



The Walden House Tattler

Museum and home of the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley

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Walden, New York

Fall 2021



The Jacob T. Walden House



1958-9 & 2018

Historical Society Outlines Projects

Members and guests of the Walden Womans Club heard a presentation by a group from the Walden Historical Society on the history of early Walden and the founding and work of the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley at Monday afternoon's meeting in the Walden Municipal Building.

Mrs. Charles B. Hill of the Society, was chairman of the program. She presented part one of the program in which she outlined the establishment of the Village as an incorporated governmental body in April 1955. Various names were given to the village and individual locations within its confines, such as Pintown, Kidatown, and Wilemantown.

The article continued with speakers Mrs. Samuel Phelps and Mrs. George Kidd about two rooms that were sponsored through financial assistance--the Schrade room and the Embler Hill Room. Mrs. Kidd displayed items found in the house such as solid brass door lock, keyhole lock and pegged roof.

She said that with the receipt of financial and historical memorabilia from the late Charles Bodine, it would be possible to go forward with the restoration plans for the Society. Among improvements will be the roofing of the house with shake shingles (reproductions), new wiring and heater and the rebuilding of the fireplaces, etc. The shingles, the audience was told, come from British Columbia.

*Mrs. Townsend Cocks spoke of gifts given and those the Society hoped would be given to restore and refurnish the Walden House. Among gifts given both as memorials and those interested in the project were china, fireplace appointments (the meeting room fireplace mantel was from the Burkinshaw family farm in Pine Bush), paintings, maps, flags of old Walden, a flax wheel, a melodeon, and a lovely slant front mahogany desk with the inscription 1773-1779, *Thomas Burling. She continued by asking anyone having items of the period of the house, to consider presenting to the Society.*

Mrs. T. L. Millsbaugh and Miss Elizabeth Mould discussed an American Heritage project, beginning with a flag project by Mrs. Marcus Millsbaugh and Mrs. Earle Houghtaling. Various flags of historical significance have been displayed on Main. Mrs. Edmond Bertram concluded the presentations with a report of how the Society will meet needs. When the Walden House has been repaired, restored and furnished with items of the era, items of historical interest, we will have attained a memorable task, she continued, urging the Woman's Club members to join in the work as both groups are interested in preserving Walden, and the surrounding area--its history and its future.

**Thomas Burling was a well known furniture maker on Bleecker Street in New York City and is known as the maker of a desk owned by George Washington.*

President's Letter - Hello all -

I just want to take a few moments to give everyone an update on the happenings at the Walden House.

We have been working on some ongoing maintenance issues and a few new ones have also popped up! The north side of the front porch has some rotted boards and water damage. Upon further inspection it appears our gutter is not adequately catching the water runoff during rain. We are looking at ways to make our gutter more efficient and then will get estimates for the repairs to the porch. We also discovered we have carpenter ants in the front porch. They were treated on Sept 20, 2021 by Hollenbeck Pest Control. They did a thorough inspection of our House for crawling critters and only found the carpenter ants.

Next time you are at the House glance up and take a look at our Shake Shingle roof. It is looking somewhat weathered but we have no leaks at the moment, but it is on our "to do" list. The bathroom needs some maintenance as does the kitchen wall--more things for the "to do" list.

Because our "to do" list is getting larger, we have been discussing fundraising during these trying times. Nothing has been finalized but we are discussing a number of types of fundraising. All I ask is for everyone's support when the time comes to initiate a fundraising event.

Enough about money!!! We have been in the Archives and have brought out a lot of items and have created a number of new displays. One focuses on Col. T. W. Bradley. Another display is on the 3 different Walden knife manufacturers. Another display called "When Music Filled the Air" which features a number of marching band items. In the past, Walden had a number of large and well known marching bands.

We are always looking for new members so encourage your friends and family to join the Historical Society. If you have any ideas for a fundraiser or a program you would like to see, please contact me or any Trustee.

Get out and enjoy the Fall weather.

~ Barbara Imbasciani

CLASS RINGS

Thank you to Mrs. Robert (Diane) Siegman for sending in photos of their two Valley Central Class Rings for 1967 and 1969 respectively. Robert and Diane have served the Society in so many ways over the years; Robert as a Trustee and Diane has generously played music for us at a number of events over the years to name a few.



THANK YOU to our Recent Program Presenters:

Following the reopening of the Walden House and resuming events after more than a year of closure due to Covid concerns, we would like to Thank...

