



The Walden House TATTTLER

The Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley

Vol. 29, No.1

Walden, New York

April 2009

2008 Christmas Tea was a big Success!

Visit our Website to see all the photos...

www.thewaldenhouse.org



Susan Rumbold donated a Walden House look-alike Gingerbread House for the event.



We had a special Holiday performance by the Nyack Choir.



Susan Turner presented a gift of an old Walden Map; the Tea was enjoyed by young and old alike. Jordan, daughter of Trustee Nancy & Dave Olhmer gets a hug from our oldest visitor.



Join us for the Annual Spring Tea—April 26th
at the Walden House—Call for Reservations
845-778-7772

~2009 Programs and General Meetings~

All programs begin at 7:30PM unless otherwise noted.

Apr 15th—Jay Beaumont, guest speaker. Topic: The Great Hudson River Water Quilt. Hostesses: Clare Ciardullo, Pat Eisley, Ginny Neidermier

Apr 26th—Annual Spring Tea at the Walden House
Reservations Only 12:30 & 3:30 seatings. Call 778-7772

May 20th—Vincent T. Dacquino, guest author. Topic: Sybil Ludington—Discovering the Life of a Revolutionary War Hero. Hostesses: Nancy Ohlmer, Jordan Ohlmer, Robert Siegman

Jun 17th—Elizabeth Werlau, guest author.

Topic: Plattekil—Images of America. Hostesses: Barbara Heitz, Yvette DiDonato, Barbara Imbasciani

Jul 15th—6:30PM--Annual Picnic-on-the-Porch



IN MEMORIAM

Condolences

...to the family of Don Henry, a long-time member and former Trustee, who passed away November 24, 2008. Don was one of our faithful lawn-keepers for many years until his health would no longer permit him to continue. In addition to his interest in the history of Walden and the activities of the Society, Don was a dowser. As such, he was our guest speaker for the April 1995 meeting.

...to the family of John Anderson, former resident of Walden, who passed away January 11, 2009. Mr. Anderson served in the Royal Norwegian Air Force during WWII. Anyone who owns a charm of the Walden spoon will recall that John Feyko (former Trustee) and John Anderson, as pewterers, collaborated to produce a full-sized pewter spoon. *This little pewter charm bears the touchmark of the makers of "The Walden Spoon."*

For more on The Walden Spoon, see pages 5 & 7...

Thank you... to "Bud" Weller for the lovely wreaths he has provided for our front door each December, to Trustee Rich Hoyt for the beautiful Christmas trees that grace the parlor each year, and to all who contributed to the Christmas Tea.

An excerpt from Ella Orndorff's book on Walden and WWII...

Chapter Four: Protecting the Home Front

"As a Girl Scout, this writer (Ella Orndorff) remembers being a messenger during mock air raids and blackouts. When the alarm sounded, we hurried to our designated spots to await our assignment. One night my assignment was to go get "Old" Doc Palen, who lived on Bank Street, to come to the central firehouse "to treat the injured." The streets were very dark, so dark that it was scary. You can imagine my surprise to be told, when Doc answered my knock, "Go back and tell those ****s I'm busy!" But, that was good "Old" Doc Palen, as anyone who knew him would tell you.

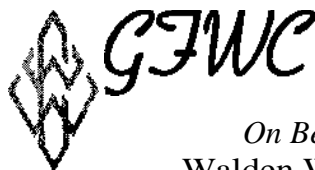
Patricia (Tenney) DiDonato tells of an experience that she had as a messenger during a blackout drill on a very dark, cloudy night. The Village of Walden's Department of Public Works had been digging a ditch on Orchard Street that day. Pat's designated post was at Bartlett's Law office on the same street. Hurrying to deliver a message to the village office on Walnut Street, she soon learned of the DPW's daylight activity. Inasmuch as blackout drills required that ALL lights be extinguished, the ditch was unmarked with any visible warning. You guessed it! Pat fell into the ditch. A little shaken by her experience she, nevertheless, completed her mission." Excerpt from Walden & World War II by Ella Orndorff, 1996. These stories and many others about the experiences of our friends, neighbors and relatives during the War Years are related in the book Walden & World War II. There are a few copies still available for sale from the Society (\$10.00)-- please call Pat Eisley 845- 778-1173.



