



### 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

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*"Preserving a Fine  
Tradition of Caring"*

Published Quarterly

Newsletter of the  
Walpack Historical Society

July 2017

## THUNDER MOUNTAIN RANCH by Michael Orlowski

*Summer Presentation Note:* July 16th, 2017 at 1pm the WHS will be hosting a presentation by Mike Orlowski about TMR. Check our website for more info.



The Thunder Mountain Ranch (TMR) was a camp for boys ages 8-16 located on 300 pristine acres of land in Bevens, NJ on what is now part of the Peters Valley property. Incorporated in June 1953 as Hoofbeats Dude Ranch, it would change its name and business plan to TMR in 1958. TMR was owned and operated by Artie and Arlene Cohen during its existence.

The Cohens, who were from Brooklyn, followed Artie's dream to have a business that involved horses. Artie was exposed to horses at a very early age by his father who used horses in his delivery business in the early 1900s.

Arlene recalls that when they moved into the main house at TMR there was no phone and it lacked a lot of modern conveniences. Artie worked and commuted to NYC weekly and Arlene watched over the farm. She would have to saddle a horse and ride to the Bevens Store (now Peters Valley Gallery) to call Artie and let him know how things were going and she often slept with a gun next to her bed.

They changed from Hoofbeats to TMR when their son Jeffery was born. The feeling was that a limited season of campers would allow more time to be spent with the

family. Make no mistake TMR was a full time job. Horses were bought and sold, improvements and upkeep of the ranch took time, money and manpower. Manpower would be provided by Artie and his wranglers. The wranglers, who were counselors, arrived two weeks before the campers did. They would help make repairs, fix fences and assist Artie with anything else the ranch needed. Understand that Artie traveled around the country to promote the ranch to potential campers but also to recruit wranglers who were real cowboys from over all over the Midwest. He chose them from numerous colleges every year. Many would return from year to year and become extended family, making it ever more difficult to see some of them go off to the Vietnam War.


The wrangler's most important job was the safety of the campers but a close second was to shoe the horses. This was done during the day, and then in the evening they would ride them so that Artie could see how the horse was with a rider and get a feel for its personality. Then Artie could match the horse to the camper/rider when they came. Mike Eisenman, a former wrangler, explained to me that they would use a grease pencil and write on the

*Continued on Pg. 7*

WALPACK  
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**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.

Linda Edgerly  
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Ruth Repko

Sarah Verbeke  
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**THE KNIGHT HOUSE: PRESENTATION AND SITE TOUR**



June 25, 2017 - Our guest speaker Bob Brandt, author *Summer Knights Revisited*, brought us all back to a time fifty years ago when a vast 400 acre farm existed where there is now a thick forest.



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

**THUNDER MOUNTAIN RANCH** *continued*

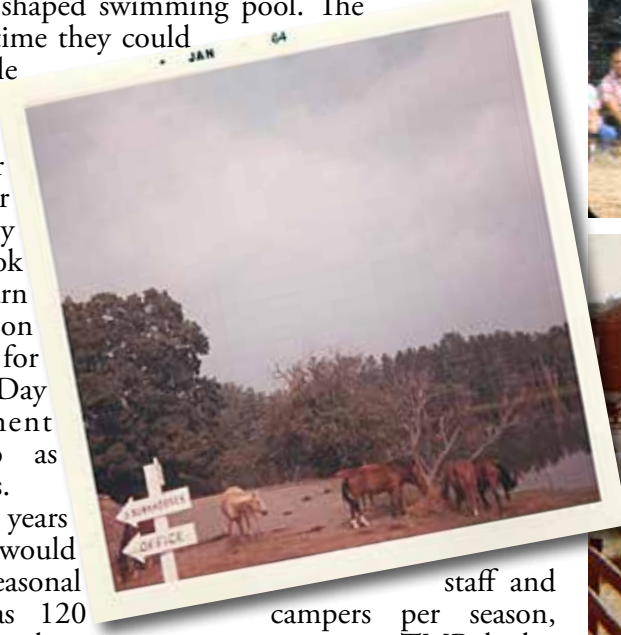
horse's shoulder the rider's initials and his bunk number. By the time the grease rubbed off the horse's shoulder, the rider would know his horse, the horse would know his rider and both knew where their stall was.

