



# The Walden House Tattler

Newsletter of the Historical Society of  
Walden and the Wallkill Valley

Vol. 40, No.1

Walden, New York

Spring 2020

## ~2020 Programs & General Meetings~

Some programs have been temporarily postponed due to the Covid 19 Virus and will be rescheduled. Please check our website & FaceBook for updates:

- Mar 31—Franco's Fundraiser**, 5-9 PM (dine in or take out) on the Last Tuesday of EVERY month.
- Apr**— Buy a Hannaford Community Bag Fundraiser during the month of April they will donate \$1 for each bag to the Society.
- Apr 15**—Possibly **Postponed**, check our website: General Meeting, **Mary Ellen Matise** guests. Tribute to Col. Thomas W. Bradley
- May 3**—**Postponed**: pen & ink drawings of **Bob Score**, 1-4 PM
- May 20**—**Postponed**: General Meeting, Guest: **Bob Score**
- Jun 17**—General Meeting, Guest Speaker **Christopher Anigacz**, founder of Queue, instructor of fine wood finishing
- Jul 15**—Annual **Picnic-on-the-Porch**, 6:30 PM
- Aug**—**Music on the Porch**, to be announced
- Sept 19**—Annual **Yard Sale**, 9-3 PM
- Oct 21**—General Meeting, **Robi Josephson** guests. Her topic is the Trapps & Mohonk
- Nov 18**—General Meeting, **Ray Kelly** guests. His topic is the Newburgh – Walden Trolley.



## THE PASSING OF THE DAIRY COW IN THE TOWN OF MONTGOMERY

There were approximately 75 dairy farms in the Town of Montgomery in c. 1965 and this was after a marked decline beginning decades before then. For the purpose of this article, a “dairy farm” is defined as

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any operation shipping raw milk, first in 10 gallon cans (80+ lbs) and, later, in bulk via tank trucks.

At last count, there only are 3 dairy farms left in the entire Town.

By necessity the study area is limited to the Town of Montgomery but the trends have been similar in the entire Hudson Valley and beyond. Reportedly, there were 2200 dairy farms in Orange County in the 1950s. The number is now under 40.

Years ago, a dairy farmer could make a decent living (and some were quite profitable) with 40-60 cows. A milking herd of 100 or more was considered large. Due to multiple factors, all of that has changed. Upstate and across the rest of the country, farms are milking thousands of cows, 3x a day and milk per cow production averages have almost doubled in the past 60 years while, at the same time, fluid milk consumption continues to decline. Ever more powerful tractors necessary to run today's much larger equipment can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars apiece. It is hard to support that kind of investment with only 50 cows. Here in the Hudson Valley we never had the huge dairy. Instead, we have numerous family operations of much smaller scale and, regrettably, these are the ones that struggle to compete in the ever-changing market.

From an economic point of view, the family farms of the 1960s bought their farm equipment, feed, seed and supplies at local dealers and vendors providing a vibrancy to those businesses. And, as

others have noted, “cows don’t go to school” so farmers paid more in taxes than they ever demanded in services providing a net gain to all of the taxing jurisdictions. As the dairies vanished, some were replaced with residential subdivisions where the demands for all services have increased.

Aside from the economics, the aesthetic and historical landscape has changed and this transformation has taken place during the lifetimes of most of us. It is rare to see a dairy cow these days. Farm buildings, many of them built in a much different era and by the best craftsmen of the day, have been demolished either actively or by neglect or by fire. The sense of collective spirit and camaraderie amongst the many small dairy farm operators in the Town at the time has been lost. That was a time when farmers would help each other harvesting corn silage so that equipment and labor could be shared. Common topics of the day were the weather, the price of milk and the rising costs of production. During the 1960’s some of the dairies actually sent their milk down the drain in protest of low milk prices. Today, it is a challenge just to have a steady market for the raw milk. In 2020, the creameries might be pleased if farmers dumped their milk; there is too much of it, the farmers are told. If any would-be new dairy farmer possibly could put everything else together to make it work, the creameries probably would not agree to buy the milk from the new farmer rendering the entire plan worthless.