Thank you to member Dale Caldwell for sending this interesting Ancestry Tree!

Did you ever stop to wonder about the number of ancestors you have? The following "tree" gives you a little food for thought.

We
all have
2 Parents
4 Grandparents
8 Great Grandparents
16 Great-Great Grandparents
32 Great-Great-Great Grandparents
64 Great-Great-Great-Great Grandparents
128 Great-Great-Great-Great-Great Grandparents
256 Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great Grandparents
512 Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great Grandparents
1024 Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-GreatGrandpr.
After just ten generations!
2,048
4,096
8,192
16,284
32,568
65,136
130,272
260,544
521,088
1,042,176
And all of these in twenty generations!



On Behalf of the
Walden Woman's Club

THIS DONATION IS PRESENTED TO
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WALDEN
AND THE WALLKILL VALLEY
IN RECOGNITION OF A PROJECT BY
EAMONN McGORMAN Boy Scout Troop 31
WINNER IN THE WALDEN WOMAN'S CLUB
YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS
CONTEST
2009



Historical Society Members Yvette DiDonato, Vice President Anita Vandemark, and Patricia Eisley, receive donation from new Eagle Scout, Eamonn McGormann.

Walden Woman's Club

YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS
CONTEST PARTICIPANTS

Eamonn McGorman and BS Troop 31*

Repair project at the Shafer House for the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley

Timothy Kurisko and BS Troop 31

Repair project at the Jacob T. Walden House for the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley

These organizations received a donation from the Walden Woman's Club in recognition of the projects selected by our judges.

The top right side of the stove served active children in other ways as well. After a busy day sleigh riding, building igloos or having snowball fights, the lined leather mittens covering our numb fingers would be soaking wet. Left overnight, palm side up on that warm end of the stove, the completely dried mittens, though stiff as boards, would be cozy warm to face another day.

Still the old iron stove's work was not finished - it was in the process of creating some after school "gourmet" kids. Take a couple of slices of 'Wonder Bread,' smear them with butter, sprinkle on some cinnamon and sugar and pop them in the oven for five minutes or so - "Twinkies" paled in comparison!

Similar to the phenomenon that "what goes up must come down" should be the expression that "what goes in must come out!" The reference, of course, is to the burned coal, or ash. For the stove to function efficiently, the ash pit had to be shoveled out almost as often as the fresh coal had to be shoveled in. Naturally it could not be accomplished without causing some dust to escape. That in turn led to the disagreeable task of dusting and waxing the furniture - a chore that my sisters

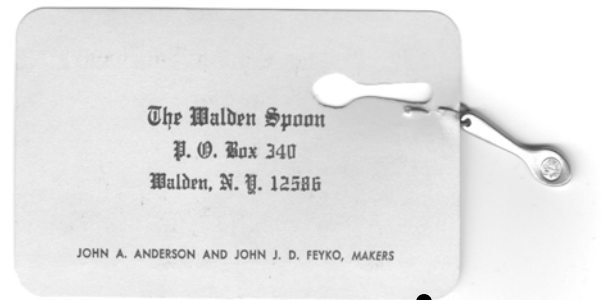
and I schemed to avoid. The ashes were carried down to the cellar and deposited into a metal garbage can along with the ashes from the furnace. Under icy winter conditions, the ashes would be spread on the sidewalks and driveways to prevent slipping. (Who ever heard of salt for sidewalks back then?) Most driveways in Walden contained a substantial layer of ashes which proved to be a great mud-abater in the Spring.

Naturally the question should arise: What became of all the ashes that weren't spread on the sidewalks and driveways? In our neighborhood, it became the province of old Bucky Ostrander and his trusty horse and wagon. He would empty the ash cans into his old slot-bottomed wagon until it was full. Then, climbing up on his seat and grabbing the reins, he would trot the load over to the top of the empty lot between Bergen and Pleasant Avenues. There he would pull the boards out and release the heap of ashes. The resultant high bank of ashes, when covered with snow, gave our sleds a rocket-like boost as we tore down the hill toward Pleasant Avenue. Oh, the happy memories!

