

# OBITUARY - WILLIAM "BILL" STECKOWICH

Walpack Historical Society shares the loss of one of our most valued trustees, William "Bill" Steckowich. Bill passed away January 19, 2017 in Green Ridge Village, Newville, PA. Bill leaves behind his beloved wife Dorothy "Dot" Whiteside Steckowich, his son, William and grandsons Dereck & Nickolas as well as one great-grandson, Tyler.

Bill served in the US Army from 1955-1957, working on the NIKE guided missiles. He was an industrial engineer.

An avid photographer, he was frequently seen camera in hand, especially in the DEWA. Bill and Dot both served as trustees in the Walpack Historical Society for over 5 years.

Bill belonged to the Stillwater Presbyterian Church, the



Walpack Historical Society, the Carlstadt Turnover, the Tax Payers Group and many other organizations.

A memorial service will be held June 24, at 2 p.m. at Living Waters Fellowship, 93A Spring St., Newton.

Please join WHS as we express our sympathy to his family and celebrate the life of a special friend.

Published in The New Jersey Herald on Mar. 7, 2017

- See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/njherald/obituary.aspx?n=william-steckowich&pid=184381438&fhid=8407#sthash.E0duqCta.dpuf>

Send cards to:

Mrs. Dot Steckowich, Green Ridge Village  
210 Big Spring Road  
The Manor, Room 12  
Newville, PA 17241

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Society actively stimulates an awareness and interest in the Walpack area through lectures, tours, publications and special events, such as Van Campen Day, hikes and exhibits at county-wide events.

It promotes collection, preservation and dissemination of Walpack area history and acts as a repository for artifacts of the Walpack area. We also maintain a small museum and book store.

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

# WALPACK historical society

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

Newsletter of the  
Walpack Historical Society

*"Preserving a Fine  
Tradition of Caring"*

Published Quarterly

April 2017

## A PLACE OF SMALL MYSTERIES AND YOUNG BOYS' MEMORIES

by Audrey Schwab



*Drawing provided by Robert L. Williams*

### THE ALBERT KNIGHT FARMHOUSE Out Of The Weeds: The Knight House

Not all of the Knight Farm's mystique can be revealed by delving into its architectural history, but that is the logical place to begin.

The c. 1800 Dutch influenced structure stands atop a peaceful knoll along the east side of Old Mine Road approximately two miles north of Flatbrookville. In their 1993 Historic Structures Report for The National Park Service, Architect, John Dodd and Architectural Preservationist, Cynthia Hinson, noted various spellings of the original builder's name and settled upon Van-Scouder based upon the spelling of his son, Garret's name as engraved on his headstone located in the Rosenkrans cemetery.

The original 1-1/2 story gable-roofed structure was built perpendicular to the road. This somewhat unusual orientation is believed to be in response to taxation based upon the number of windows facing the roadway. The original wood framing stands upon a 20" thick rubble stone foundation and features wattle and daub infill between the vertical exterior wall studs. This practice of packing a mixture of mud and straw and sometimes horsehair around horizontal lath attached to the stud wall, served to afford some insulating capabilities to the structure. The original home did not have the front porch or dormers that we see today.

Sometime, shortly after the original construction, a single story kitchen wing was added on to the east side of the house, thereby allowing for the repurposing of the original kitchen or keeping room which had been located

in the first floor room on the front east side of the home.

In his wonderful book, *Summer Knights Revisited*, Robert C. Brandt vividly recalls the kitchen wing as a place where Mrs. Hattie Knight "cooked on a large wood stove that stood in front of the open hearth fire place". Bob Brandt also noted that the stone fireplace was not part of the exterior wall construction, but rather was "free-standing" approximately two feet into the room. He remembers stove wood being stored behind the fireplace. The kitchen wing was demolished in the late 1960s leaving only that sturdy fireplace hearth and its massive lintel as testament to where it once stood.

