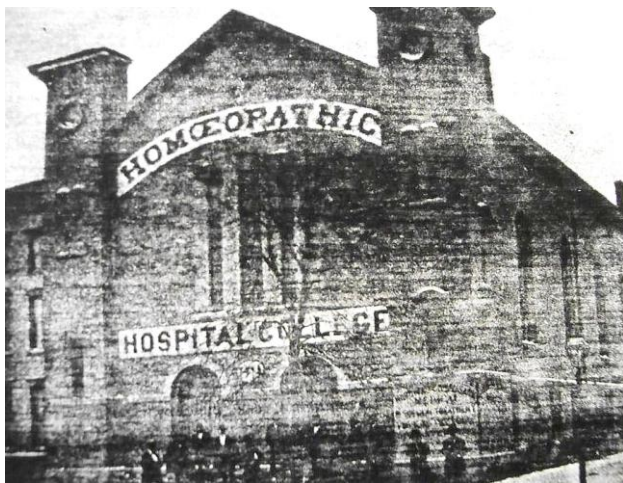


**Skeletal remains**  
(photo courtesy of Richard Roland)

**The Skeleton Story:** The following information, courtesy of Richard Roland, was written by Mary Flannery of Paddy Lane Road, Ontario in 1989 timeframe and titled "The Missing Link." For 45 years a skeleton resided in a Campbell's Soup box at Wayne Central School and was an object of study. Marjorie Esley, Dr. Esley's daughter, believed it was the remains of a janitor at the Homeopathic Medical Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, where her father had studied. She said the body had been bequested to the hospital for dissection. Dr. Esley acquired the skeleton, intending to have it articulated and used for reference and identification. However, there were other animal and baby bones in the box; some human bones were missing. Marjorie was an art student in New York City and decorated her apartment at Halloween with the skeleton. In the late 1980's the box resided in a back cupboard of room 11A at Beneway High School. Upon Dr. Esley's death, teacher Al Gentile asked if he could use it in a biology and health class.

**Community Involvement:** Dr. Esley taught Sunday School class at the Walworth Methodist Church for more than 20 years. The Esley family sat on the right side near the front. Dr. Esley always had his medical bag by his side in case he would get a call. An usher would come and whisper in his ear of an emergency. A member of the Walworth Fire Department, he would push a button at his house to turn on the siren and then go to the fire hall to let the firemen know the location of the fire. He was also a member of Walworth Grange and the Walworth Lodge F&AM. He was instrumental in starting the Walworth Light and Power Company. He played horn with a local group of musicians called the "Friedcake Band". He helped administer a fund for needy students and for many years served as school doctor and health officer, working with state authorities to provide proper care for the state patients living in Walworth.

For 45 years he served this community in numerous ways. He was loved and admired by many. Dr. Esley died 1946, Mabel in 1966. They are buried in the Esley family plot in Walworth Cemetery on Sherburne Road.



**Homeopathic Medical School**  
(photo courtesy of Richard Roland)



**Dr. and Mabel Esley: 1935**

**Country Doctors series to be continued:**  
**next issue – Dr. Newman**

*Editor's Note: In our last issue we printed a story by Walworth resident Ethel Henning who reminisced about several Jewish peddlers who frequented our community. We continue Ethel's report with her memories about the people who were peddlers. Ethel was born August 1902 and passed away in 1997.*

At the turn of the century, there were many men and some women who canvassed the countryside selling their wares and satisfying the needs of the area. One such person was Jew Jake. He had a small horse-drawn cart with a cupboard on the platform from which he dispensed kitchen utensils – heavy enamel basins, pitchers, all sizes of kettles and other kitchen needs.

He had special places where he could spend the night and buy sweet butter, for his way of life frowned upon salted food. After the evening meal, he put on a little black cap and his prayer shawl around his shoulder and said his prayers before retiring. He paid for this hospitality by giving the housewife something from the cupboard. I remember his coming to my grandparents' farm when they lived on the Kelly farm on Downs Road.

Then there was David Levi, a small bent-over Jewish man who carried a large pack on his back that was strapped with pieces of clothesline and leather thongs. He dispensed men's work socks, linen towels, and sewing items. He too had special places where he could have a meal, stay overnight and then he gave the lady of the house some item from his pack as payment for her hospitality. I still have some of the beautiful linen red-bordered towels he gave my mother.

**To be continued**

### Status of 2020 Programs By Gene Bavis

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we've had to make a lot of changes in 2020.