8th Annual Local History Day

As we go to press, the Walden and Wallkill Valley Historical Society in conjunction with the Josephine-Louise Public Library and the Village of Walden hosted the 8th Annual Local History Day on March 29th, 2009 from 2-4 pm. This year's event was a Digital Wallkill Valley Cemetery Tour. Look for photos from our event on the website soon.

The other side of the Walden Spoon Card (page 1).



Neighborhood News

Lifetime best friends David C. Lustig and Lawrence Yeaple spent happy childhood hours living next door to one another on Capron Street. This photo was taken, circa 1938.



Trustee David C. Lustig and Lawrence Yeaple are still lifetime friends and still Walden residents.

Photo: following the recent Anniversary play, 2008..



The Four Legged Fire-Breathing Monster in our Kitchen~by David Lustig

I can visualize it like yesterday, back on 89 Capron Street - that gleaming four legged fire-breathing monster. It lurked defiantly in an inside corner of our kitchen, its long black trunk thrusting upward and into a hole in the wall. But you know something, I kinda miss it. You see, it was a somewhat comforting childhood monster and only had to be fed its messy lumpy diet from October to May. Contrary to conventional timetables, warm weather was its hibernating season. Substituting for our attention, from June until September, was its alternate, a skinny homely four legged relative. Less domesticated than our primary monster, it was kept in our well-ventilated attached back shed - not for behavioral reasons but because of the rather unpleasant odor caused by its liquid diet. In case the analogy escapes you, the imposing kitchen monster was our big black cast iron, four lid coal stove. Its less revered summer substitute, in the back shed, was our kerosene stove. So let's turn back the clock to the 1920s and 1930s and discover just what living with kitchen monsters and coal was all about.

The indispensable gourmet chefs who tamed these ubiquitous monsters were, of course, our mothers. More often than not, it was these stay-at-home moms who also hauled heavy full pails of coal from musty cellar coal bins. I say "musty" because the loads of coal were wetted down before delivery from the coal truck to help prevent objectionable coal dust from filtering throughout the house.

In the Walden area, almost all of our homes were heated by coal and the two primary sources of the coal were Garrison's Coal and Lumber on Grant Street (the current site of Sheeley's Laundromat and Car Wash) and the Hill Coal Company on Valley Avenue opposite the end of William Street. The coal, from Pennsylvania mines and open pits, was delivered to railroad sidings at both locations. Most of the coal for domestic use was anthracite, or hard coal, which burned slowly and very hot with little smoke or flame. Bituminous, or soft coal, was less expensive but produced a great deal of smoke and ashes and also odor. It was used primarily for commercial purposes and for satisfying the voracious appetite of the huge noisy steam locomotives that pulled the endless lines of full coal cars under choking clouds of black smoke. During the Great Depression, it was a common sight to see impoverished or elderly people picking through the ash piles or walking the railroad tracks looking for warmth-producing unburned lumps of coal.

To better appreciate the role coal played in our lives in the first half of the twentieth century, let's start with

the local delivery. Coal was graded by the size of the individual lumps - chestnut for most domestic use, and pea and buckwheat primarily for commercial furnaces with automatic feeds. It was sold mostly by the ton or partial ton, and in burlap bags by the pound. At the Hill Coal Company, the large drive-on weighing scale was just off the east Valley Avenue sidewalk between a small office building and the owner's residence. To load the truck for a delivery, the driver drove across a one lane bridge over the Tin Brook to the far side of the open field. There he backed the open truck under an elevated trestle holding the parked loaded coal car. A few turns of the big side mounted iron wheel released the desired amount of coal onto his truck bed. The usual driver, Mr. Owen as I recall, stopped briefly on the scale to record the weight and then proceeded to make his delivery. At the awaiting residence, Mr. Owen would then go to the basement, open a casement window to the coal bin, place boards across the opening to the bin and then climb onto the coal pile on his strategically parked truck. He would place an adjustable length heavy steel coal chute between the truck and the bin window and start shoveling the load of coal for its noisy ride down the chute and into the bin. It was strenuous dirty physical labor and, after a load or two, the delivery man took on the appearance and pallor of the coal itself.

