

# WALPACK

## historical society

*"Preserving a Fine  
Tradition of Caring"*

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

Newsletter of the  
Walpack Historical Society

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## STUDENT CONSERVATIONISTS REVITALIZE WALPACK CENTER



The above photo-postcard of the Christie House, at the approximate time of its completed construction, is used with the permission of Robert Williams. The horse and carriage sheds once used by parishioners are located beside the church.

The Summer of 2016 was a transformative season in Walpack Center, USA. While The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) Preservation Team toiled away at the Rosenkrans Museum and the General Store/Post Office roof replacement projects, they were joined by a group of young preservationists who were tackling the challenging task of restoration triage at the c. 1913 Christie House just down Main Street.

When The Walpack Historical Society set out to document the work of The Student Conservation Association (SCA), it was expected we would be chronicling the transformation of one of the venerable properties which uniquely defines our park. In fact, the story became so much more about a team of eight 18 to 24 year old SCA members and their advisors coming together to form a preservation team.

As a bit of background information, The Historic Preservation Corps (HPC) is the product of a partnership between SCA and DEWA that has continued to evolve

since its inception in 2014. The SCA was founded in 1957 by young Vassar College student, Elizabeth Putnam. The ambitious mission of the SCA is "to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land." SCA members are age 15 to young adult; high school and college students or recent graduates who are interested in green careers. Jamie Weleber, SCA Program Manager in DEWA, states: "In the intervening 57 years, SCA has deployed a force of more than 75,000 members, completing 26 million hours of conservation service in 550 parks, forests, wildlife refuges and urban green spaces at the national, regional, state and municipal

level in all 50 states and several U.S. Territories."

Jamie further explained, "Since 2014, 28 members have gained significant training in carpentry, masonry, roofing and other historic preservation techniques while restoring multiple buildings located within DEWA." The various teams spent the better part of two years improving Camp Ken-Etiwa-Pec (KEP), a former Boy Scout Camp located within the park, transforming it into the team's base of operations for both housing and training. With that challenging project complete, the Summer of 2016 became a year to focus team efforts on the Christie House and to work side-by-side with DEWA staff on other restoration projects within the park.

The Christie House is located in Walpack Center to the west of and immediately adjacent to The Walpack Methodist Episcopal Church property. It was constructed circa 1913 to house workers at The Batten Creamery which operated just south of Walpack Center. The home is named for its last occupant prior to the Federal

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## NOW IT'S OUR TURN! Rosenkrans Museum Paint Project



Thank you to DEWA for the 2016 restoration projects of The Rosenkrans Museum. A new roof is in place; a new front porch and new rear entry access has been constructed, and other detail carpentry and masonry work performed.

It is now critical that the Walpack Historical Society proceed with the final phase of the exterior restoration. Environmentally safe lead paint remediation, surface preparation and painting of a historical structure is a costly endeavor. We are asking the members and friends of the Walpack Historical Society to help defray the cost of hiring a contractor to perform the work.

Please use the form on Page 7 to make a donation or check our website to donate online - [Walpackhistory.org/donations](http://Walpackhistory.org/donations)

## IMAGES FROM HISTORY - WAYNE McCABE

*from the archive of the Sussex County Historian*



Stephen's Point was a very popular rural fishing retreat that was located near Flatbrookville. Even during the middle of World War II, this retreat boasted "modern bungalows" and was generally booked up. It also was the home of the Stephen's Point Fishing Club.



# HOLIDAY'S IN WALPACK



*Walpack Holidays  
Dec. 2016 - photo Dan Curtis*



*Holidays Dinner  
Dec. 2016 - The Walpack Inn*

## 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

*Tentative*

February	Black History Month
April 2	Spring Hike TBD
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. 9	Fall Hike TBD
Dec. 2 & 3	Walpack Christmas
Dec. 9 & 10	Walpack Christmas
Dec. 10	Holiday Dinner

## NEW MEMBERS

Fritz Arnold  
Evan Castner  
Helen Dannatt  
Linda Edgerly  
Don Lynch  
Jennifer Nelson  
Bob Newkirk  
Michael Peterson  
Kathleen Rivers  
Sarah E. Verbeke  
Jamie Weleber

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Event Photos by Tom Dust  
Walpack Historical Society Newsletter  
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# OUT OF THE WEEDS: THE SMITH-DODD HOUSE

by Allyson Schwab-Miller

Traveling north on Old Mine Road from the Smith-Lennington Farm you will come upon the Smith-Dodd Home. The original home was constructed by Jacob Smith circa 1810. While not as elaborate as the Richard Layton or the Jacob Roe Houses, it remains a classic example of a 19th century rural stone home. One can easily imagine the difficulty of building this sturdy home while juggling the never ending tasks of operating a rural farmstead. There are many idiosyncrasies unique to the home. The stone portion features a “four bay” front facade with the door flanked by two windows to its right and one to its left. The windows on the side of the building are not level with those on the front facade. The asymmetrical door and window placement continues



on the wood frame Delaware Valley Style addition that was added to the home in the 1850's. The Delaware Valley style of construction was quite popular during the 1850's and a number of examples remain today including the Rosenkrans Museum and the Losey-Robbins House in Walpack Center. This style of building was popular for a number of reasons. The finished structure is considered to be a story and a half; as such, it was cheaper to build, cheaper to heat and the owner of the property was taxed for having a single story structure instead of two. The “half story” offered a great deal of living space. Even a relatively tall person can stand at their full height in all but the eaves of the “half story.” These unique characteristics combine to make a wonderfully charming and steadfast home that has sheltered generations of families for over two hundred years.