- The March 16 program, "A Tour of Lincoln," was moved to Sunday, **October 18** at 2 PM in the Lodge in Ginegaw Park as there had been a lot of interest in this.
- The May 18 Annual Meeting, Pot Luck Dinner, Community Service Award & Program was cancelled. The Annual Meeting/Election of Officers has been rescheduled to our **September 21** meeting.
- The Letchworth CCC trip through Walworth Recreation was postponed from **May 27** to **September 30**.
- The normal **Wednesday and Sunday** afternoon Open House hours during June through September have been cancelled. We will operate on an "Appointment Only" schedule during this summer.
- The July 24 and 25 Walworth Festival in the Park and Parade have been cancelled.
- We are still planning to have our **September 21** and **November 16** programs.
- The special Fall Open House on **October 4** has been cancelled.

All future events are being reviewed as we go. If cancellations are necessary, we will do our best to notify you. Updated information can be found on our website: [www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.walworthhistoricalsociety.org) or you may call President Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 or Town Historian Gene Bavis at 315-573-2768.

### From Your President By Jessie Keymel

This is a time in our history when everything important in our individual lives has been put on hold as we fight the battle of COVID-19. So too the activities of our historical society and community have been put on hold or cancelled. Now we are regrouping and making our collections of Walworth history available on a limited basis. We will be open by appointment only until we get the all clear from Governor Cuomo and our health officials. Please feel free to call on any board member to get access to our collection. While we have been sheltered this past spring it has been a time to reflect on our family history. We have information from the schools, churches, and cemeteries in town; if we can help please call us. We also have some family tree information and would like to keep your family on file also.

Finally, with some restrictions lifted, a group of eight members assembled at the museum with saws, rakes, spades, and an assortment of cutting tools to restore our grounds to its usual groomed state. Thank you for your time spent on Saturday mornings to Linda Pembroke, Judy Markowski, Becky Appleman, Roger and Jessie Keymel, Ed Stalker, Larry McMillan, and Gene and Liz Bavis for a job well done. Now we are ready for visitors when the time comes.

On June 3, 1971 I received a letter from Donald G. Colvin, Chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors inviting me to participate in the planning for the Wayne County Sesquicentennial in 1973. Little did I know that a few months later that I would be Co-Chair of that planning committee. Well, it has happened again! I was appointed as Co-Chair of the Wayne County Bicentennial Committee on April 16, 2019 along with Larry Ann Evans, Director of the Wayne County Historical Society.

Wayne County will be 200 years old on April 11, 2023. A committee was formed and has met several times over the past 6+ months. Some of the projects that the County Committee is working on include:

- PowerPoint presentations to share the Bicentennial story with any group who will invite us
- A 2022-2023 Calendar full of historic photos and interesting facts
- An activity book for younger children
- Display panels about various aspects of Wayne County history and cultural heritage
- Bicentennial logo signage to call attention to our celebration
- Historic markers commemorating the founding of each town
- Publication of a book or books about Wayne County
- Creation of a brochure about each Town (each town's brochure similar in format & design)
- Creation of Bicentennial Minutes (short video presentations on dozens of topics) for social media
- Special Pictorial Postal Cancellations commemorating our history & heritage
- Creation of Wayne County Bicentennial souvenirs and memorabilia
- Tours of Wayne County's many historic sites
- A Wayne County NY Challenge based on the Wayne County historic sites database
- Geocaching
- A 200-mile Torch Relay in 2023 that goes through every town in the county
- A special ceremony in Lyons (our county seat) on 4/11/2023

In addition to what is happening at the County level, the Wayne County Bicentennial Committee has asked each Town Supervisor to create a committee to plan and carry out projects at the town level and to help promote county-wide events. Supervisor Jacobs asked Town Board Member Amber Linson to organize a committee for Walworth. Approximately 20 Walworth citizens representing most local groups have agreed to serve on this committee. In future issues of the newsletter, I will report on the activities of both the County Committee and the Town Committee. We hope that YOU will take part in some of the Bicentennial activities and help celebrate our rich cultural heritage here in Wayne County.



**The WHS Museum Hours of Operation**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this summer's hours of operation (June - September) have been changed to appointments only. Please contact WHS President Jessie Keymel at 315-524-9205 or Walworth Town Historian Gene Bavis at 315-573-2768 for an appointment.

**In Memoriam – Sister and Brother**      **By Jessie Keymel**

Can we take a look back and celebrate the lives of people who made a difference? Brother and sister Robert Leland Wignall and Janice Wignall Mitchell passed away in Colorado 18 days apart last March. Their parents were Robert W. and Bertha (Franke) Wignall; their great uncle and great aunt were George and Carrie Wignall. The Wignalls were church-going individuals who believed and were involved in their community. The passings of Bob and Janice mark the end of the Wignall family connection to Walworth.