Burning coal efficiently was an art form in itself. The ash that accumulated on the grates which supported the newly shoveled coal slowly choked off the draft that fed the flames. The housewife would then insert a socket wrench-like crank over a nut-like protrusion on the front of the stove that was geared to the grates. A practiced jiggle of the crank, while observing the fire bed through an open stove lid, would shake down the ash and give the unburned coal a new lease on life. Cooked food has never tasted as good as it did coming out of a frying pan or a pot on those two coal heated super hot stove lids. I drool at the thought of the tantalizing aroma of warm molasses or gingerbread treats spread across a cookie tin

on those same stove lids. The kitchen mistress knew just how to adjust the draft vents on the stove to retard the burn rate and make the fire last until morning. That function alone made the coal stove a blessing in disguise.

A mother could put an oatmeal, farina or cream of wheat mix in a double boiler in the evening and let it slow cook all night without burning. Ladling hot cereal into a bowl topped with cream and brown sugar gave most children a nourishing start-off to school on a cold winter morning. Naturally the cereal would

sometimes crust over and we were faced with the disagreeable task of fishing out the lumps.



Letter from our President, Barbara Imbasciani

2008 was a Banner year for the Society and the Trustees have a great year planned for 2009.

I bet that most members do not realize how much upkeep goes into the House. Just to mention a few highlights--did anyone know we had a new front railing installed, storm windows designed and installed to protect the original glass surrounding the front door, had a new gutter installed along the front porch, plus we were the benefactor of 3 Eagle Scout projects courtesy of Scouts in Troop 31. This years' plans include an upgrade of the electric in the kitchen and Bradley Room, painting in the Meeting Room, and an aggressive computerized archive project.

What we really need more then anything else at the moment is volunteers--any amount of time would be appreciated. We have scheduled a general Spring Clean - up Day for April 4th form 9-1 pm. Remember, many hands make light work!!

I am looking forward to seeing lots of old and new faces this year at our great programs and maintenance projects. ~Barbara



Greetings to the newest members of the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley!

- Andrew Corbo
- Fran Pierce
- Christine Snyder
- Diane Sandbothe
- Lauren Yeaple

Welcome!!

Eagle Scout Projects

The Historical Society has been the recipient of two wonderful Eagle Scout projects in the last 6 months. Two members of Boy Scout Troop 31, Eamonn McGorman and Jeff Schwetje, planned, organized and completed projects in the Schaffer House. Eamonn's project consisted of tearing down and replacing a ceiling, spackling and painting two upstairs rooms. Jeff's project consisted of repairing, spackling and painting the upstairs hallway, ceiling and stairs into front downstairs foyer. A *big Thank You* to both boys and to all the volunteers who assisted them.

**100th Anniversary of the Traveling Fireman's Monument!
Our Heartfelt Thank You to the Firemen of Walden!**



Dedication of the Firemen's Monument, corner of Bank and Main Streets. Honorable Thomas W. Bradley was the main speaker.—1909 (*Walden Centennial Program Booklet 1955*)



Our Monument at its present location across from the Josephine-Louise Public Library, after spending a few years near the upper bridge at Cross and North Montgomery Streets.

From the Centennial booklet:
The Fire Department is older than the incorporated village itself. The earliest record is an account book of August 1852 which shows that nine men had paid their initiation fee of fifty cents.



1909

WALDEN WOMAN'S CLUB CELEBRATES
100 YEARS OF SERVICE
"To be, not seem"

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), one of the world's largest and oldest nonpartisan, nondenominational, women's volunteer service organizations, was founded in 1890 and chartered by the 56th United States Congress in 1901.

In 1909, inspired by Mrs. W. Crowell, seventeen women gathered together to form a study club. However, on the advice of Mrs. J. H. Reid, familiar with the work and benefits of women's clubs, the group decided to form that type of organization. So on November 1, 1909, a meeting was held in the vestry of the Walden United Methodist Church and the Walden Woman's Club came into being.

Mrs. J. H. Reid was the first of many women to assume the leadership of club president and bring it to the place of prominence it holds in our community.

