

THE ROSENKRANS FAMILY BIBLE



www.walpackhistory.org

RUTH ANN WHITESELL, FORMER WHS PRESIDENT



Ruth Ann Whitesell, 75, of Frankford Township died Saturday, September 21, 2019 at home. Born in Newton, Ruth Ann was a lifelong Sussex County resident and was 1962 graduate of Newton High School. She was survived by her husband Gene and was employed at Selective Insurance Company in Branchville for over 44 years and was a member

of Selective's 25-year club. Township Election Board, a member and board member of the Sussex County Historical Society, member of the Branchville Borough Historical Society and Dingman's Delaware Historical Society, as well as a member and past president of the Walpack Historical Society. She was a member of the Friends of the Delaware, Bushkill, PA as well as a docent at the Rosenkrans Museum for several years. Ruth Ann also served as a member of the Sussex County Agricultural Society and a member of the New Jersey State Fair History Committee.

of Selective's 25-year club.

Ruth Ann was the direct descendant of Nathaniel (Tanny) Sisco who served as a drummer boy in the Revolutionary War.

Ruth Ann was dedicated to serving her community. She was one of the founders of and charter members of the FFC Credit Union. She served on its Board of Directors for 30 years including 10 years of service as the Board President.

She was a member of the United Methodist Church of Branchville and served her faith community as a Sunday school teacher, Lay speaker, member of the Board of Trustees and helped to birth the Mystery Dinner Theater.

Ruth Ann was passionate about her membership in the Order of Eastern Star. She was a past Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star, Northern Chapter No. 38. She also served as a past District Deputy of the Order of the Eastern Star of New Jersey, as well as a Grand Representative of the Order of the Eastern Star, NJ to Ontario, Canada.

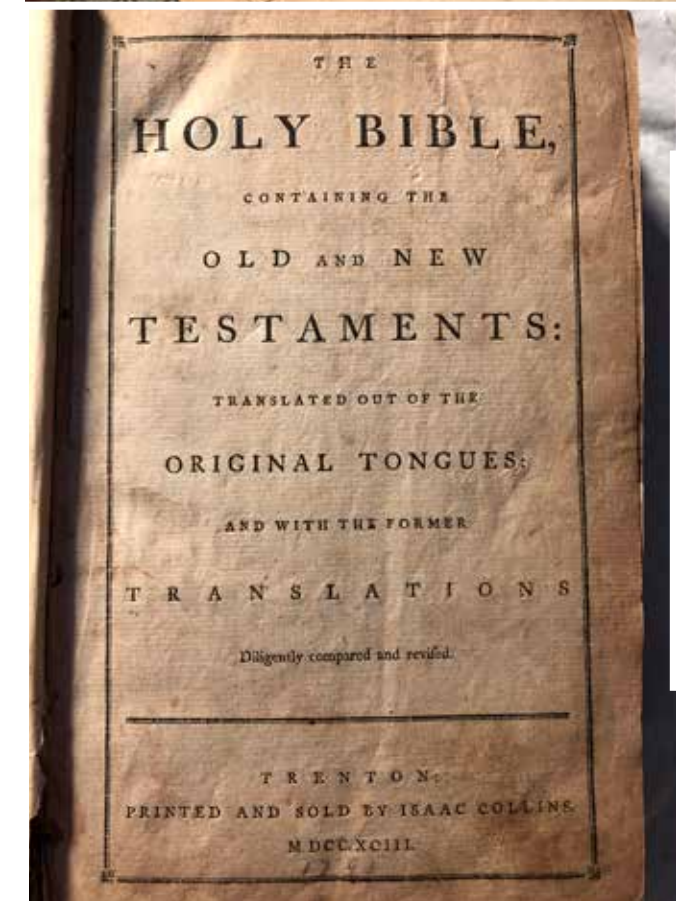
She served her community as a member of the Sandyston

Memorial donations may be made to the United Methodist Church in Branchville, 8 Broad St., Branchville, NJ 07826 or Blue Ridge Rescue Squad, PO Box 232, Branchville, NJ 07826. Online condolences may be offered at www.WoodFuneralHome.net.

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, and also maintains a small museum and book store.



