

Walworth Historical Society

**July 2024
Newsletter**

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2024 Walworth Historical Society Annual Meeting By Bob Mogray

On Monday, May 13, the Walworth Historical Society held its annual meeting at the Lodge in Ginegaw Park. It started with an excellent dish-to-pass potluck supper and then followed with a short business meeting. The first order of business was to elect and confirm our officers and trustees for another year. WHS President Amber Linson and Vice-President Bob Mogray agreed to serve for another one-year term. Linda Pembroke will continue as Treasurer for the next three years. Trustees Liz Bavis and Judy Markowski have each agreed to another three-year term. Gene Bavis (also the Walworth Town Historian) and Jessie Keymel will continue as Trustees for one more year and Christine Kubida and Alex Heinonen will also serve as Trustees for two more years.

After 27 years of excellent service as our secretary, Judy McMillan has retired and Chris Bray was elected as the new WHS secretary. Judy and others have also volunteered doing grounds work at the museum and other Walworth public buildings. Judy has served on various committees and projects such as installing displays at the town hall. Thank you Judy for many years of outstanding service! The best of luck to Chris as she takes over as WHS Secretary.



The next order of business was to give out the WHS Community Service Award. This is an award given yearly to an individual or small group for their volunteerism in the community above and beyond the normal expectations of their profession. This year's recipient is Mary Jane Cauwels Devlin **(shown to the left, receiving this award from Gene Bavis).**

She is a charter member, has held all of the officer positions, was the treasurer for 24 years, has served on the Newsletter Committee, and has worked on many other committees and projects for many years. Her sons, daughters-in-law, and grandsons were there to help her celebrate this award. Our thanks and congratulations to Mary Jane for all she has done and continues to do for the Walworth Historical Society!

To finish out the evening, since we are a historical society, I presented a short slide show about some of the noteworthy items and events of 1974, 50 years ago. Time really flies and many things are forgotten about the past. It is funny and interesting to remember some of these things from time to time.

Finally, thanks to all who attended this meeting. We really appreciate the support of our members and the community. We are always looking for new members to join the WHS to help us with our efforts and projects.

2024 Memorial Day: West Walworth

By Bob Mogray



Memorial Day has become an important national holiday, paying honor to all Americans who gave their lives serving in the military. Congress made it a federal holiday in 1971 to be celebrated on the last Monday in May. Previously, it was called Decoration Day, as there were celebrations of placing flowers on the graves of fallen soldiers since the mid-1800's. Today, Memorial Day is a solemn reminder of the ultimate sacrifice of men and women in service to our country.

This year, in spite of some very bad weather, there was a short parade in West Walworth, sponsored by the West Walworth Fire Department. Included in the parade were West Walworth Fire Department marchers and fire department vehicles of all kinds, the Western Wayne Ambulance, a Wayne County Bicentennial car, and more. Following the parade there was also a brief ceremony at the fire hall.



Thank you to all of the volunteers, marchers and attendees for honoring Memorial Day!

2024 Festival-in-the-Park By Bob Mogray

This summer on Friday, July 26 and Saturday, July 27, the Walworth Lions Club will sponsor its 34th annual Festival-in-the-Park in Ginegaw Park. On Friday at 7:00 PM there will be a parade that will march north on Walworth-Palmyra Road and turn left onto Walworth-Penfield Road, ending up in Ginegaw Park. This year's theme is "Volunteer More in 2024." There is always lots of great food and fun for the whole family. The following is a tentative schedule:

Friday July 26

- 4:00 PM Concessions and games open
- 5:00 PM Cruise Night
- 7:00 PM Parade
- 8:30 PM Bingo

Saturday July 27

- 8:00 AM 8k race
- 1:00 PM Concessions and games open
- 2:00 PM Water Spray and Corn Hole Tournament
- 3:00 PM Wayne County Sheriff K9 Demonstration
- 4:00 PM Pony Rides
- 9:15 PM Fireworks

The Walworth Lions Club sponsors this Festival-in-the-Park to provide a family event for our local community and as a fundraiser, so please feel free to attend any or all of the events planned! Thank you and hope to see you there!