Mrs. J. H. Reid said:

"True worth is in being, not seeming
In doing each day that goes by
Some little good—not in dreaming of
Great things to do by-and-by."

Every Walden Woman's Club program since 1909 has had the Motto: *To Be, Not Seem* and the Object: *This club is organized for mental, cultural, and community improvement, for Philanthropic purposes and for encouraging a generous public spirit.*

The major activities undertaken by the Walden Woman's Club have centered around the following: the Walden Girl Scouts, the Josephine-Louise Public Library, college scholarships, community improvement, and NYS Federation projects.

The first decade was spent organizing and planning the club's goals, and membership grew. The club became federated with the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs. Established in 1893 with members from all over the State of New York, the NYSFWC is the only not-for-profit organization that was given permission to use the NYS Seal.

In the 1920's, Walden Woman's Club entertained the Wallkill WC and their husbands/sweethearts at a Gentleman's Night with a Japanese Operetta. Gentleman's Night continued until the WWII years when it was cancelled. A group of members decided to recreate Gentleman's Night in 1993 in the form of the "Snowflake Ball." Held each February for the past six years, this has become the annual scholarship fund-raising event. This year, the Ball also served as the 100th Anniversary Ball.

In 1934, the Club celebrated 25 years of service and growth. This decade was a huge milestone for the Walden Woman's Club with the installation of Mrs. C. J. Hoyt as NYS Federation of Women's Clubs President. She was the first of four State Presidents from the Walden Woman's Club. Succeeding her were Miss Virginia Dougherty (1962-64), Mrs. Joseph Ruscitti (1974-76) and Mrs. Clifford Barber. This is quite a remarkable achievement for a small organization.

The Woman's Club has long been a supporter of the library. In the spring of 1957, the Board of Trustees of the Josephine-Louise Public Library mentioned the need for repainting the entrance to the library, but did not have the necessary funds. The Walden Woman's Club took immediate action to have the library sign refurbished and the entrance repainted. The annual Library Fund drive continues to provide the library with support.

In 1939, through the dedication and love of Girl Scouting, the Walden Woman's Club raised enough money and gathered the community's help to build the Walden Girl Scout Cabin, which was part of Bradley Park. The Walden Woman's Club continued through the 1950's to raise money for an addition to the cabin. The addition was officially dedicated in 1960 at a ceremony named "Girl Scout Sunday." A flag was given to the GS Council to be displayed on the front lawn flag pole.

In 1966 the Walden Woman's Club set up the Girl Scout Cabin Maintenance Drive, chaired for many years by Miss Dorothy "Nance" Millspaugh. In the 1980's the Club paid for a new roof for the Cabin. A law suit filed by a neighbor of the Walden Girl Scout Cabin made headlines when part of the settlement was for the Village of Walden to take ownership and responsibility for the cabin and its maintenance. The Walden Woman's Club Girl Scout Cabin Maintenance Drive came to an end; it was replaced by the Community Fund Drive. The Club continues to support Scouts through a "start-up" fund for new troops and sponsoring a scout for summer camp.

During the Second World War, a War Service Committee was appointed. Boxes containing cookies and various foods, tokens from home, cards etc. were sent to the troops. The club also participated in the GFWC campaign to "Buy a Bomber" during WWII. As part of that campaign, the NYSFWC sold war bonds worth \$154,459,132.00 – enough money to purchase 431 planes! The Walden Woman's Club played a large part in that campaign and is very proud to have been involved.

In the 1950's in response to a tuberculosis "scare," the Walden Woman's Club took action once again. A committee was formed to address this situation.

Chaired by Mrs. John Hritz (Ruscitti), it included Mrs. Nelson McKay (Helen), Mrs. Geoffrey Donovan, Mrs. Raymond Hunt, and Mrs. George Roebuck (Ruth). The committee was instrumental in obtaining one of the first X-ray Mobil Units to come to Walden. The total number X-rayed was 1,130 including residents from Walden, Wallkill, Maybrook, Montgomery and as far as New Paltz.