Chris Cunningham, Suzanne Brown and Don Stieb, WHS President.

September 8, 2019 - The Rosenkrans's Family Bible comes home to Walpack. The WHS was very pleased to receive a very special donation of the Rosenkrans's Bible from Suzanne Brown of California. The Bible is signed by Colonel Benjamin Rosenkrans and was printed in 1793.

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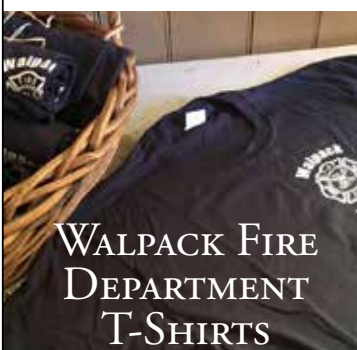
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Event Photos by Tom Dust
Walpack Historical Society Newsletter
Designed and Edited
by Dusty Roads Media

MY HOUSE IS BUILT UPON A ROCK by Audrey Schwab



Imagine the optimistic and joyful tone the Walpack Center Methodist Episcopal congregants must have lent to the above noted hymn as they raised their voices in the celebration of laying their new church corner stone on the 28th of June in 1871. The irony of a once divided congregation, at serious odds over the location of the new church, ultimately finding strength in their unity, is a testament to the moral fiber of the community.

A newspaper article from the archives of *The Hackettstown Gazette*, chronicles how the selection of the location for the new Walpack Church was the subject of a very heated debate. The comparatively grand new edifice was intended to replace a modest stone structure built in 1837 on land donated by Robert Bell. The original church was located amid the gravestones in the Walpack Cemetery. The planned site for the new church was on higher ground in Walpack Center village on land donated by Jacob Roe. It seems the Flatbrook stream became the “line in the sand” that divided the congregation into two parties; the east siders and the west siders. Conjuring the wisdom of Solomon, it was decided that the side that contributed the most money toward the building of the new church would have the choice of the site upon which it would stand. With a bit of alleged subterfuge, the treasurer of the congregation, a west sider “who alone knew which side was ahead, so

managed it that his side won the day.”

Fast forward nearly 150 years. This Fall, the Walpack Church will be undergoing additional work to the remaining three sides of the exterior of the structure. Thanks to Life Members, Beverly and Bruce Gordon for their generous donation to the effort and to the cost share from the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA), the Walpack Historical Society is able to continue its efforts to refresh the paint and make necessary carpentry repairs to the clapboard, soffits and trim. The spalling plaster coat on the stone foundation will also be addressed. Areas of plaster failure will be restored, painted and scribed to best replicate what is believed to be the original application of over a century ago.

We are most grateful to all of our members who have contributed to the ongoing efforts to restore the church to its former glory. As we approach the 150th Anniversary of this key DEWA structure, we are reminded of the integral role it has played in the social, moral and cultural fabric of the Walpack community and beyond. We are inspired by the efforts of the congregants and smile at controversy they overcame. If a tarring and feathering of the church organ did not rip them asunder (another story for another newsletter), then we know the true strength of the community from which our Walpack Historical Society has evolved.

Our appreciation and thanks to all the members and friends of WHS who remembered the Society while taking advantage of their employer’s *Employee Matching Gift programs*. Your generosity helps projects such as the Walpack M.E. Church Restoration Project.

The Walpack Historical Society would like to acknowledge and express its appreciation to our many Lifetime Members for their generous support.

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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.

WALPACK CENTER’S GIVING TREE by Audrey Schwab



the history of this place and struggling to withstand time. I imagine we all have hurried by this old tree with our thoughts and purposes too far removed to take note. I, too, was guilty of only a subliminal awareness until long-time Walpack resident, Jimmy Heigis referred to the battered but resilient old gal as “Walpack’s Giving Tree.” Jimmy reflected upon the wonderful children’s book by Shel Silverstein as his inspiration for the naming of our tree. That was impetus enough to revisit Mr. Silverstein’s poetic tale and reflect upon the uniquely personalized meaning it conveys to the reader.