Anyone who has worked on or around an old home knows they have a way of talking to you and of slowly giving up their secrets. The Smith-Dodd home is a unique and peaceful place where you can easily imagine peeking through the thin veils of time and catching a glimpse of

the multitudes of yesteryears the home has witnessed. If you look hard enough maybe you will see the farmer walking along the path to the old barn that has been lost to time, or perhaps see the farm lady carefully tending the irises at the edge of the old stone patio that was recently unearthed and cleared of debris.

Dragging one of these properties “Out Of The Weeds” is a long and arduous process. Many hours of weed whacking and brush cutting are usually required before mowing can commence on a regular basis. Most of the clearing was done in late fall and late winter, just prior to the appearance of the first spring flowers. Dormant brush and dead grasses are much easier to cut and remove than the stubborn green growth that inundates most DEWA structures. Clearing from the home outwards helps to protect the structure from vandals by increasing visibility of the structure and shows it is being cared for. Though a difficult task, it is also very satisfying as this is often when the ghosts of the property's first flower beds appear.

Spring time at the Smith-Dodd House is a breathtaking experience. What has become known as “Dodd Ivy” climbs the recently cleared stone wall along Old Mine Road. Tulips and daffodils make a scattered appearance



*Walpack Center  
photo by Tom Dust*



as well, and carpets of snowdrops and crocus put on a spectacular show. Perhaps the catalog purchase of a long ago farm lady, these bright harbingers of spring drift across the side and rear of the property in swatches of white and



resident of the home, she had many wonderful insights and stories to share. John Dodd was an architect with his office located in the 1850's wooden addition of the home. The wooden addition also served as the family's home during the renovation of the stone portion of the structure. Roberta confirmed that the foundation off to the north side of the rear of the house was indeed a barn. John Dodd had it dismantled as it was in a state of extreme disrepair and had become dangerous. The gnarly old tree beyond the edge of the stone patio at the rear of the home was once a magnificent apple tree. Curious to know what kind of apple tree it was, the Dodds sent samples for testing. It was confirmed that the tree was an heirloom variety. All of Roberta's stories made it very clear that the Smith-Dodd House and its surrounding property were very much loved. It was a comfortable and livable home. She was happy to report that, unlike many other stone homes in the area, the basement was not home to any snakes. John Dodd loved to kayak and having the Delaware river just beyond his backdoor provided plenty of opportunities. John Dodd inherited his father's talent as an artist and painting with watercolors provided him with great enjoyment. After a delightful meal, Roberta and I exchanged contact information. We planned to stay in touch so she could share more of her memories of the Dodd House. Sadly, Roberta passed away a few weeks after our dinner. I will remain forever grateful for her delightful and lively telling of her years with John Dodd and the home he loved.

yellow. While it's surely a whimsical and sentimental thought, it would seem the Smith-Dodd House is saying "Thank you for loving and caring for me," as it erupts with flowers each spring.

The Smith-Dodd House has also shared its secrets through the oral history of the people who once lived there. The Oliver Family rented the stone portion of the home during the first half of the 1900's while another fellow lived in the frame addition of the home. Mr. and Mrs. Oliver had eight children. While the Olivers lived in the home, it had one bathroom and an outhouse. They did have running water, but no hot water. The Oliver family milked a dairy herd of thirty-two Guernseys and Holsteins, and grew hay and corn. Woodchucks were often on the family's menu. A friend of the family's would frequently visit, rising early in the morning to hunt woodchucks, which were cleaned, skinned and brined before being brought to the family table.

I had the great good fortune of dining with Roberta Dodd, the wife of John Dodd, at the Spring 2016 Walpack Historical Society Dinner. John Dodd lived in the home for forty years before selling the property to the Federal Government. While Roberta was never a full time

Bringing a house "Out Of The Weeds" is a never ending battle. On a recent bitterly cold and windy day I walked the property of the house I have cared for over the past two years as a member of the Historic Property Stewards team. All was safe and secure. I reflected on all that was accomplished and all the hard work yet to come. I walked the path to the long gone barn with the once upon a time farmer and wondered what tools of the past I would come upon this year. I asked the farm ladies of yore which of their plants and beautiful flowers they thought would come up this year. I told the Smith-Dodd House that I would be back for another season of care and discovery.

If you have a home in DEWA that you feel particularly strong about and wish to help that property to emerge "Out Of The Weeds," please contact the Walpack Historical Society for more information on how to become a Historic Properties Steward. Action is needed and every volunteer is a valuable asset to our team.