Janice passed away peacefully in her sleep March 11, 2020, in Parker. She was born in Walworth and will be laid to rest with her family in Marion. Janice was a 1942 graduate of Walworth High School, received her bachelor's degree at the Eastman School of Music and her Master's Degree in music at the University of Southern California. Her life was teaching and sharing music. Often when she returned to Walworth she shared her musical talent at the Walworth United Methodist Church and the Second Baptist Church of Walworth.



Bob passed away March 29, 2020 at his home in Colorado Springs. He was born in Walworth and grew up helping on the family's fruit farm. He remembered climbing a tall observation tower to report sightings of unusual aircraft during WW II. In 1948 he graduated from Walworth High School where he sang in the choir; he received a Master's Degree from Harvard. Bob was fluent in several languages and worked for the National Security Agency in Washington D.C. He is survived by his wife Virginia, sons Robert (Lynn) and Jonathan (Becky), daughter Kara Elder (Marc), two grandsons and a great-granddaughter.

Janice and Bob were life members of our organization. In the past they have contributed articles to our newsletter and items to our collections. Complete obituaries for Janice and Bob are in our Wignall family file at the museum.

**Robert L. Wignall and Janice W. Mitchell (above): 1987 when they returned home for their mother's funeral**

**Dues Are Due for the Walworth Historical Society**      **By Bob Mogray and Linda Pembroke**

Yearly dues for the Walworth Historical Society were due by June 1. Please make arrangements to pay your dues if you haven't done so already. This can be done by contacting WHS Treasurer Linda Pembroke at 585-455-7595 or mailing in your payment. We really appreciate your prompt attention to this. The membership form with current prices is on our website. Because of the time and cost involved with assembling, mailing, and printing the newsletter, those still owing dues will not receive any more newsletters after this one. Much time and effort from many people goes into all facets of this newsletter. So we hope you will understand when we ask for dues to be paid as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support.

**In Memoriam – Doris Darron**      **By Jessie Keymel**

Doris Darron passed away on May 25, 2020. Doris has been an important part of our community since she came here as a new bride in April 1951 to Pillar Hill Dairy Farm. Doris was a member of the Walworth United Methodist Church, an active member of the Aldersgate Class, and the Women's Society. I remember her as being a good organizer and always willing to help wherever help was needed. Her life centered around her family. She is survived by Carlyle, her husband of 69 years; children Jacqueline (Roger) Hansen, Linda (Thomas) Yale, and Richard (Karen) Darron; nine grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren: sister-in-law Helen Schultz and many nieces and nephews.



**Our Collection Continues to Grow**      **By Jessie Keymel**

We continue to receive items for our collection. Duke and Mabel Risley donated a 1973 issue of the Courier Journal observing the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wayne County and an issue of the Wayne County Mail celebrating Walworth's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The information in both issues will help Walworth prepare to celebrate the 2023 Wayne County Bicentennial. We also received a biscuit box from the Bavis collection. The box was from the store on Main Street operated and owned by the John Baker family from 1855-1915. Do you remember it? We have many calendars, pencils and other souvenirs that advertise stores and businesses in our area. I know there is a box of baking soda with White's Store printed on it. There is also a grain scoop from Anna B. Youngs' grain mill south of town. It makes you wonder how these simple items survive and how many important items have been discarded over the years.

**Family Names Live On**      **By Dorothy French**

Generations of families have left their mark in the Walworth area. When Dottie DeMay was secretary at the Walworth Highway Department she found these names of residents in a 1914 directory and matched them with area roads, buildings and our town park: Albright, Baker, Bills, Boynton, Burrow, Daansen, Downs, Fosdick, Ginegaw, Hennessey, Jacobs, Kuttruff, Lewis, Mildahn, Seely, Sherburne, Stalker, Swadling, Tiffany and Wiedrick.

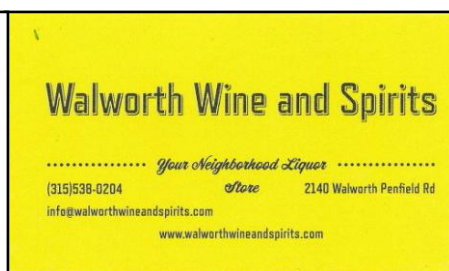
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**The Walworth Historical Society wishes to thank the Reliant Community Credit Union for the excellent job in not only color printing the cover of this newsletter as they have since 2014, but for color printing this entire newsletter to be sent to those who do not have access to a computer and receive this publication by the U.S. Mail.**

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**The Walworth Historical Society wishes to thank the following Corporate Sponsors for supporting our programs and events held throughout the year.**



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**Officers and Trustees**

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