Campers had full days, most of the day was spent riding. Wranglers tried to get everyone into the water at least once a day, in either the swimming hole or the horse head shaped swimming pool. The rest of the time they could go to the rifle or archery ranges, play baseball, or do leather crafts. They also took time to learn routines on horseback for Parents' Day entertainment referred to as Rodeo Days.

Over the years the ranch would have seasonal staff and as many as 120 campers per season, many of whom were return customers. TMR had a full time ranch hand named John Gould, a local man, a nurse and kitchen staff. Arlene ran the day-to-day office operations while Artie oversaw the ranch.

Former wranglers and campers remembered the Cohens with great fondness, describing them as extended family, great role models and just plain wonderful people.

June 2017 marked the first anniversary of Artie Cohen's death. The TMR program has helped reunite the Cohens with former wranglers and campers here in



Walpack Center by using the event as a sort of reunion and opportunity to visit TMR one last time.

Several wranglers have offered to take questions and speak. They have shared many photographs and memories of TMR. Jodi Cohen, the Cohens' daughter, has also shared the short video her dad used to promote TMR.

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# HOE CAKES

By Len Peck

It seems that no matter how old one gets you can always learn more about some things that you knew about practically all of your life.

I read an article the other day about George Washington and how he liked hoecakes, which was something I loved when I was a kid. Hoecakes are fried corn meal mush, served with butter and syrup or honey.

When I was a youngster between 10 and 13 years of age (that was a long time ago), my grandfather would make several pans of corn meal mush to take on camping trips. When us kids went on camping trips with him, you either learned to like fried corn meal mush or you went hungry. Fortunately, I loved it, but neither of my brothers did. They did love to fish, and as youngsters they were exceptionally good at it, so never a day would go by when we were either camping or staying at the family owned farm in South Plainfield, NJ that fish could not be caught in a nearby stream.

My grandfather was a great outdoors man and had special ways of cooking almost everything when camping. For instance, he would merely gut the fish, leaving the scales on. He would then wrap the wet fish in a newspaper, cover the wrapped fish in mud or clay about 2 to 3 inches thick and place it in the hot coals of the campfire until the mud became hard and dry. Then, by splitting the hard lump open from bottom to top, the baked fish would split in half, the scales and skin would stick to the newspaper and you would have cooked fish with all the flavor sealed in. All you had to do was lift out the backbones and enjoy.

But, as usual, I seem to have digressed, so back to the hoecakes.

George Washington had many slaves, who he was reputed to treat very well. So, on his birthday he was invited to join them at an outdoor pit fire where they would cook and serve him hoecakes, which was one of the foods of the slaves. But lacking utensils, the slaves would fry the cakes of mush on the blades of their hoes, which were used in cultivating the fields and an implement they always had on hand.

My grandfather died in 1924, and as cornmeal mush was not a favorite among the rest of the family we seldom had it since. Anyway, after some 80 years I finally learned how hoecakes got that name.

"Boy, with melted butter and honey, were they Good!"

Please continue to share your memories or those of a family member or friend of favorite meals or foods from your Walpack past. Recipes are most welcome! We will share them in future issues of this Newsletter

--

*Another voice from the past, former Walpack Historical Society President, Len Peck wrote about his fondness for Hoe Cakes in the WHS Newsletter of March, 2004. We feel Len would have wanted us to share his fond food memory once again.*

# OUT OF THE WEEDS: RETURN TO THE SMITH-DODD HOUSE

By Allyson Schwab-Miller

On June 17, 2017 ten members of the Historic Properties Stewards (HPS) convened at The Smith-Dodd House (Dodd House) located on Old Mine Road north of the Smith-Lenington Farm for a very unique opportunity. The National Park Service (NPS) approached HPS and requested that members provide assistance by engaging in a full interior house clean-up of both the circa 1810 stone portion of the structure and the 1850s Delaware Valley Style wood frame addition.