The Giving Tree was first published by Harper and Row in 1964. It was originally offered to Simon and Schuster for publication but was turned down for subject matter that was deemed to be too sad for young children. The book did illicit some controversy; is still discussed in reviews and academic forums; and continues to be one of the most widely read children’s books of all time. Like the tree in the story, I expect those who grew up in Walpack harbor fond memories of our tree’s gifts; sweet smelling blossoms in springtime; a shady canopy to dream under on hot summer days; and limbs to

If you are fortunate enough to be a frequent visitor to Walpack Center, you have probably come to know the aged apple tree that seems to beckon to us with her bowed and gravity defying trunk. Standing across from, and slightly east of the Walpack Historical Society’s Rosenkrans Museum, the tree has become a mere shadow of her former self; anchored in

swing upon while walking to and from school as the anxiously awaited autumn fruit slowly ripened and finally fell to the ground.

Someone suggested Walpack’s tree may be of the Pound Sweet variety, which originated in Manchester Connecticut in the 1830s and is described as bearing “large and superbly sweet yellow-green fruit.” An on-line search noted that nursery stock of this variety may still be available but finding an apple to sample might be very hard indeed. Perhaps if you were not too consumed by your own thoughts as you passed by, you might have welcomed the promise of a baker’s dozen of tiny apples that appeared on our Walpack tree last July. As August waned, the apples had grown plump and my personal surveillance kicked into high gear. Just about the middle of September, the first of eight ripened survivors fell to the ground. It seems the trajectory of most fallen apples sends them rolling across Main Street and into the field next to the museum. It becomes a battle to grab one before the night critters, birds, bees and ants lay their ruinous claim to the fruit. I managed to scoop up two... one bruised and one nearly pristine. Though the variety is not necessarily recommended for fresh eating, I took mine home, and ruminated about the children of Walpack’s past while enjoying every last bite. Somewhat tart, a bit mealy perhaps, but ever the sweeter as it may be the last I may savor. The tree is on tenuously borrowed time. A major limb was lost in the early winter of 2018, and what now remains is a mostly hollowed trunk, pixelated by wood peckers. This rather rickety skeleton manages to support a modest crown of branches that quite astonishingly produced a nice sprinkling of spring blossoms. The tree must have expended a huge portion of her very modest energy reserves in order to bear fruit and offer it as a gift to those who were paying close attention and grabbed some to eat as they passed by. The Walpack tree gave of her gifts and as Shel Silverstein would say...“the Tree was happy.”



Photos by A. Schwab

THE LOG FLUME BY Jeff Stoveken

Sometimes you “find” something that’s even better than what you were looking for! We headed out to Walpack Township to hike up the side of the mountain looking for a set stone that we had come across earlier this year. Apparently, there could’ve been a small graveyard in that area. We made our way back to that stone and were following what seemed to be an early road but now is barely a pathway into the area. Once we completed our search, we decided to veer off this old road after checking out a few crude stone walls along one of the creeks. Shortly after we crossed the creek we came across a shallow channel in a part of the forest that had a mainly dirt floor. Since we weren’t far from the creek, the channel simply appeared to be run-off coming down the mountain. As I glanced up the hillside, I saw two tracks which looked unusual and man-made. I decided to take a short walk up to see where these tracks led. As I made it to the next rise these parallel ditches, which were about 10 feet or so apart, continued up the mountain. I turned around and figured we could go see what this was another day.

As I was backtracking to the area where we had crossed the creek I noticed that these two impressions in the ground joined together and were slightly curving to the right. We followed this trench and as it started to get a bit deeper, I’d say a few feet; it junctions with a small brook that feeds into it. This little canal seems to be the deepest in this short stretch where it takes a couple of sharper turns. Just below this junction, it branches off into at least three parallel chutes, with the main one always a bit more prominent. We also noticed that larger rocks were strewn about on either side, like they had been dug out of this trench so as to not restrict anything. Another observation was that the berms on the downhill side of this channel were higher at intersections and tighter turns. As we followed it to the very end, before approaching Mountain Road, we noticed a very old maple tree in a small clearing. To the right of that clearing, along a small stream coming in from a different angle, is the site of an old building; maybe an old industrial site, a garage, or something of that nature. We had seen that little site previously since it

is so close to the road. We parked on the other side of the road in what seems to be a short driveway to a previous structure that is marked on a 1950’s map.