Developing any type of accurate list going back 55± years is a challenge. One or more will be left off inadvertently and, likely, more than a few actually sold the milk cows before c. 1965. What follows is an attempt at a list with the qualifications recited above being so noted. The main purpose here is to have the reader note errors, omissions and the like and send in your comments to the Society at P.O. Box 48, Walden, NY 12586 or by email to [4hswwv@gmail.com](mailto:4hswwv@gmail.com). (Please note our new e-mail address.) It seems important to document this transformation as accurately as possible before it will be too late to do so. Many of the names on this list came from the present recollections of long-time Town residents, recollections that otherwise might be lost forever.

We’d enjoy hearing anecdotes from our readers as to their memories of the dairy farms that used to populate just about every road in the Town outside of its villages in circa 1965.

### **North and East of Walden:**

- Nicholas Zwart – 2 dairies – Lake Osiris Rd.
- Case Herima – Lake Osiris Road
- Ted Watkins – Rt.52 East
- Arthur Johnson – St. Andrews Road
- Chris Wiest – Rt. 52 East
- Harry McCord – Plains Road
- Preiser Family – Old St. Andrews Road
- John Lilienthal and George DeZemo – Coldenham Road
- Van Dam Brothers – Coldenham Road
- Thornton Brown – Browns Road
- Pimm – Maple Avenue
- Seigman – Berea Road
- Revoir – Ridge Road
- Wallenberg – Ridge Road
- Otto Zimmerman – Old St. Andrews Rd.
- Norman Turner – Borden Road

### **South of Walden to Maybrook:**

- Ellison Scott – Rt. 208
- Alfred Scott – Coleman Road
- Charles Coleman – Coleman Road
- Tweddle – Beaver Dam Road
- Malley - Beaver Dam Road
- Miller - Beaver Dam Road
- Rockafellow - Beaver Dam Road
- Seacord- Goodwill Road
- Buck - Goodwill Road
- V. Hawkins - Goodwill Road
- Charlie Stanley – Bailey Road
- Bushfield – Cty 99
- Fairweather – Cty 99
- Harry Sanders – Rt. 208

### **Walden South to Montgomery**

- Harry Brach – River Road
- C. Hawkins - River Road
- N. Vanderley - River Road
- E. Andrews – E. Searsville Road
- James Andrews and Harvey Andrews– E. Searsville Road
- Comfort Brothers– E. Searsville Road
- Ralph Score – Mills Road
- Don Rowe – River Road
- Nick Kikina – River Road
- Twin Islands – River Road
- N. Andrews – S. Searsville Road


**Walden North and West to Crawford**

- Phelps – Wallkill Road
- Roebuck – Wallkill Road
- McVoy – Wallkill Road
- Shaper – Wallkill Road
- Menendez – Wallkill Road
- Comfort Rider – Rt. 52 West
- Nick Valk – Albany Post Road
- Wheeler – Albany Post Road
- Harrison Brach – Albany Post Rd.
- Hoekstra – S. Searsville Road
- Zylstra – Hill Avenue
- Baisley – Albany Post Road
- Arden Muller – Rt. 52 West
- Bracken – Beamer Road
- Winters – Beamer Road
- Al Rhinehart – Cty. Rt. 17
- John Valk – Albany Post Road
- Ray Wild – West Searsville
- Frank Wild – Hill Ave.
- Barney Miller – Albany Post Road
- Enright – Albany Post Road at Rt. 17K
- Carl Hormann – Rt. 52 W

**Outside of Village of Montgomery**

- Joyce – Rt. 17k West
- McCarthy – Rt. 17k West
- Anthony Wild – Kaisertown Road
- George Malcolm – S. Searsville
- Ferris Malcolm – W. Searsville
- Dave Smith – S. Searsville Road
- John Mazur – Rt. 416
- John Lokema – Rt. 416
- Phil Hoeffner – Chandler Lane
- Charlie Willie – Kaisertown Road
- Paul Scheffel – Kaisertown Road
- Ted Benedict – Rt. 17K West
- Karsten – Kaisertown Road
- Rush Bros – Kaisertown Road
- Harold Mould – Rt. 211
- Corbett Farm – Corbett Road
- Galletly – E. Kaisertown Road

On the upside, the Town of Montgomery continues to be the home of a variety of other agricultural pursuits. Blessed with some of the best soils in the County, we still see active farms even if the cows, for the most part, are gone.