The simple beauty of the original structure was most visibly altered by the addition of the front porch during the second half of the 19th Century and by dormers added to the front facade in the early 20th Century. Ironically, Dodd and Hinson note in their *Historic Structures Report* that during the construction of the dormers, existing roof rafters were cut out and the new openings inadequately framed. Along with the added weight of the two dormers, "significant structural problems" occurred.

Dodd and Hinson notably included significant commentary on the somewhat perplexing second floor room on the northwest side of the house. They describe it as "perhaps the most interesting space". It is widely known that the Knights and perhaps other owners opened their home to summer boarders, yet for some reason this rather large room (approximately 19' X 13') remained in its skeletal form with studs exposed and exterior walls of wattle and daub left without board panels or plastered. Oddly, a chair rail was attached to the framing and a baseboard installed. Dodd and Hinson felt the "incomplete room in its pristine condition presents an extremely rare opportunity to study the historic finishes, structural system and construction techniques. Regardless of the future of the house, this room should remain unchanged".

In spite of its mysteries and structural meddling, the sturdy house built on the 1800s New Jersey frontier endured and later served as The Knight Family home for nearly a century. A small but engaging piece of this time in the home's history is eloquently described by Mr. Brandt as he chronicles his summers of 1951, 1952 and 1955 as a young teenage city kid working and living alongside the Knights on this Walpack farm they called "OWASSA". Bob notes the name was derived from the Lenape word for friendship and his memories, recorded with such clarity and good humor indicate the Knight Family cultivated his and many friendships right alongside the crops and livestock they grew. You will read the book with a smile on your face as Bob fondly recalls the family meal time banter, punctuated by

*Continued on Pg. 7*

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SUSSEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

EVENTS

- Thursday March 16, 2017 at 7 pm  
Wayne McCabe - Creameries in Sussex County
- Sunday March 26, 2017 at 1:30 pm  
Fred Hough - Dairy Farms of Many Decades Ago
- Thursday March 30, 2017 at 7 pm  
Richard Byma - Dairy Farming & Sussex County Milk Cooperative
- Sunday April 2, 2017 at 1:30 pm  
Alex Everitt - Truck Farming in Sussex County
- Saturday April 8, 2017 at 12 noon SCHS Annual Luncheon at the Spring Street Pub & Grill, Newton (parking in back) Martin Kane - President of the Lake Hopatcong Historical Society speaking about Lake Hopatcong in 1917 \$35 per person
- Thursday April 20, 2017 at 7 pm - Sussex County Railroads
- Sunday April 30, 2017 at 1:30 pm Bill Strait - Lackawanna Cutoff

EXHIBITS

Our year long exhibits include the History of the Hill Memorial Building, and Farming in Sussex County.  
 Sussex County Creameries currently until April 30, 2017  
 History of Early Sussex County Schools May 1 - August 31, 2017  
 Lake Communities in Sussex County Sept. 1 - December 31, 2017  
 Sussex County Railroads currently until June 30, 2017  
 The History of Mining and Minerals July 1 - December 31, 2017

ALL MUSEUM EXHIBITS AND LECTURES ARE FREE, BUT DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED.

Museum Hours:

Fridays 9 am to 1 pm, and 1 to 4 pm on the listed Sundays below:  
 3/19, 4/2, 4/16, 5/7, 5/21, 6/4, 6/18,  
 7/2, 7/16, 8/6, 8/20, 9/3, 9/17,  
 10/1, 10/15, 11/19, and 12/17/2017

The Hill Mansion  
 82 Main Street, Newton, NJ 07860 | 973-383-6010

SAVE THE DATE

Grand Opening of Lake Ashroe  
 (Formerly Kittatinny Scout Reservation)

FREE EVENT

June 10, 2017 - 8am to 3pm.  
 Stokes State Forest  
 29 Struble Road, Sandyston, NJ

Sponsored by Friends of Stokes State Forest - [www.friendsofstokes.com](http://www.friendsofstokes.com)

THE KNIGHT HOUSE *continued*

Hattie Knight's skill with a meanly wielded fly swatter. His recall of the one time taste of John Knight's morning griddle cakes, made from a scoop of grain straight from the dairy cows' feed bin, was less enthusiastically conjured; knowing that rodents also considered the grain bin a source of fine dining. Today, that grain bin holds pride of place on the upper level of The Walpack Inn; minus the rodents of course!