As we followed this sluiceway all the way down the mountain, we came up with ideas as to what it could be. Dan’s idea, that kept re-surfacing, was that of a log flume. We knew we needed to revisit this area, climb the mountain and find out where this ditch originated. A few days later we met up in that same old driveway and began to track this mysterious ditch uphill. We paid close attention once we got to the original spot that caught our eye. We each walked a channel up a small rise to another intersection, but this time there was water. Now, we knew that this ditch was definitely once full of water and most likely we had located its source. This particular junction appeared to be a diverter and may have had a gate to control each one of the parallel ditches. This spot seems to be the beginning of a transport system. As we walked further upstream, we spotted one of the tallest trees in the area. This little brook was leading us right towards it. Just before the tree you could hear gurgling water and there was the spring hole; the water source. We wondered why all this effort was made to hand-dig ditches down the side of a mountain when you are no further than 100 or so feet from a fairly large creek that follows a similar path down to the bottom.

Before we headed back down, we decided to check out a ridge that separated us from the creek. It was a fairly narrow area and we quickly noticed a bridle path that runs perpendicular to what we had been following. This path went for quite a while. We turned around, so we could return to the spring and track and photo document this man-made passage down the mountain.

The only thing that made sense to us was that it was once a log flume. When the mountain was forested, they would’ve hauled the trees along that ridge trail, called a skid road, to the beginning of the spring fed flume. The logs, with the assistance of water and possibly horses or oxen, would descend the mountain in this earthen channel that gradually curved towards its destination. There is another brook that terminates just before reaching Mountain Road. After looking at a 1954 map of the area, I spotted a longer dirt road that went from there to the Flatbrook. It also shows a building near that road’s terminus next to the brook. That driveway we had parked in was just the entrance to this old roadway.

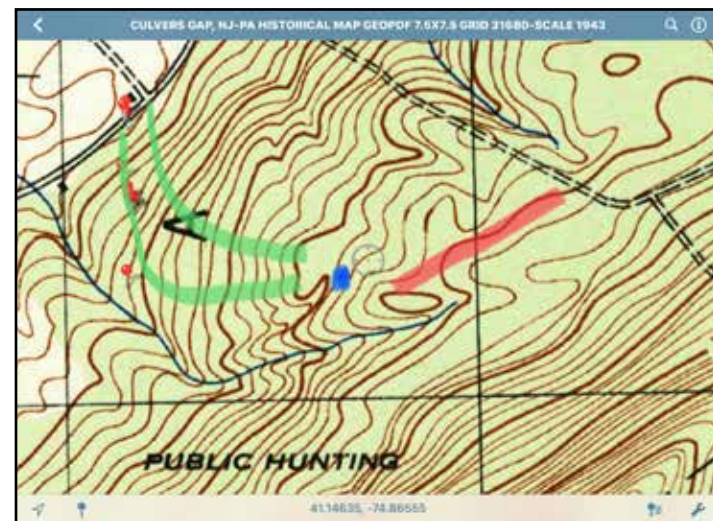


Did the timber stop at that little industrial area that we had found on the mountain side of the road? Or did it continue on that little brook towards the Flatbrook to be transported elsewhere? The outlet would be the Delaware river at the south end of Walpack where it may have been floated to market in Philadelphia. It may sound far-fetched but back in the 1800’s rafting trees down the Delaware towards Philadelphia was big business. Or, the timber could have supplied the building at the end of that road which could’ve been a sawmill? Either way, I have never come upon anything like this before. Even though it’s such a simple trench, to walk it and think about what it could’ve been is fascinating.