Richard W. Hoyt, Trustee  


**A BIG THANK YOU!**

The Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley wishes to give our Special Thank You to **Franco’s Pizzeria & Restaurant**, 74 Oak Street, Walden for their continued generous support of the Society. On the last Tuesday of each month they have so kindly contributed 20% of the night’s proceeds for patrons participating (with a coupon). Flyers are posted monthly on FaceBook and our website (www.thewaldenhouse.org). Coupons are available at the Josephine-Louise Public Library in Walden, or available to download on our website. We really can’t say enough about how much this amazing support of our Society has helped.

*WE THANK YOU!*



**Citizen Herald**, May 29 1941:



The Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley was formed in 1958. It is solely supported by the membership, fundraisers, donations and occasional small grants. As you can imagine, with two structures to maintain, the Jacob T. Walden Historic House Museum and the Shafer House, funds and capabilities dwindle without your continued interest, membership & support.



**Did you know the historic stone Jacob T. Walden House was not always known by this name?** In the 1930s, the house was referred to as **the Joseph M. Shafer House**.

11	"	34	Shafer Joseph M.	Head	11	M	56
"	"	"	Shafer Emma	Wife	11	F	56
"	"	"	Shafer Bessie	Daughter	11	F	28
"	"	"	Shafer Carrie M.	Daughter	11	F	20
"	"	"	Shafer Arletta	Daughter	11	F	10

1915 Census shows the Joseph M. Shafer family at 34 North Montgomery Street, Walden.

34	154156	Phafer	Joseph M. Shafer	08000	11.900	
			Prudencia Erwin			✓
			William Erwin			✓
			Edward Gatehouse			✓
			John Gatehouse			✓

The 1930 Census shows Joseph M. Shafer family still residing at 34 North Montgomery Street, Walden. Interestingly, the house value shows \$8,000. Now known as the Jacob T, Walden House, the museum is owned by the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley.

**Some interesting excerpts from Walden’s Citizen Herald, Historic Walden column, by Charles J. Bodine, October 7, 1937**

“Many of the St. Andrew’s congregation were known to be patriots during the Revolutionary period, Among them we might mention William Erwin, son of Samuel and Prudence Erwin, who occupied the farm on the West Side and the old stone house of Joseph M. Shafer. William Erwin was a member of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regt., Ulster Militia...” We now know the dates of his life to be b. Aug. 3, 1767-d. Jan. 16, 1834.

The article continues, “...his wife, Ann Erwin, was born in 1753 and died Sept 5, 1817. Both are buried at St. Andrews.”

**In the February 10, 1938 column of Historic Walden, Charles Bodine continues...**

**“The Joseph M Shafer House**

“This venerable old structure stands as sturdy and stately amid the surrounding pines at 34 North Montgomery Street as the day it was completed.

Not many persons who pass this house give it a thought while it is doubtless one of the oldest houses in this locality. We are inclined to believe it was built at least a decade before the War of the Revolution, and even older than the Kidd Tavern that stood in the center of Bank Street. Mr. Eager in his history of Orange County, states that this land was purchased by William Erwin from the original owner, Edward Gatehouse, but this is not probably as Mr. Gatehouse died before April 6 1753, as administration of his estate was granted to his brother, John Gatehouse, on that date. Moreover, William Erwin was very young at that date and it does not seem probably that he would become a landowner, during boyhood days. However Samuel Erwin, the father of William, above mentioned, was the probable purchaser of this property from the Gatehouse estate either before the death of Edward Gatehouse or from the estate after his death when it was in the hands of his brother, John Gatehouse, who