As fate would have it, another young man literally dropped into the Knight House legacy about two decades following Bob Brandt's tenure. A then fifteen year old adventurer was drawn to the Knight house during one of his many forays throughout the newly formed Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Though his first visit to the house was through an open cellar window and then onto a work bench that collapsed beneath him, he was undeterred and with no real assurance of a means of egress, the teen made his first sojourn through out the abandoned house and was touched by its old world charm. The ensuing years found him repairing holes in the roof and later, as a member of the newly formed Citizens Advisory Commission he worked with the NPS to allocate funds for a new slate roof and structural repairs to the first floor. Today, that young man remains a true steward of The Knight House and other homes within the park. Mowing the grass and tending to the security of several properties, Robert L. Williams spearheads many of the preservation efforts within the park. A former president and founder of The Walpack Historical Society, Bob currently leads the efforts of The Historic Property Stewards, sharing a lifetime of research and knowledge along with considerable personal effort reclaiming and maintaining that which we all hold dear.

As is often the case, a property "relationship" that spans

The Walpack Historical Society would like to acknowledge and appreciate all of our many Lifetime Members for their generous support.



decades, usually has interesting tales to tell. Bob recalls one of the Knight home's most enduring mysteries of a single andiron mortared into the stonework of the fireplace wall on the building's west facade. No one knows why it was put there and no one knows where it has gone. Sadly, along with so much of the area's movable history, Bob recalls the senseless theft occurred in 1983. Bob also shared his memory of the ancient Knight key, which for many a decade if not nearly a century or two, hung from a rusty nail in an obscure part of the house. His mind was set to wondering, as such history hunters minds do, what doors did it open and what secrets might it tell?

The Walpack Historical Society is pleased to invite its members, readers and friends to a special program about The Knight House and Farm, to be presented on Sunday, June 25th at The Walpack Methodist Church in Walpack Center. Bob Brandt will be our featured guest and his wonderful book, Summer Knights Revisited, will be on sale. Bob will be available for a book signing following the program. For those who are unable to attend, Bob's book can be purchased in our online book store or by calling the WHS at (973) 948-4903.

*Note: The program will begin at 1:PM with a BYO picnic lunch on the lawn at 12:00/Noon, weather permitting.*

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

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 Rosenkrans Museum Paint Project  
 Membership Type:  
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 Life \$200  
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 Mail to: Walpack Historical Society, PO Box 212, Layton, NJ 07851  
 The Walpack Historical Society, Inc. is a non-profit, tax exempt organization under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.  
 Donations are tax - deductible as allowed by law.*

# SPRING HIKE - THE LAYTON FAMILY CEMETERY by Tom Dust

It was a beautiful, partly cloud day in early April for the WHS Spring Hike. The temperature was around 57°, a welcome change after the large “snow event” that buried the area only weeks before.

On this day, a small group of 53 hikers gathered on the bridge over Flat Brook on Fish and Game Rd in Sandyston. The group, lead by Daniel J. Tassej and Jen Wycalek, headed out on a three hour trek that was not very arduous, so not a challenge to fans of CrossFit, but perfect for the group that had gathered to enjoy a walk through history. Danny and Jen were excellent guides as they related what is known about the area and the Layton

Family. Their stories were mostly gleaned from obituaries and the remaining headstones.

The area where the cemetery is located is off the known roads, in the woods. As you walk, there was a raise in the land that leads to a small plateau. Walking around the edge of the cemetery, there is a steep drop around half the cemetery. You can only imagine that at that time the forest was not here and the views must have been beautiful - an excellent place to rest eternally.

Our visit lasted only about 20 minutes and the area was left, of course, just as we had found it - at peace, filled with memories and history.



## DO WE DARE TO DREAM? by Audrey Schwab

The National Park Service (NPS) is in the midst of developing a Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) for eligible structures within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA).