Here is log chute description that I came across online,

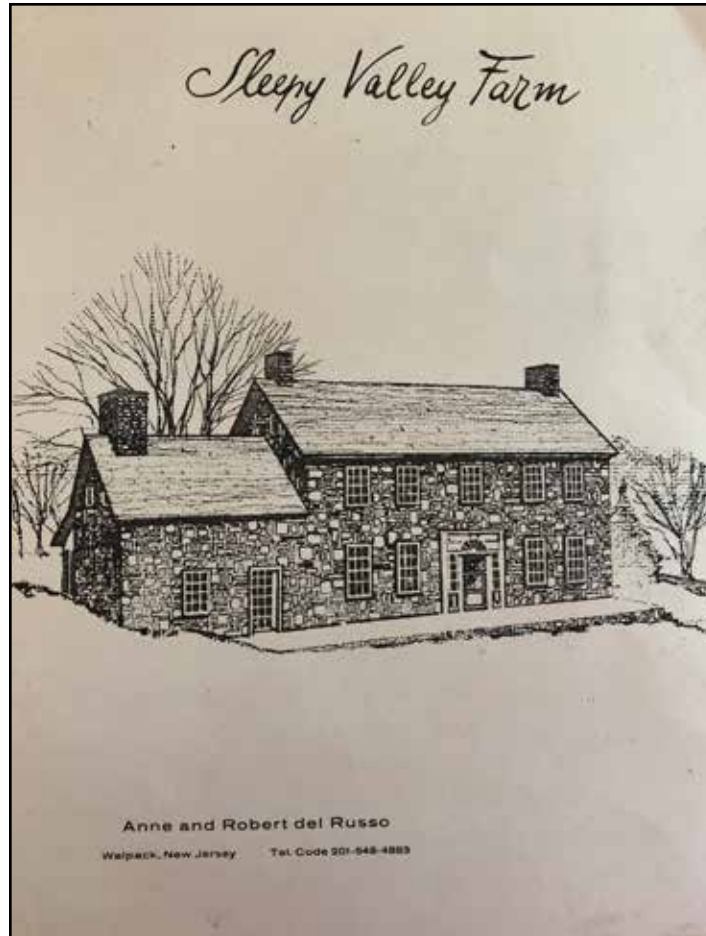
“Early loggers and settlers cut timber near water and had to move further away as the wood supply on that land was depleted. The water made it easy to move timber to mills and overseas, but as loggers were forced more inland, they needed to develop new methods of transporting their product. One popular technique for hauling lumber was to use horses and oxen to drag logs over skid roads and rough tracks through the woods. Log flumes, now known because of theme park rides, got their start as a way to move logs via man-made troughs.”

When I got home and pinned every picture that I took onto the map, it created a gradual arc that we were aware of while walking. The layout looking down on a map puts it all together as far as I can tell.



Photos by Jeff Stoveken

IF YOU SET YOUR MIND TO WONDERING *by Audrey Schwab*



Sit back and try to conjure a late winter's evening in 1968; St. Patrick's Day to be precise. The hour is approaching 7 o'clock as you negotiate the sometimes steep and always winding road that traverses the still leafless hillside and wends its way toward Pompey Ridge and points south. You are scheduled to arrive at the sprawling stone house along with twenty-five other guests. It is very likely you have traveled from afar; perhaps from New York City or the New Jersey outlier cities that surround and make up the metropolitan area. As you near the end of your journey, you note soft shifting light patterns in the shadows. Unexpectedly, your headlights capture the front facade of a beautifully restored c.1812 farmhouse. An impressive complex of barns and a silo compliment the farmhouse and a sweeping driveway leads you to its front door. Welcome to Sleepy Valley Farm and the elegant restaurant within.

You are greeted at the front door by owner and ever gracious host, Maitre d'hotel, Robert del Russo. Mr. del Russo has recently retired from a thirteen-year career as the employment manager for Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City. His wife, Anne, a former fashion house executive, will be your chef this evening. Together they have restored this lovely two-story home to its former grandeur and welcome their dining patrons as a weekend hobby. You

are seated hearthside in one of two dining rooms to the left of a wide center hall. The room is complimented by the owners' collection of antiques and the table is set with pewter, hallmark silverware and antique Spode china; a most fitting compliment to the gourmet meal you are about to enjoy.