Mr. Michel Diaz, Curator of History and Uniforms at West Point, presented a program at the Walden Municipal Building on July 24th, in conjunction with the Josephine-Louise Public Library and the Village of Walden. His program was about the history of West Point and the Museum. Volunteers are welcome - please see the West Point Museum website. Walden's own recently retired Police Chief Jeffry Holmes has joined the Volunteers. The West Point Museum is open daily from 10:30am to 4:15pm (Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day). Free Admission.

Marianne Greenfield, proprietor of Gravestone Cleaning Service, presented a cemetery stone cleaning talk and cleaning at St. Andrews Cemetery in Walden on August 14th. Presented by the Orange County Historians office, selected stones were cleaned. *Look for more photos on our website, along with special instructions on the correct way to clean a gravestone as cleanings can be harmful to the stone.*

Guests included Johanna Porr, Orange County Historian, Nicole Nazzaro, Office of the Orange County Historian, and pictured, Adeline McIver, daughter of Trustee Lisa Melville McIver. This was a great event for young and old alike.

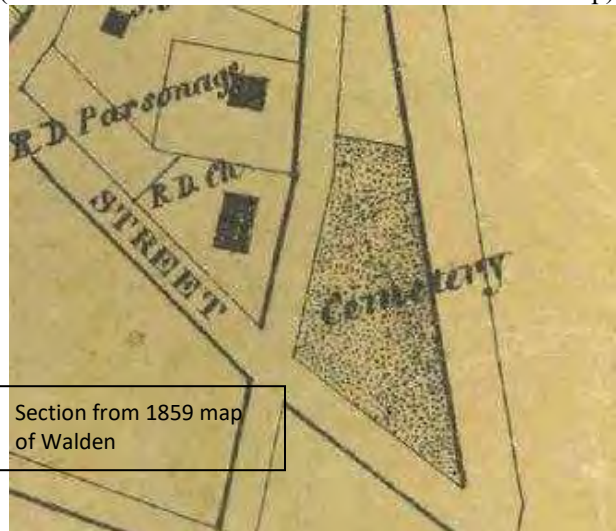


Adeline cleans the stone of John G. Tremper's wife, Mary; The before & after stone cleaning of John G. Tremper, Revolutionary War soldier of Berea.



Historical Society Trustee, Lisa Melville McIver and Nicole Nazzaro, Office of the Orange County Historian

There were two additional cemeteries in Walden that were later removed. One was at the corner of Scofield and Orange, and affiliated with the Walden Dutch Reformed Church (or the Reformed Dutch Church as then called on map)...



Section from 1859 map of Walden



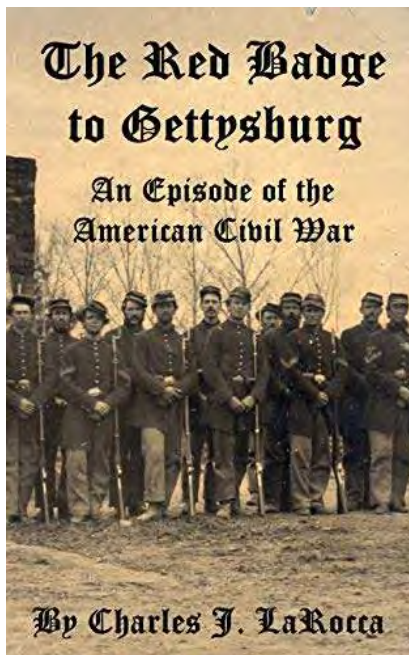
...and the other one was at the end of Center Street belonging to the Methodist Church. Inhabitants of both were moved to the Wallkill Valley Cemetery. Look for a follow-up in an upcoming issue.

HAPPY VETERANS DAY!

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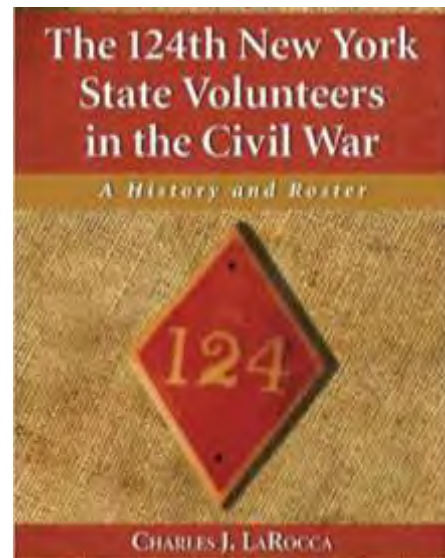
Continued Thanks to our Recent Program Presenters...