The HPMP is intended to guide the NPS decision-making process in prioritizing preservation actions for designated historic properties within DEWA. Monies made available by the Susquehanna-Roseland Transmission Line remediation will be used to finance the decided upon actions.

As DEWA staff labors through the public scoping and decision making process, it is enticing to imagine what eventual preservation and rehabilitation actions COULD mean to Walpack Center. Nearly all of the structures in The Walpack Historic District are considered to be "contributing". By NPS definition, "a contributing building is one whose historical integrity or architectural characteristics enhance the significance of the historic district". In the case of Main Street, Walpack Center, contributing buildings include the General Store/Post Office, The Rosenkrans Museum, the "Creamery Houses" (Hendershot and Christie) and The Walpack Methodist Church on the south side of Main Street and Robbins Houses 1st and 2nd, along with the parsonage on the north. The Walpack School/Municipal Building is owned by Walpack Township and thereby not part of the HPMP. Many, but not all of the out buildings are also considered contributing structures. Imagine, if you will, what a revitalized Walpack Center COULD look like.

A walk down Main Street would be a time rewind to about the turn of the twentieth century. Utility poles and transmission lines are gone as their placement underground restores the proper over-head street scape. A slamming screen door announces The Walpack Historical Society's reopening of the general store/post office as a place for light refreshment with a vintage photo gallery to

*Note: The above article merely reflects a concept envisioned by the author and in no way implies any proposal or concept presently endorsed by the Walpack Historical Society.*

the rear. The old post office window and letter boxes are brought out of their current retirement and set back to interpretive duty in their original position and Walpack area memorabilia and collectibles are dusted off and displayed upon awaiting shelves.

Freshly painted facades, new roofs and rebuilt porches rejuvenate original Main Street structures and a refreshed and updated interpretation of The Rosenkrans Museum presents a new experience for even our most frequent visitors.

Instead of horse-drawn drayage, carts and carriages; mountain and road bikes tether up to their own unique hitching posts as the various homes, run by a private concession, open their doors to birders and bikers, history buffs, hunters, fishermen and hikers as overnight or weekend guests. As unusual as this idea may sound, it is a concept being used to great success in other National Parks, such as The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park. DEWA has expressed an interest in such adaptive reuse of historic structures that could also serve to energize not only Walpack Center, but the entire park and its surrounds.

Finally, as Main Street winds its way east toward the Flatbrook, we stop to visit the newly restored Walpack Church now serving as a NPS Visitor's Center, staffed by park personnel and serving the New Jersey side of the park. The former sanctuary would continue to be used for The Walpack Historical Society's seasonal monthly programs and interpreted by Society members as volunteers permit.

Though grandiose ideas may seem unrealistic given the mired-in-time village we currently know, the Walpack Historical Society chooses to dream big and hopes all of our members feel free to voice their own visions of Walpack Center and other park structures as the NPS seeks public input throughout the various stages of the planning process.

## REMEMBERING WALPACK

Many of us likely recall a time when early evening was ushered in by Mom's call to "supper". Lunch was often referred to as dinner and usually occurred about noon; while Holiday Feasts become "dinner" no matter the time of day consumed. As times evolved and society's labels gentrified, the evening repast came to be known as dinner and supper a quaint thing of the past.

Sometimes, as we go in search of our historical and cultural roots, we tend to overlook the most mundane but fundamental thing of our past...what we ate for supper, or breakfast, lunch or dinner!

The Walpack Historical Society is asking our members and readers to plumb their memories and those of their older relatives and friends to

seek answers as to what was served for supper on any ordinary weekday night. We would especially like to hear from those who have roots in the Walpack Area or know someone who does. We hope to have enough of a response to share those supper-time memories with all of our readers in a future Newsletter article.

Please send your thoughts, recollections, research or even recipes to The Walpack Historical Society; PO Box 212; Layton, NJ 07851. If you would prefer we call you at a convenient time to write it all down, leave a message on our Society answering machine (973) 948-4903 and we will return your call. Thank you! We look forward to hearing from you.