New Walworth Town Hall Display By Bob Mogray



Recently Judy McMillan and I installed some new items in the display case at the Walworth Town Hall located to the left of the inside library entrance. These include photos of recent springtime views around the Walworth area as well as spring garden pictures that almost no one has seen from a Garden Tour that the Walworth Historical Society sponsored a few years ago. Hope you like them and have a great summer because it's here already!

Turning Back the Pages to 1959 By Dorothy French

The following news items appeared in the Wayne County Mail during 1959:

- Mar. 13:** Residents of Livingston, Monroe, and Wayne Counties will have free access to libraries in all three counties, effective March 2.
- Apr. 3:** Pat Torpey, country music singer and guitarist, will emcee and star in a variety show presented by Ontario-Williamson-Walworth World Inside Chapter.
- May 22:** Walworth was pounded with hail stones, some as large as a quarter. Heaviest damage was in the village, where Milton Bradshaw's greenhouse suffered a \$5,000 loss in broken windows and plant damages. Seven window panes on the south side of Walworth Methodist Church were broken. Roads were covered with leaves, sliced from the trees. There was extensive damage to farmers' crops.
- June 5:** A sodium fluoride clinic was held June 22 - 24 at the Walworth Elementary School.
- Oct. 30:** Crane-Engert Post, American Legion, will hold a memorial service on Nov. 11 in front of the Grange Hall on Main Street, where a monument will be unveiled listing the servicemen of Walworth who served during World War II.

Melba Smith and Her 1918 Diary – Part 3 By Mary Jane Devlin

Editor's Note: Melba Smith was born in 1899. Melba and her parents lived on Canandaigua Road and she was a student at District #8 in 1904-05. The school was also known as Freewill and was located on the northeast corner of Atlantic Avenue and Downs Road. Melba taught at Finley Road district school and was a faithful writer in her diary, which has been transcribed to give us a better understanding of life in 1918 - 1920. In later years she lived at 2179 Walworth-Penfield Road, the current home of Russ and Barb Kuelling. Melba died in 1971 and is buried in Baker Road Cemetery. Excerpts of her diary are printed below, thanks to Mary Jane Devlin who transcribed them.

- Aug.** Good news - my position at \$16 a week in Finley District; taught because of scarcity of teachers.
- Sept.** Started school and like it very much. I have 27 pupils and 31 enrolled. Learned to ride a bicycle. Took some awful spills. Landed in the burdocks and got my hair full, also landed on Mr. Wignall's hedge.
- Sept.** School closed on account of "Spanish Influenza" for 3 weeks and 2 days. Worked in dry house. Worked off 30 bushels when we worked alone.
- Sept.** Started school - everything went fine. Had a ride most of the time one way or another. Coal was very scarce.
- 3rd Week:** Went to Wignall's for milk. Went to Halloween social. Had a fairly good time.
- No date:** Bertha and Ethel came home sick. Ethel's friend died of the "flu".
- Nov. 25** First snow storm. Rode home with man from Williamson.

In Memoriam: Arlene Duell Suwijn

By Dorothy French



Arlene (Duell) Suwijn (**left photo**), whose family has long-established roots in Walworth and member of the Second Baptist Church, passed away May 29 at age 100. For many years Arlene and her husband Bill, lived on Walworth-Palmyra Road in the Huddle area. They loved to travel and dance but after Bill's death, she resided at the Fairport Baptist Home.

Arlene was a member of the Saxophone Quintet of Walworth High School and one of 19 Walworth High School seniors of the Class of 1941. She was a long-time employee of Wayne Central School District and a Life Member of the Walworth Historical Society. Arlene was the daughter of Louis and Gertrude Duell. Louis and his brothers operated a saw mill behind the Baptist Church, harvested ice from the Huddle's mill pond during the winter months, and also drilled wells.

President's Message

By Amber Linson

First, let me express my gratitude towards our new business sponsors! Towards the beginning of the year we reached out to local businesses and offered them a place among our supporters and two businesses responded. Walworth Wine and Spirits and John M. Bodak Western Snowplows have become WHS sponsors for 2024. We are so thankful for the support of these companies who make it possible for us to continue our mission of preserving Walworth's history.