Mr. Charles J. LaRocca, Author of *Red Badge to Gettysburg*, published March 2021, presented a talk held in the Shafer House on August 28th on his new book which is “a sequel to *The Red Badge of Courage*” by Sullivan County author, Stephen Crane (1871-1900). Chuck’s book is receiving great reviews. Available at Amazon.com, he has another new book due out soon.



The photo from his book cover is one from the Historical Society Archives of Company H, 124th Orange Blossoms.

For non-fiction reading on our local 124th, see Charles LaRocca’s earlier book, *The 124th New York State Volunteers in the Civil War, a History and Roster*, Oct. 2012.



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This photo courtesy of the Wikipedia website of the 124th New York Infantry Regiment flag, downloaded Aug. 2021.

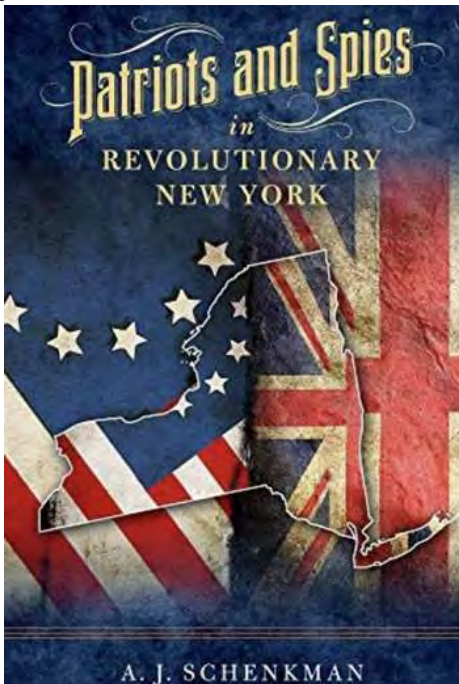
More info about the Civil War and the local Orange County companies is located on our website, thewaldenhouse.org.

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Thank you to...

A.J. Schenkman, Town of Gardiner Historian, Teacher and author of many books, gave a talk on Sept. 15th on one of his most recent, *Patriots and Spies in Revolutionary New York*. Quoted from his Publisher... "Spies! Loyalists! Tories! Conspiracy! Strange messages? Codes in invisible ink? The American Revolution was first and foremost a civil war that tore at the very fabric of families as well as society. Patriots were determined to separate from England; while Loyalists were just as determined to defeat what they saw as a rebellion. Many do not know that during several critical periods the war was almost fatally undermined by English sympathizers or in some cases opportunistic Patriots. *Patriots and Spies in Revolutionary New York* is a compilation of twelve stories regarding important moments in New York State's history during the American Revolution."

There are two books out this month by A. J. In addition to *Patriots and Spies*, look for *Unexpected Bravery, Women and Children of the Civil War*. Both are available at Amazon.com.



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Major General Richard Montgomery

As our local school children will tell you the Town of Montgomery and Village of Montgomery, as well as a huge annual street faire, are all named in honor of Revolutionary War Hero, Major General Richard Montgomery (1738-1775). Here is an overview of his biography from the ArmyHistory.org site (accessed 11/1/21).

Born in Ireland, in 1738, Richard Montgomery was educated at St. Andrews and Trinity College before enlisting in the British Royal Army in 1756. During the French and Indian War, he served with his regiment at the siege of Louisbourg and in the Lake Champlain campaign of 1759...

...He purchased a farm near Kings Bridge [1722], a town thirteen miles north of New York City. He isolated himself from colonial politics and pressures and married Janet Livingston, daughter of the wealthy Judge Robert R. Livingston. But as tensions grew between the colonies and Britain, Montgomery joined the rallies against the crown. Although he did not vie for the position, on 16 May 1775 he was elected to represent Dutchess County in the New York Provincial Congress, largely because of his pro Colonial views and because his fellow New Yorkers viewed him as a man of great integrity...

...Appointed a brigadier general in the Continental Army on 22 June 1775...Schuyler was forced to step down due to poor health on 16 September, leaving Montgomery in command.



Major General Richard Montgomery

(Dec 2, 1738 – Dec 31, 1775), image from Battlefields.org

...Montgomery created his battle plans based on the advice of friendly Canadians... With many of the American troops' enlistments about to end on 1 January 1776, Montgomery and Arnold launched a courageous attack at on 31 December in the middle of a snowstorm...

...Montgomery had many factors in his favor... but the attack was doomed to failure, and Montgomery was killed by a point-blank blast of grapeshot from a hidden British position, without ever knowing that he had been promoted to Major General on 9 December...