## REVITALIZE WALPACK CENTER *continued*



Government purchase of the property. A second dwelling, known as the Hendershot House was subsequently constructed to the west of the Christie property and together they are referred to by The Walpack Historical Society as The Creamery Houses.

As with many, if not most of the historic structures within DEWA, the past several decades of exposure to the elements, vandalism and general neglect have not been kind to the Christie House. Considerable stabilization work needed to be accomplished in order to assure a safe working environment. Thus the challenges to The SCA Class of 2016 began when young people from six states and two foreign countries along with their dedicated advisors converged at DEWA's Camp Ken-Etiwa-Pec to begin their summer of learning about Historic Preservation, general construction methods, safe tool usage and workplace management. Along with SCA Program Manager, Jamie Weleber, the team worked under the guidance of SCA Project Leader, Steve Cimbalik and Historic Preservation Expert, Mathew Grubel. The team received extensive training in multiple areas and disciplines including but certainly not limited to Wilderness First Aid, an EPA eight hour course on lead paint abatement, drafting, reading of architectural plans, lessons in building anatomy, scaffold construction and so on. Additionally, the team members embraced the concept of conservation in every aspect of their daily activities from the preservation of historic buildings in the park to how their everyday living and working activities impacted the surrounding environment. Reuse, recycle, repair was the team mantra.

The Walpack Historical Society met with the SCA team at The Christie House job site on November 1st as this season's task list was nearing completion. WHS soon learned that much of the repair work cannot be seen and represents a large part of the project. Documentation, photography and cataloging preceded structural repairs. Lil's sill, Brook's porch, Stanley's corner and Jessie's

joists needed to be addressed before work could begin on Ethan's door, Kate and Sam's slate roof repairs and Jennifer's trim work. The entire team donned EPA mandated Tyvek suits and safety masks to undertake the arduous task of "very robust" paint scraping preliminary to the preparation of surfaces to be painted. Every board on the house was touched many times by many hands during the scraping and sanding of old paint and the filling of holes and

surface damage with epoxy or wood filler.

Historic Preservation Specialist, Matt Grubel aided the team in investigating the historic paint layering using a technique known as "cratering" whereby a small dish-shaped depression is created in a painted surface in a manner that exposes most paint layers. The choices of colors were chosen to "approximately replicate" those in existence after all additions and alterations to the original house had been made. Surfaces were primed and painted and where wood was particularly dry or exposed, linseed oil mixtures were applied before priming. Additionally, window sashes were removed to repair glass and glazing and several windows were re-weighted to enable proper function.

When asked by the WHS what the team found to be most challenging among their many efforts, the unanimous response was the laboring in excessive August heat and humidity in Tyvek suits. The need for "Death Breaks" resulted in specters clad in white body suits, draped willy nilly over the building's grounds and construction scaffolding; no doubt presenting a haunting portrait to any passers-by as the team sought a brief respite from the unrelenting heat.

As a demonstration of team unity, the group chose to speak only in generalities regarding the challenges of living and working within a group of persons not previously known to one another. The Walpack Historical Society's wondering about the potential difficulty of working with one's spouse or living with one's boss was put to rest by the team as they described each person's nine day stint as "Hitch-Leader". While serving as hitch-leader, each team member had many responsibilities including meal planning, shopping, chore assignments and presenting a 30-minute Environmental Education lesson. Any "conflict resolution", if necessary, was handled within, by the team members and peers evaluated each other. In this way leadership skills were

*Continued on Pg. 7*

# REVITALIZE *continued*

learned, honed and tested to the benefit of the individual and team effort.

After witnessing the impressive work done in Walpack Center and speaking with team members and their advisors, the WHS had one final question as the young preservationists prepared to move on to the next steps and challenges in their lives.

WHS asked: In a cash strapped, budget stripping economy, what compelling arguments can be put forth to continue the historic preservation efforts within DEWA?

A thoughtful response by one member and agreed upon by all was the unique quality of the vernacular that our Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area presents through its historic structures; a period concentration of the homes lived in and beloved by the ordinary people who toiled, raised families and worshiped here in pursuit of everyday lives.

In a culture of superlatives where biggest, best, most valuable seem to hold inordinate sway in the public mindset, perhaps it is important for all of us who so love our park and its historic structures to take more interest and pride in the homes and their long absent inhabitants who represent the ordinary, the practical and common of what once was here. It may well be the most valued part of ourselves and all of our histories and that part most needful of our attention and preservation today.

The Walpack Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the efforts of the entire SCA team and DEWA as we further our responsibilities to preserve and promote the history of our unique local heritage.

Still more work remains to be done at The Christie House but the photos below show the condition of the property before work began and at the current stage of the project's completion (compliments of Program Manager, Jamie Weleber)



5/13/2016 - Condition before repairs



12/2/2016 - Seen from NE, at completion of season.

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

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*Van Campen Day Oct. 2016*



*Fall Hike Nov. 2016  
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*Van Campen Day Oct. 2016*

### **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 countrywide 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.

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