In the late 1950's, the club embarked on a three to four year project to improve Wooster's Grove. The Civic Improvement Committee of the Club appeared before the Village Board of Trustees and was assured that they could plan to start this project. From that point, a new interest was aroused in the citizens of Walden for improving the grove. The Rotary Club, Lions Club, fire companies and village officials all joined in their efforts.

**The Walden Spoon
Touchmark ~ Pewter Charm**



In 1962, Walden and surrounding area residents attended the dedication of Wooster's Grove. Following a parade through Walden, Mayor Theron Coddington officially opened the park. The Walden Woman's Club received the Community Improvement award for this project from the General Federation of Women's Clubs that year. In the 1970's, plans were underway to restore and relocate a gazebo or bandstand in Wooster's Grove for Senior Citizens.

Recent activities of the Club include the Mayor for a Day program with the elementary schools, the art awards, recognition of volunteer youth and creative writing awards. The monthly meetings frequently have a guest speaker and many are open to the general public. The Walden Woman's Club is looking forward to its next hundred years of service to the community with great enthusiasm.

Many thanks to Maryann Landolina for permission to condense her history of the Walden Woman's Club for this article.



It is the Touchmark of the first Pewterers registered in Orange County since Andrew Henry in 1761.

REPRINTED TEXT FROM THE BICENTENNIAL:

THE WALDEN SPOON

a great Bi-Centennial gift

In the early 20th century, a bride was given the gift of an antique rat-tail pewter spoon which is reputed to be one of the first pewter spoons cast in Walden, N.Y.

The spoon became known as the Walden Spoon and found its way into a private collection. Later, an 18th century spoon mold offered at auction in the same area, aroused special interest when close examination revealed similarities to the Walden Spoon. Subsequent castings prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Walden Spoon was indeed cast in this old mold and was most likely used by an eighteenth century pewterer in colonial New York's Orange County. The spoons offered for sale have been cast in this old mold and are hand-finished in the same manner the original Walden Spoon was turned out by some pewterer perhaps 200 years ago. The metal used is approximately the same mixture of tin, antimony and copper contained in the original spoon. No two spoons will be exactly alike. Handcrafting the spoons will dictate a slight difference in each spoon. The spoons will be made in limited quantity and the mold will be re tired from further use. Each spoon will bear the touch mark "Walden" and an owner's registered serial number.

Wish List

- Dress Forms and Manikins
- Lawn Mower
- Lawn Care Help
- Vacuum
- Weed Wacker



Dr. W. Faulkner in his automobile. He was the first person in Orange County to own a car.

~Officers~

President Barbara Imbasciani
Vice President Anita Vandermark
Secretary Nancy Ohlmer
Treasurer Patricia Eisley

~Trustees~

Class of 2009

Barbara Imbasciani

Howard Oldrey

Robert Siegman

Anita Vandermark

Gail Yeaple, Editor, *Tattler*

Class of 2010 Class of 2011

Patricia Eisley Claire Ciardullo

Joyce Freeman Yvette DiDonato

Richard W. Hoyt David C. Lustig

Lisa Melville Sandra Magill

Marcus H. Millspaugh Nancy Ohlmer

The Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley publishes the *Walden House Tattler* bi-annually and distributes it free to members.

The Society is a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving local history and is chartered by the State of New York. Membership is open to anyone interested in local history preservation. Rates increased slightly in 2008. Annual Dues are \$10 per person, \$7.50 Student or Senior, and \$15 per family.

Inside This Issue...

- Report on the Christmas Tea 1
- Upcoming Programs & Spring Tea
- In Memoriam... Don Henry; John Anderson
- Thank You to...Bud Weller; Rich Hoyt
- New Members 2
- 100th Anniversary of Firemen's Monument
- Eagle Scout Projects
- Ella Orndorff's *Chapter Four: Protecting the Home Front* 3
- Ancestor Tree
- Scout Project Award
- *Four Legged Fire-Breathing* by Dave Lustig 4
- Annual Local History Day 5
- The Walden Spoon
- Neighborhood News
- The Walden Woman's Club—100 Years 6
- More on the Walden Spoon 7
- Photo: Dr. W. Faulkner's Car
- Officers & Index / Dues Rate change 8

The Past, Our Doorway to the Future

Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley
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