..In 1776, Congress erected a marble memorial to Montgomery in the graveyard of St. Paul's Cathedral in NYC. In 1818, the Canadian government relinquished his remains and he was reinterred under the memorial. While his service in the Continental Army was brief, Montgomery's leadership skills and battle experience were vital to the Revolution.

Notes originally written & letters collected by his wife, Mrs. Janet (Livingston) Montgomery, published much later in 1876. "Biographical Notes Concerning General Richard Montgomery together with Hitherto Unpublished Letters." Source, Google Books, this document is posted for your further reading on our website, thewaldenhouse.org



Cornelius H. DeLamater
(1821-1899)



Alexander K. Rider
(1802-1889)



John Ericsson
(1821-1889)



Paulson Spence
(1895-1961)

Spence Engineering Company, Inc. – GONE! Years of Combined and Complicated History

Phoenix Foundry, Delamater Iron Works, later Rider-Ericsson Engine Co., and in present times, Spence Engineering--all had a long history in the manufacture of quality, precision products. Each company and most from the pioneers named above, had numerous new patents that led the companies forward. About 1874-75, Alexander K. Rider, who was previously associated with the DeLamater Iron Works in New York City, founded the Rider, Wooster & Co. in Walden, NY. Here focusing on Rider-Ericsson, in 1879, A. K. Rider and John Ericsson founded the Rider Engine Co. in Walden. The company became the world's largest manufacturer of Hot Air Engines using the patents of Alexander K. Rider and John Ericsson. By 1898, the Rider-Ericsson Engine Co. was the successor of the DeLamater Iron Works and the Rider Engine Co.

In 1926, Paulson Spence of Louisiana, founded Spence Engineering Company, Inc., manufacturers of pressure regulators. In 1939, the firm moved to Walden and acquired Rider-Ericsson, remaining in the Grant Street location of Rider-Ericsson for the next 26 years. In the mid-1960s they built a new facility and moved to 150 Coldenham Road, Walden. Their entire production during World War II went to the military, particularly the U. S. Navy. "Spence Regulators are shipped all over the world and are vital to the construction of our nuclear submarines." (from a 1954 ad, *Walden Citizen Herald*) They remained at the Coldenham Road location until very recently. At last check (2021), the building is empty and for sale with the remaining few divisions relocating out of the US.

From a *Citizen Herald* front page article, July 26, 1945...

Army-Navy "E" Banner Presented to the Spence Eng. Co., Walden concern receives honors for war work

The highly coveted Army-Navy E" Banner (awarded by the Army and Navy for efficiency and promptness in the manufacture of needed war materials) was presented to the Spence Engineering Company and now waves proudly on the flagpole over the factory. It was the first presentation of the kind to be made in Walden.

The presentation for outstanding production of war equipment was made before 300 employees and interested residents and was accepted on behalf of the employees by Paulson Spence, president of the company.

The listing of resource material, websites and photo credits were numerous and are included with supplementary material on our website, thewaldenhouse.org

Photo of Spence Engineering Employees, approx 1940 – Please see next page.

We don't have a list of names for this photo of employees in front of Spence Engineering on Grant Street, Walden. Three employees I can identify (between and against 3rd & 4th windows) are: Don Henry (light shirt, former Trustee of the Historical Society, Robert Irving, dark shirt and Lawrence Yeaple, light shirt, all residents of Walden. Spence Engineering sent a lot of young men off to war, promising to rehire them upon return, and kept their promise.

Here is a wonderful photo of some of the patriotic men and women who worked at Spence when still at 29-41 Grant Street in Walden. The photo is approx 1940, the years leading up to the A&E "E" Banner recognition. The photo will be available to view as a larger image or to download on our website—we would greatly appreciate any help with the names.



Welcome Mrs. Nancy Phelps, our newest Trustee!

Trustees: Patricia Eisley, Treasurer
Richard Hoyt
Barbara Imbasciani, President
Lisa Melville McIver
Sandra Magill
Marcus Millspaugh
Susan Millspaugh
Nancy Ohlmer, Secretary
Howard Oldrey
Nancy Phelps
Mary Slater
Anita Vandermark, Vice President
Gail Yeaple
Open

Membership is open to anyone interested in local history. We welcome new members as your energy and ideas are needed to help maintain our over 235 year old stone house, Archive work, Project work, Research and Writing. In order to be considered for Trustee, you must first be a Member. Suggestions for articles for our website, the newsletter and Facebook are welcome. e-mail: 4hswvv@gmail.com or visit the website thewaldehouse.org



1749 Lewis Evans map section, showing “Wildmanton & Coldenham” as spelled on this map (Map courtesy Library of Congress.) A PDF of this map is viewable on our website.

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