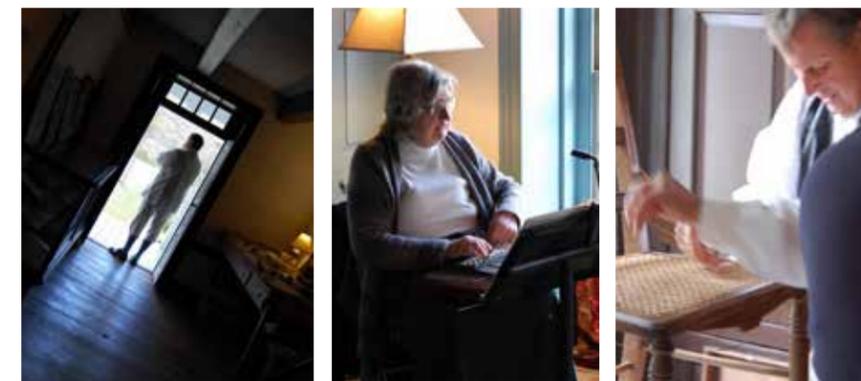
## THANK YOU!

The Walpack Historical Society would like to offer a most gracious THANK YOU to the following members and friends who have so generously donated to our Rosenkrans Museum Paint Project and to our General Fund.

Peter and Madeleine Brennan  
Robert Chervy  
John and Carol Ford  
Bert Kuenzel  
Charles Pozzi  
Robert Savarese  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Spink  
Steven and Elaine Van Camp

Janina Wycalek  
Chris Dufford  
Joseph and Charlette Mikulka  
Phil Jaeger  
Karen & Bob Berner  
Richard Schooley  
Jutta Seeler

## WE NEED YOU! DOCENTS & VOLUNTEERS



A Docent is a person who acts as a guide, typically on a voluntary basis. We are always looking for new people to help us at our events and meetings throughout the year. Please call, 973-948-4903, and ask to speak with Jen Wycalek to learn more about how you can help play a part in history.

## 2017 CALENDAR

February	Black History Month
April 2	Spring Hike
April 23	Sping Dinner at <i>The Walpack Inn</i>
May 21	Civil War Program
June 25	The Van Scorder Knight House
July 16	Thunder Mountain Ranch
Aug. 20	See Who is Buried Here?
Sept. 17	The Victorian Lady
Oct. 15	Van Campen Day
Nov. 5	Fall Hike
Dec. 2 & 3	Walpack Christmas
Dec. 9 & 10	Walpack Christmas
Dec. 10	Holiday Dinner

Visit [Walpackhistory.org](http://Walpackhistory.org) for updates, changes and details.

## NEW MEMBERS

Chris Dufford  
Daniel Tassej  
Allison Erb  
Vincent and Terry Fiedler  
Jack Hirsch  
Richard Brazicki  
Dave Brey  
Liz Farrar

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Event Photos by Tom Dust  
Walpack Historical Society Newsletter  
Designed and Edited  
by Dusty Roads Media

## THE CIVIL WAR

A special presentation by Patte Haggerty Frato of the Sandyston Historical Society  
Sunday, May 21, 2017 - 1:00 pm at the Walpack Methodist Church, Walpack, NJ

Private Peter Peach served in the Civil War out of PA but lived at different times in his life in Sandyston, Montague, and Walpack Townships. Being that he is buried in Walpack, it's only fitting that this program be presented in Walpack with the WHS.

Pvt. Peter Peach died on August 29th, 1909 and was laid to rest in the Walpack Cemetery, but no stone was ever erected to his honor. Now, over 100 years later we will give that honor and *Thank* him for his dedicated service. Please join us for this special day. Visit [www.SandystonTownship.com](http://www.SandystonTownship.com) for more info.

Following the presentation there will be a  
The Dedication and Memorial Service to honor  
Private Peter Peach

Any questions, please contact Patte Frato at [pattefrato@embarqmail.com](mailto:pattefrato@embarqmail.com) or 973-948-7743