was acting administrator. It is also probable that Samuel Erwin built this stone house shortly after. Samuel Erwin must have been a man well along in years at this time, as we find he made a will March 5 1761, and mentioned his wife, Prudence Erwin, He probably died late in 1767, or very soon after the new year, as his will was proved January 18, 1768. This will mentioned his children, Samuel, Edward, George, John, William, Phoebe, Margaret and a grand-daughter, Phoebe. This will was witnessed by George Burne of Wallkill Precinct and Jane Morran. Wallkill Precinct was later called Hanover Precinct and still later the Town of Montgomery. Mr. Burne, the witness, was a vestryman of St. Andrews Church in 1775, which seems to be supporting evidence that Samuel Erwin resided in this immediate vicinity. The Erwins were early identified with St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church. William Erwin, a son of Samuel Erwin and William’s wife, Ann Erwin, are buried at St. Andrew’s graveyard. Samuel Erwin named his wife and his son’s, Samuel and Edward as Executors of his estate which may indicate that they were the oldest of his children, while his son, William is named fifth in the will which may also denote that he was much younger. All of this evidence has a tendency to show that William Erwin was too young to have purchased this land from the original patentee or his administrator. William Erwin probably came into possession of this property later and he resided here when the first Federal Census was made in 1790...

**February 24, 1938 -- Bodine continues...**

“... We had an Indian battle at the St. Andrews Church during the French and Indian War but that was a generation before this time and the settlers had felt quite secure from such dangers until about the middle of the Revolutionary period when the British began to employ Indians and Tories against our settlers on every frontier. All of these stirring and terrible times the Shafer House has been a silent witness of (This house, originally the Erwin house, later the Walden house).

“We have examined this old structure in company with the late Mr. Shafer—from cellar to attic but have been unable to find a date to indicate the year it was built. We may safely state that it was built in Colonial times as there is every evidence of this about it ... continued



*“ The solid foundations, ponderous base upon which the chimney rests, the huge beams and rafters, the curious old mantel in the parlor and the fireplace. The walls of this house are nearly two feet in thickness of solid masonry, the low doors, the hand-wrought builder’s hardware such as door latches, hinges and nails. The heavy lock on the front door and the curious old knocker all bear mute testimony of the age of this house. Another outstanding feature is the double Dutch door leading into a wide entrance hall where equally wide stairs lead upward to the second story. The beautiful old fashioned banister of walnut, also attracts one’s attention.”*



## NEW HISTORIC MARKERS IN WALDEN

Thanks to the Wm. G. Pomeroy Foundation for helping us preserve our history.



### Contributed Article & Photo Mary Ellen Matise

As you walk or drive around the Village of Walden you may notice some shiny new blue and gold roadside markers. The credit line at the bottom of these historic markers reads “Wm. G. Pomeroy Foundation” with a date indicating when the Village received a grant from the foundation to procure the markers.

On the foundation’s website is the following mission statement: *“One of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation’s core initiatives is to help people celebrate their community’s history.... They educate the public and foster historic tourism, which in turn can provide much needed economic benefits to the towns and villages where the markers are placed. The program also fills a gap, as New York State stopped funding roadside markers in 1939...”*

The Village of Walden has been the recipient of grants for seven markers. In 2014 while serving as Historian for the Village I applied for markers that commemorate Walden’s industrial past. Markers for **New York Knife,**

**Walden Knife Co** and **Schrade Cutlery** are installed at the former locations of these giants of the American pocketknife industry. A sign for the **Rider Engine Co** is on Grant St. All these firms had reputations of both national and international renown.

In 1915 over one thousand people in Walden and the surrounding area worked at these factories.

In 2016 I did the research on markers for two of our most distinguished landmark buildings. The Village received grants for the markers at the **Municipal Building (1915 Fire House)** and **The Hill Church**. I also helped the **Walkkill Valley Cemetery** secure a marker that highlights the location of the grave of Col. Thomas W. Bradley. In 2017 the Pomeroy Foundation announced funding for signs celebrating Women’s Suffrage. The marker on W. Main Street locates the site of the **First Meeting** of the Walden Woman’s Club in 1909 in the Walden Methodist Church. The Club was Pro-Suffrage and the President, Mrs. Frank Benedict was the first woman to vote in a general election in Walden.