With our new sponsors, our annual meeting behind us, and the summer ahead we continue to work on organizing the collection. It is most definitely our biggest project this year. With many items to be accessioned, the Collection Committee is busy working on the 1st and 2nd Wednesday of every month. They could definitely use your help. It is a simple matter of reviewing an item and completing paperwork to accompany it, but it is time consuming and we have much to do.

However, the curiosities we find are worth the writing. So, email us at walworthnyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you want to help.

We also have the Festival-in-the-Park coming up and plan to participate in both the parade and the festival. This year's theme of "Volunteer More in 2024" touches right at the heart of our organization and we wouldn't miss it! We will be decorating the float on Tuesday, July 16 at 6:30 PM at Keymel's barn. If you're crafty, come give us a hand.

With all the organizing we have been doing and the festival to come, unfortunately we had to cancel the June 30 open house. It was a tough decision, but we realized there just wasn't enough time for our small group of volunteers to get everything ready for you to come visit. Don't worry though, we will absolutely be ready for you in October and look forward to having company again. And don't forget, you can call or email us anytime for a tour of the museum! See page 8 for the list of officers/committee chairpersons and their phone numbers. **Stay cool this summer! We will see you in the fall.**

Wayne Central Celebrates 75 Years

By Gene Bavis



Wayne Central High School circa the mid 1950's

On April 29, 1949, the New York State Commissioner of Education issued the order for the centralization of 21 common and union free school districts within the towns of Ontario, Walworth, Macedon, Williamson, Webster and Penfield. The newly formed district consisted of about 72 square miles and served just over 1,000 students. In 1972, six square miles were ceded to the newly formed Gananda Central School District.

On April 29, 2024, a celebration was held in the auditorium of the James A. Beneway High School with several speakers. Since I was out of town, WHS President, Amber Linson, represented both the WHS and me as Town Historian at the ceremony.

June 2025 will be the 75th Wayne Central Class to graduate, so this 75th Anniversary Celebration will take place throughout the 2024-2025 school year. As Town Historian, I'll be working with Jim Switzer (unofficial school district historian) and Ontario Town Historian, Liz Albright, to gather and share more information about the history of education here in our area.

Our Collection By Jessie Keymel



Molner family lemonade service set

Have you seen the new item at the museum? It is a hand-painted lemonade pitcher and five glasses. This is no ordinary gift; it has been cherished by the Molner family for generations. Anthony Molner was a herdsman who came with a herd of Holsteins from Holland in the late 1800's. The lemonade set followed with the family when they immigrated, with the understanding that it should return to Walworth when the family no longer lived in the area. Mary Jane Molner Moore, the last Molner in the area, has moved her household to Florida, so the lemonade set has returned to Walworth. It is amazing to me that only one glass was broken during this long journey back to Walworth.

The other herdsman on this journey was Abram Pembroke, but this is not the end of the story. Abram's sister, Anna, married Anthony Molner on 1/29/1871 in Walworth. They had seven children - three girls and four boys. The oldest daughter Lena married George Millen, who worked for George Wignall. Their son, Albert, married Ella Hall; they owned a farm on Walworth-Ontario Road across the road from her parents. In one of Charlie Pembroke's writings at our museum he mentions his Molner cousins.

APHNYS 2024 Regional Meeting By Gene Bavis

APHNYS is the acronym for the Association of Public Historians of New York State. Each town, village, city, and county is required by New York State law to have an appointed historian. I serve as the Walworth Town Historian. Each public historian is encouraged to join the statewide organization that provides support, training and conferences. There is an annual conference held in different places around the state, but regional meetings are also held in most of the 13 regions. We are in Region 11 which consists of Wayne, Ontario, Monroe, Seneca, Yates, and Steuben Counties.

At the 2023 Region 11 meeting in Victor, several historians from Wayne County offered to host the 2024 meeting in Macedon and Macedon Town Historian Linda Braun was the Chair. On Saturday, April 20 about 40 historians gathered at the Macedon Town Hall/Library complex to hear several speakers. Among them, Region 11 Coordinator Babette Huber (Victor Town Historian) updated attendees on New York State's plans for the upcoming 250th United States birthday celebration. Professor of History Michael Oberg (SUNY Geneseo) spoke on his student fellowship programs. Erika Newcombe (Pal-Mac Class of 2023) spoke about her Old Baptist Cemetery restoration project.