Equipped with work clothing, heavy shoes, gloves and masks, HPS members got to explore the home from top to bottom. No crack or crevasse was left untouched as HPS members hauled refuse left behind by the last tenant as well as years of garbage left behind by people illegally accessing the home. Bob Williams played a key role in assuring that nothing of historical value or importance was inadvertently discarded.

As years of junk were hauled to a dumpster provided by NPS a wonderful old home regained its pride. Beautiful floors and moldings resurfaced, a cozy kitchen reappeared and wonderful old bedrooms regained a welcoming appearance.

While work is still required to remove remaining

refuse in the attic and cellar, HPS members left the main house and its addition broom clean. Many HPS members were heard commenting on the warm and livable nature of the home.

Any building can be a house, but a house needs a little something extra to be a home. Based on the number of times "I love this house! I could live here," was heard during the interior clean-out, the Dodd House was unofficially reclassified as the Dodd Home on June 17, 2017. Please stay tuned for more developments regarding the future of the Dodd Home and other historic structures throughout the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DWGNRA).

If you have a house or



Continued 

# WHAT DID YOU HAVE FOR SUPPER?

By Jacqueline Broughton née Potofsky

The WHS has had a number of responses to our question of "What Was for Supper" included in our April Newsletter's "Remembering Walpack" article. We will be including them in future issues.

The following memories submitted by long time member and former Flatbrookville resident, Jacqueline Broughton are especially descriptive and wonderfully evocative.

--

What an interesting question. I am now 81! The memory may not be correct but I do remember some things clearly. I was six and going to the Walpack School and was learning to read. Mr. Abers was a good teacher.

My parents went on a trip and I got to stay with Bertie (I don't know her last name, maybe Fuller). They had a big house at the base of the hill below our property in Flatbrookville. It was two stories and had a wide wrap-around porch and a pump outside the kitchen. It was up the road from Benny and Delores Rosenkrans and Marie Salter who had a lot of chickens, many, many chickens.

Bertie had a cow and we had milk and made butter in a churn with a paddle inside. I got to turn it and help make the butter. There were a lot of vegetables from the garden. They did a lot of canning for the winter, great numbers of tomatoes, green beans, carrots, beets, peaches and apple sauce. She made large crocks of pickles with dill. We had potatoes with almost every meal; fried, mashed, in stew and potato soup.

Breakfast was a big meal with eggs and bacon, potatoes and onions. Lunch was simple, a sandwich and an apple. I took a lunch box to school. Supper was often a stew or chicken. I know that we had rabbit that her son caught.



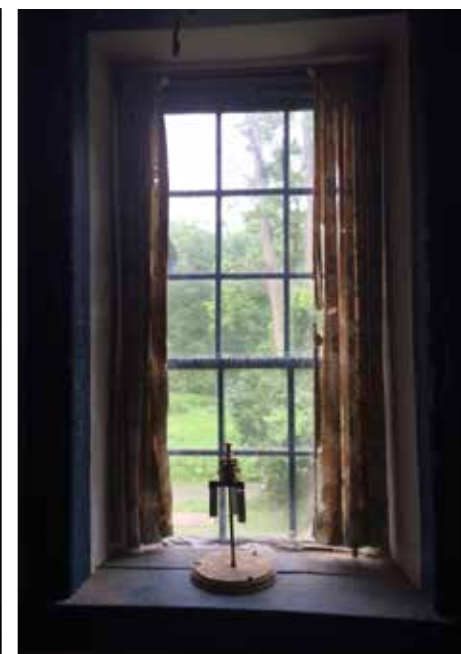
Old Mine Road in Flatbrookville - Harding House  
"I knew it as the 'old' house. We went there before the Potofsky House was built in 1939. It was on the brook."

I also remember eel from the Flat Brook and fish. The house was across the road from the brook and there was a lot of fish. The food was mostly fresh and wholesome.