In the future you will see some new historic markers in the Town of Montgomery. The Pomeroy Foundation has provided funding for the **Brown Farmstead and the Thomas Colden House (Coldenham)**. A grant was also awarded for the site of the **Mastodon Dig** on Rte. 17k opposite Valley Central High School. There are plans for a small park site to be constructed there near the marl pit that contained the bones of the mastodon excavated by Charles Wilson Peale in 1801.

Hours, even days, of exacting research have gone into proving the accuracy of the signs that the Pomeroy Foundation funds. The committee only accepts primary documents which guarantee that all the information is correct on the traditional blue and gold signs. When you read these signs, you can be sure that every word you read is true, even the “and’s and the’s.” To me, this is the most important thing. It is a challenge to meet Pomeroy’s standards, but once achieved, well worth the effort. I hope you enjoy these new additions to the historical landscape of our community.

~Mary Ellen Matise  
Historian, Town of Montgomery, March 2020

**Hot off the press: Mary Ellen Matise has been named Town of Montgomery Historian by Town Supervisor, Brian Maher.**

**Our Congratulations to Mary Ellen!**



## Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program Designates our Historical Society for the month of APRIL

Hannaford has designated April 2020 for the second time in the past year as the month to donate to our Society. For each Community Bag purchased in APRIL for \$2.50, Walden Hannaford is donating \$1 to our Historical Society.



Our sincere thanks to former Society Trustee, George Heitz, who has donated the reference work, “*New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865*” to the Society. The five volume set was compiled by Frederick Phisterer, Volumes I–V, Lyon Company, State Printers, 1912.



An excerpt of info from the above book, Volume 4 follows: ***Registers and Sketches of Organizations. The One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Regiment Infantry. American Guard; Orange Blossoms.*** For a full PDF of the section on the Orange Blossoms please see our website, [www.thewaldenhouse.org](http://www.thewaldenhouse.org)

“Colonel A Van Horne Ellis received authority, July 11, 1862, to recruit this regiment; it was organized at Goshen, and there mustered in the service of the United States for three years September 5, 1862...”

“The companies were recruited principally:  
A at Newburgh, Cornwall, Chester and Goshen;  
B – Goshen Company – at Goshen, Warwick, Florida and Newburgh; C – Cornwall Company – at Goshen, Cornwall, Newburgh, Monroe and New Windsor;  
D – at Warwick and Goshen; E at Goshen, Crawford, Otisville, Wallkill, Newburgh, Bullville, New Windsor Mt, Hope and Port Jervis; F at Port Jervis and Deer park; G at Washingtonville, Blooming Grove, New Windsor, Monroe, Newburgh, Craigsville and Chester;  
H at Montgomery, Walden and Goshen;  
I at Newburgh and [New] Windsor, and K at Wallkill, Goshen, Middletown and Newburgh...”

For the full section of information regarding the Orange Blossoms including surnames and battles they participated in, please refer to the PDF on the welcome page of our website,

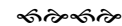
[www.thewaldenhouse.org](http://www.thewaldenhouse.org)



We invite your input, questions and conversations at our FaceBook group page accessible from our Jacob T. Walden House FaceBook page. Idea suggestions for projects and future issues are also welcome.



The “Light House” at Wooster’s Grove (on the Tin Brook). Jan. 1939 – An old Walden photo with the above caption written on the back. Additional writing on the reverse reads: “Note the Dam.”



The Society wishes to extend our sincere condolences to the family of Mrs. Dolores Moore who recently passed away. Dolores was a long time, active & supportive member of the Society and a good friend to our community. She will be missed.







**Pictured Opposite is a Walden High School Class Ring from 1951.** We have a few class rings in our collections and invite our readers and members to send a photo of your class ring from Walden, Montgomery, Maybrook or Valley Central by e-mail for a Class ring digital display we are planning for our website. Send to [4hswvv@gmail.com](mailto:4hswvv@gmail.com), a NEW e-mail address for our Society, or to our Group page on FaceBook.



The Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley 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. Annual Dues are \$20 per person, \$25 Family, and \$7.50 Student or Senior.

As we were going to print, concerns over the COVID-19 virus issues were ramping up with numerous closures. Please check the website or FaceBook before any of the meetings and programs listed for possible updates or changes. Thank you.

Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley  
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