Gene Bavis (Walworth Town Historian and Chairman of the Wayne Historians Organization) spoke about the work of WHO and in particular about the WHO Database of Historic Sites. Recently two new parts were added: People and the 111th New York Volunteer Infantry (see www.waynehistorians.org). Chris Blomgren (retired social studies teacher and head of the Historic Pursuits non-profit organization) spoke about how Historic Pursuits can inspire young people. The final speaker, archaeologist Ann Morton, described how archaeology can be useful to local historians. Local historians felt the day was productive and educational, and it provided another networking opportunity.

Photo (L to R): Ann Morton, Michael Oberg, Babette Huber, Chris Blomgren, Gene Bavis, Ericka Newcombe, Linda Braun.

**A friendly reminder that yearly dues are due.
Please contact WHS Treasurer Linda Pembroke with questions or payments.**

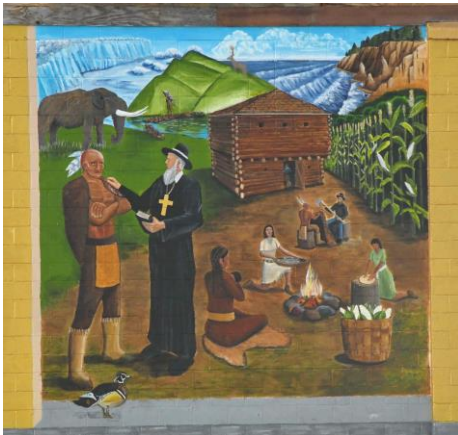
Museum Clean-Up Day May 11 By Gene Bavis

Every year we schedule a day to spread mulch (donated by Paul Luckman...THANK YOU!), pull weeds, trim bushes, fill in holes in the lawn, etc. This year we also power washed the vinyl siding (THANK YOU, Adam Bushey) and did inside spring cleaning and window washing. Thanks to all who turned out to help (photos below).



Bicentennial Mural in Williamson By Gene Bavis

If you travel Route 104 in Williamson (across from McDonald's) you will see that progress is being made on the Bicentennial Mural. Two of seven panels were completed in 2023 (below). Work began in June on the other five. Completion is expected by the end of August and a ceremony will be scheduled there, probably in September to celebrate this Bicentennial project.



Turning Back the Pages – Walworth Town Board Minutes By Dorothy French



A review of town board minutes (1855 – 2005) reflects the growth and information of our Walworth township.

- 1-8-1987 Assessor John Aman reported that 83 single family homes were built in 1986, 29 of which were in Gananda.
- 11-19-1992 1993 Homearama will be held in Gananda areas of Fairway 5, Drumlin Top, and the Woodlands.
- 1-19-1995 John Aman reported that 276 building permits were issued in 1994, of which 76 were single family homes in Gananda and 26 were in the remainder of Walworth township.

Wreaths Across America Program By Liz Bavis

The Walworth Historical Society is again looking forward to partnering in the Wreaths Across America Program. It is a wonderful way to honor veterans who are buried in Walworth cemeteries (Walworth, West Walworth, Freewill, Baker and Gould). Guy Bringley presented the idea to our community in 2020 and it was met with enthusiasm. Since then we have had a wreath-laying ceremony in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Last year 145 wreaths were laid at five different Walworth cemeteries.

The ceremony will take place on December 14 at noon at the Walworth Cemetery on Sherburne Road. To sponsor wreaths go to the address below. The cost is \$17.00 each. You may order wreaths now through the end of November. If you need help in ordering, please feel free to reach out to me for assistance at 585-802-0380.

Those who receive the newsletter electronically click on the link below to order wreaths.