Mrs. Anne del Russo describes the cuisine as "International" and features a fixed menu that varies from day-to-day and season-to-season. Appetizers may include jellied ham in white wine, shrimp quiche, cheese soufflé, or roasted peppers with pine nuts, raisins and garlic. Soups often feature herbs from Mrs. del Russo's garden, such as cream of sorrel, or perhaps a Yankee black bean or onion soup served table-side from a large tureen. The entrée this evening will be roast shell of beef from a New York purveyor, accompanied by a baked stuffed potato topped with cheese, and ratatouille with herb or garlic bread as an accompaniment. A salad will follow European style, after the entrée, and will be served on a chilled glass plate with Anne's homemade tarragon vinegar dressing. Of course, you have saved room for dessert and know this evening's offering will probably be lemon chiffon pie, chocolate mousse, biscuit tortoni or perhaps raspberries in Cointreau. Post dinner espresso, made from freshly roasted and ground coffee beans, and an assortment of cheeses from Italy, encourage you to linger and enjoy the ambiance of the kerosene lamps and flickering candles. A delightful repast, in a lovely home with gracious and talented hosts will cost you \$8.50; a very reasonable sum, you feel, for a most delightful evening and sumptuous meal.

The above brief visit into a very short chapter in the Richard Layton House history was made possible by the fortuitous find of long forgotten promotional materials the del Russos had printed for their restaurant business. A circa 1970 article written by *The Newark News* food editor, Joan Babbage, vividly described the del Russos' gourmet restaurant in the very rural, rolling hills of Sussex County farm country. Babbage includes a quote from Anne del Russo who states, "One recent guest...a world traveler, told me that we had served him the finest meal he had ever tasted anywhere. I was so flustered that I put my heel right through my dinner dress."

The Walpack Historical Society will not be able to welcome you into the 1812 house, but after teasing you with "wonderings for your mind," we hope to entice you to set your feet to wandering with us, as we hike to the Richard Layton 1812 House on Sunday, November 3rd. We hope to introduce you to more former residents and learn of their personal chapters in the home's long past. We will be meeting in Walpack Center at 11:00 AM and carpooling to the property's driveway access on Pompey Ridge Road. Please check our Social Media pages for updates and the most current information.

2019 CALENDAR

April 7	Spring Hike to the Gunn House
April 28	Spring Dinner at <i>The Walpack Inn</i>
May 19	The Smith Descendants of Walpack/ Walpack Church Rededication
June 1	<i>National Trail Day</i>
June 23	Fort Nomanock Presentation - Sharon Spangenberg
July 21	History of Fire Towers, Mike Orłowski
Aug. 18	Artistic Heritage by Marie Liu
Sept. 8	Special Movie Presentation: <i>These Thirty Years</i>
Oct. 13	Van Campen Day
Nov. 3	Fall Hike: Hike to Richard Layton's 1812 house
Dec. 7	Walpack Christmas - Church and Museum open
Dec. 8	Holiday Dinner - Walpack Inn
Dec. 14 & 15	Walpack Christmas - Church and Museum open

Visit WalpackHistory.org for calendar updates, changes and details.

SUPPORT THE WHS NEWSLETTER

We are looking for Corporate sponsors and/or WHS members who are interested in supporting our newsletter. As costs continue to rise and our membership grows we need to offset some of the costs. Companies can have a business card sized ad, about 3.5" x 2". For WHS members, we would proudly display your name in our newsletter as a sponsor, or you can remain anonymous.

Info@WalpackHistory.org



2019 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE

Did you know there are two ways to pay your membership dues?

1. Visit www.walpackhistory.org, click on the Membership tab to pay your 2019 membership dues online using PayPal.
2. If you wish to pay your dues through the mail, please fill out the Membership Form on page 7 and send it along with your payment to the given address on the form.

All memberships must be made current to 2019 in order to remain on our mailing list. Thank you!

BE A PART OF HISTORY - DOCENTS & VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



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.



NEW MEMBERS

Arlene Sliker
Lori Reich

Thank you for becoming a member of the Walpack Historical Society. Your dues helps us to fulfill our mission to actively stimulate 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.

Donations Are Welcome!

WalpackHistory.org/donations



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 the Walpack M.E. Church Restoration Project and to our General Fund.

Curtis Engesser
Judy Keith
Alfred Liland
Roberta & Janos Spitzer
Rick & Toby Lear
Ernest Bouyet

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