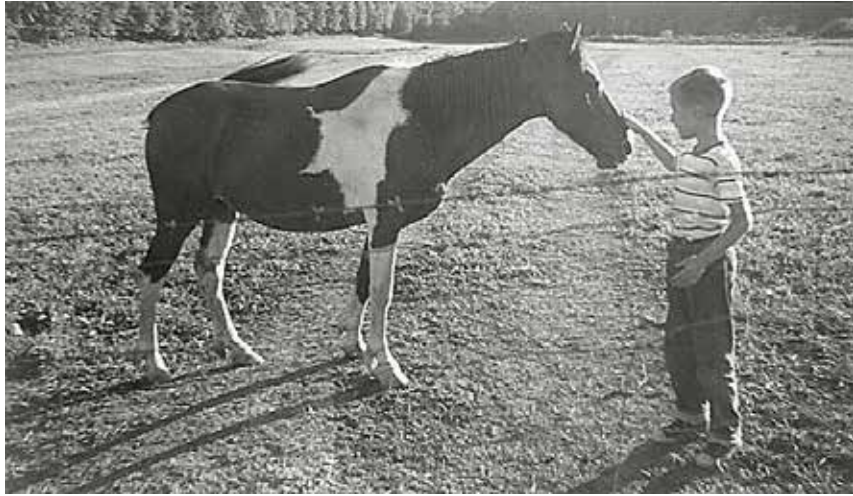
I do remember a bread truck that came with bread and cake in boxes. There was also a vegetable truck. We grew vegetables and fruit and had a root cellar, but the vegetable truck had bananas and oranges! We ate very well. Cooking and canning was fun and took up a lot of our time when we were not down by the river.

property within DWGNRA that you feel strongly about or would like to become involved with HPS please contact Walpack Historical Society for more information.

*The following pictures taken by Mark Miller, Audrey Schwab, Patrick Mahon and Allyson Schwab-Miller chronicle The Dodd Home's continued journey as it emerges out of the weeds. More pictures are on page 8.*



## TMR: FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN *continued*



the horses, the river and the country scene, remarking that we had our own Ponderosa, referring of course to the popular Bonanza TV show of that era.

The kids from along the river loved the horses. The feeling was mutual, because when we walked over to visit we fed them sugar cubes. As soon as the horses saw us coming, they would run over to the fence line and eagerly await their treat. The procedure was to place the cube flat on your palm, with fingers straight and flat so they would not be nipped off as the horse took the cube. The horses were friendly, and tolerated our attention. One horse in particular could be ridden bareback, no saddle or bridle, and of course no helmets! This was in the days before the nanny state, the farmer did not mind, the parents were fine with the riding, and no one complained. Life was the way it should be.

One time a horse expired, and was lying motionless in the field until some outfit came to remove the carcass off to the glue factory or wherever such creatures end up. Just before the carcass was winched onto the truck, all the horses arranged themselves single file and slowly walked off past their deceased comrade, almost as if it was a funeral procession. It was an amazing thing to see. Whoever may claim that horses are dumb and unfeeling animals is way off the mark.

One Saturday afternoon I was in the general store when a fire call came in. The Ranch reported a fire in their kitchen that was out of control. The siren sounded, the town came alive, and the fire truck started up the mountain to the rescue. By the time the firemen arrived the fire was out, and there was no real damage. Fred Battali Sr. then told me about an earlier kitchen fire at the Ranch. It was in the wall behind the stove, and Fred and Artie were standing side by side frantically wielding axes chopping open the wall to put water on the fire and save the building. While Artie was in mid swing, a young lady ranch worker suddenly appeared behind them and said "Excuse me Mr. Cohen, will breakfast be served at the usual time tomorrow morning?" Artie spun around to face her, ax blade raised high above his head, with a glaring look of sheer horror on his face. Fred quickly grabbed the ax handle to steady it, and Artie's reply to the

worker best not be repeated. There are certain times when you just do not bother a man while he is busy working!

The red devil would eventually have its way with the Ranch. Following the government takeover, on a summer day about 1974 a worker was mowing right alongside the main building when his mower ran out of gas. Refueling resulted in gas splashing onto the hot engine, it flashed, the worker was burned, and fire spread onto the building which was gutted. Another valuable life lesson learned, but in a very harsh way.