<https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/social/NYWVCW->

https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/social/NYWVCWWalworthVillageCemetery?Sid=163759&fbclid=IwZ_Xh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR12mlyEfxSbI46Ey42pY9ZATgUsw411kkEmka9yT9noR3IdJBFgxFxYXUE_aem_ZmFrZWR1bW15MTZieXRlcw

2024 WHS Calendar of Events

July 16	6:30 PM	FIP* Float Decoration Keymel's Barn
July 26	6:30 PM	FIP* Parade & Booth Ginegaw Park
July 27	3 – 8 PM	FIP* Booth Ginegaw Park
Aug. 12	4:00 PM	Board of Trustees WHS Museum
Sept.16	7:00 PM	Program - Automobilmism in Newark Ginegaw Park Lodge
Oct. 6	2 – 4 PM	Fall Open House WHS Museum Allen Hopkins Music
Oct. 14	4:00 PM	Board of Trustees WHS Museum
Nov. 18	12:00 PM	Soup Program TBA Ginegaw Park Lodge
Dec. 9	4:00 PM	Board of Trustees WHS Museum
Dec. 14	1 – 3 PM	"Wreaths Across America" Open House WHS Museum

Memories from Marjorie Joan Esley

By Dorothy French

Editor's Note: Marjorie was born in 1904 to Dr. Ernest E. and Mabel Esley. The Esley family lived at 2188 Walworth-Penfield Road, corner Church Street. She was a freelance artist and also illustrated school text books, "Girl Scout Magazine", and several "Little Golden Books". She is still remembered by the many "children" she used as models who still live in Walworth. Marjorie died November 22, 2000 at age 96 in Indiantown, Florida. She is buried in the Esley family plot in Walworth Cemetery on Sherburne Road. The school referenced below was located on the corner of High and Academy Streets. It was torn down in 1930 to make way for the 2½ story Walworth High School, which was demolished in 2014 and replaced by the Gateway Senior Luxury Housing. The following letter from Marjorie Esley was written in 1991. This letter was given to the museum by Hazel Bassage.

To All Friends of Walworth High School Association:

As my generation is rapidly diminishing, I'd like to reminisce a bit about what our student life was like in Walworth during the 2nd decade of the 1900's.

I liked to tell people unfamiliar with our then-small village that I was valedictorian of my 1920 high school graduation class. After a suitable pause, I would add that we were a class of three! Alvira Meyers (later Mrs. Robert Harris) and Julian Petty were the others.

It took stamina in those pre-bus, pre-powerful-rotary-plow days to acquire a high school diploma if you came from an outlying district. Alvira drove from West Walworth in a pony cart, parking her horse in the sheds that stood behind the Methodist Church. In winter she boarded in the village. Some came as far as from Hall Center, often treading through heavy snow in the dark of winter and carrying their own lunches.

continued on next page.....

(Right) Marjorie Joan Esley

(Left) Academy and Grange Hall prior to 1930



We attended school in the old three-story red brick building, which was once the distinguished Walworth Academy but definitely showed signs of long usage. We were summoned to school at nine and one by the bell now preserved on the school grounds, thanks to efforts by Joe Finley and others. We lucky villagers went home for what was then customarily dinner in our farming community. The others ate in the classroom during cold weather, and of course a teacher was assigned to keep the bread balls and other food from flying about the room. There was no running water in the school. I have a vague recollection of a pump outside. And, of course, there was no indoor toilet facilities which took courage to face the elements in winter.

The gym and stage were on the top floor, and an outdoor staircase descended to the Grange Hall which was close by – an attractive cobblestone building. The staircase presumably served as our only fire escape. A large room on the 2nd floor was not only an assembly hall but doubled as a combined study and class room for the entire high school. Classes were conducted on long benches at the front. It was remarkable that two teachers could cover all the subjects required for a diploma, but somehow it was accomplished and we passed our Regents examinations.

I think we were very fortunate in our teachers. We were living thru World I and its aftermath. We learned to read the newspapers and come prepared. Another fallout from the war was that those of us who had been started on German as our only modern language course found ourselves suddenly switched to French, so we ended with a smattering of each.

Sitting in front of a computer screen and pushing buttons looks to me like a fun way to learn, and modern children acquire skills we never dreamed of. But with computers came drug pushers, knives, and sometimes even gun-toting youngsters, teen-age pregnancies, and even Satanic cults. So I am glad I grew up in a more innocent age and attended a small school in the small village of Walworth.

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