Back in the day opening Monday of deer season was an event not to be missed, and Walpack was the place to be. Dad would take off from work, and I would be way too

sick to attend school. Arthur and Eileen Kahn had a summer home on Old Mine Road, and their property ran up the mountain to border with the Ranch. Dad knew these fine people from hangin' at the Walpack Inn, so we could hunt on their land. One freezing cold and windy December dawn finds me standing at the top of the Kahn property, hoping for the best. The borders were not marked. I sort of believed that I was where I should be, but in any event the hunt was on and precise legal niceties were of no concern.

About an hour after daybreak two hunters, another father and young son, walk up to me. That dad politely inquired who had given me permission to hunt there, and I truthfully replied "Mr. Artie Kahn". I suppose "Kahn" sounds a lot like "Cohen" especially when pronounced with a slight deliberate rural drawl. Anyway, everything was cool, we wished each other luck and they went on their way. But my hunt was now screwed, as the duo were part of a drive that was pushing the woods going away from me. Not good. Nevertheless, I resolved to stick it out a while longer, despite the freezing cold and bitter wind that would just not quit.

Fifteen minutes later there I stand, hands in my pockets, hunched shivering behind a tree trying to keep warm, shotgun carelessly leaning against the trunk. I look up and see a deer trotting right at me. Blink twice and then spy the rack. The crafty guy managed to sneak himself undetected right thru the drive line, and was backtracking his way to safety. For a moment forever frozen in time we lock stares, with that certain Oh S#!%! look on our faces. Buck swaps ends and races away, while Kid swings into action with all the speed and agility only a seventeen year old can possess.....

Throughout the years a polished set of antlers rests in a place of honor at my home. I remain eternally grateful to the Mountain for the sharing of its bounty, and providing cherished memories of my life at Walpack and of adventures with my Dad.

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## THUNDER MOUNTAIN RANCH: FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN by Donald Stieh



*Don with favorite TMR horse, dated Sept. 1960*

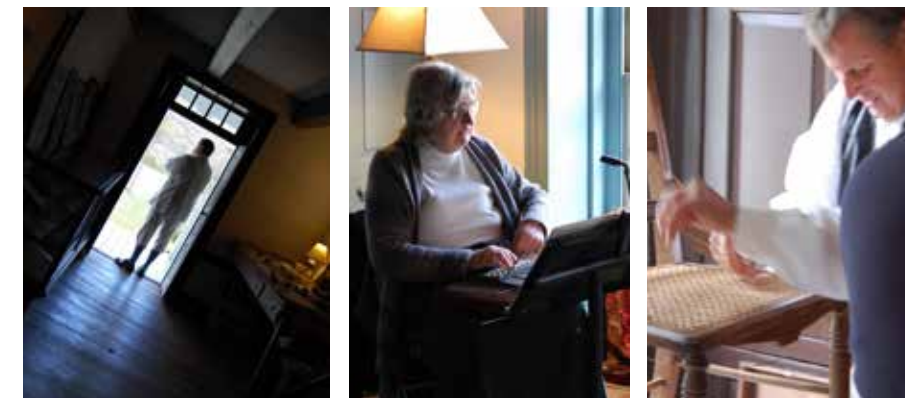
From the front deck of our home on the bluff above the Delaware we enjoyed an expansive view of the Van Campen Inn Farm and Old Mine Road. Many times during the summer I would see a long single file column of horses and riders traveling along Old Mine Road. They were campers at Thunder Mountain Ranch, a youth camp operated by Arthur and Arlene Cohen, and located on the Ridge Road north of Walpack Center. I was quite envious of the boys on their steeds, resplendent in their cowboy hats and western clothing. This was during the 1950's and early 1960's when almost every show on TV was a western, and the cowboy theme was in full swing. How I really wished I could be one of them!

Wranglers from the Ranch who were Catholic like us often attended Sunday Mass at St. Matthews, riding in on horseback and hitching their horses outside the Church. On at least one occasion I was able to get a ride back home, and it was a real thrill for a little city kid to ride with a real cowboy!

During the off season Ranch horses were sometimes pastured in the fenced in farm fields near our house. When friends from the city came for weekends, they were really thrilled with

*Continued on Pg. 6*

## 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    | Spring Dinner at<br><i>The Walpack Inn</i> |
| May 21      | Civil War Program                          |
| June 25     | The Van Scorder<br>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                             |

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Glenn T. LaBarge

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