

WALPACK

historical society

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Newsletter of the
Walpack Historical Society

Published Quarterly

Fall 2022

A FARMER THROUGHOUT HIS SEASONS WITH OLLIE TREIBLE - PART II

By Audrey Schwab



Ollie Treible on the doorstep of his boyhood home in Peters Valley

Following our meeting at the Rosenkrans Museum in Walpack Center last May, Ollie and I visited the Peters Valley farm he next called home. We are most appreciative to Kristin Muller, the Director of Peters Valley, and her staff for their warm welcome and gracious invitation to revisit the home and farm property of Ollie's youth. The former church building, now referred to by Peters Valley as Upper Treible, was built in 1848 by The Universalist Society at Peters Valley. Church records indicate the building was no longer being used, had fallen into disrepair and was sold to George VanSickle in 1922. The property remained in the VanSickle family until purchased by Kenneth and Lillian Treible in 1945. Today the building is used as a dining hall, kitchen and dormitory for Peters Valley staff and students.

As we walked up the driveway and approached what was once the Treible family farm house, Ollie noted that the property his parents purchased in 1945 had not been lived in nor tended to for many years before they took ownership. It took four months just to clear brush and prepare the house for Ollie, his

parents, brother and sister to be able to move in. One of the first changes his father made to the house was to close in the bottom of the original double front door entrance leaving the windows in place. The main entry was now accessed from the wrap-around porch on the left side elevation. Ollie recalls helping his father install the current siding over the original clapboard and the replacement of the old roof as part of the significant repairs made to the home.

Behind the home, the farm property also included a 30' by 30' bank barn with a hay mow and two stalls for milk cows. A large coop, able to house fifty chickens, was part of the barn complex along with a shed used for coal and other storage, and a dog house and run for the family hunting dogs. Ollie recalls buying a Guernsey heifer calf when he was 15 or 16 years old. He bred the cow and eventually sold her and her calf to the Chapot farm

in Walpack. The family usually had at least one freshened milk cow for the family butter and milk supply. All that remains of the farmyard complex today are the vestiges of the original fieldstone foundations which were revealed by a recent Peters Valley volunteers' brush clearing effort. A log slab smokehouse and frame privy once stood near the barn and behind what today appears to be a barbecue area.

Planting, tending and harvesting the large kitchen garden was one of the most important farm chores engaging the entire family. Leaf lettuce, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, peas, asparagus, green beans and Silver Queen sweet corn all had a place in the large plot and on the family menu. Though much of the work was done by hand, a small self-propelled walk behind Kohler tractor greatly assisted with the plowing, which turns over the ground bringing lower soil to the top, and cultivating, which then loosens that top layer of soil. Ollie fondly recalls

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A FARMER'S CREED

Author unknown



The Treible Farm, provided by Gary Treible (Enhanced/colorized)

I believe a man's greatest possession is his dignity and that no calling bestows this more abundantly than farming.

I believe hard work and honest sweat are the building blocks of a person's character.

I believe that farming, despite its hardships and disappointments, is the most honest and honorable way a man can spend his days on this earth.

I believe farming nurtures the close family ties that make life rich in ways money can't buy.

I believe my children are learning values that will last a lifetime and can be learned no other way.

I believe farming provides education for life and that no other occupation teaches so much about birth, growth, and maturity in such a variety of ways.

I believe many of the best things in life are indeed free: the splendor of a sunrise, the rapture of wide-open spaces, the exhilarating sight of your land greening each spring.

I believe true happiness comes from watching your crops ripen in the field, your children grow tall in the sun, your whole family feel the pride that springs from their shared experience.

I believe that by my toil I am giving more to the world than I am taking from it, an honor that does not come to all men.

I believe my life will be measured ultimately by what I have done for my fellow man, and by this standard I fear no judgment.

I believe when a man grows old and sums up his days, he should be able to stand tall and feel pride in the life he's lived.

I believe in farming because it makes all this possible.

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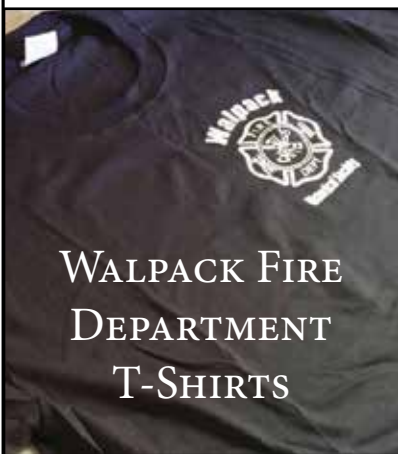
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The Walpack Historical Society
Newsletter is designed and edited
by Tom Dust.

2022 CALENDAR

April 24	Spring Hike: Donkeys Corner Trail
May 1	Spring Dinner at The Walpack Inn
May 15	Presentation: The Original Columbia and Walpack Turnpike
June 4	National Trail Day
June 26	Presentation: The Anniversary of the 1955 Flood
July 17	Lower Walpack Cemetery Event
Aug. 21	Presentation: History of the Appalachian Trail
Sept. 25	Millbrook Village: Fire Tower Hike
Oct. 9	Van Campen Day
Nov. 6	WHS at Space Farms Zoo & Museum: Exploring Sussex County
Dec. 3	Walpack Christmas - Museum open
Dec. 4	Holiday Dinner at The Walpack Inn
Dec. 10 & 11	Walpack Christmas - Museum open

*All events are subject to change based on current CDC & NPS Covid guidelines
Visit WalpackHistory.org and [Facebook.com/WalpackHistory](https://www.facebook.com/WalpackHistory)
for calendar updates, changes and details.*

WHS NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIPS

The production of our newsletter is a time-consuming and costly ongoing project for the WHS. As our membership grows so do our expenses for printing and mailing the newsletter. To help, please consider becoming a sponsor. Simply make a donation and note that it is for "Newsletter sponsor."



DUES ARE DUE

Members and friends of the WHS can fill out the membership form on page seven and mail it in with a payment to the address on the form.

Also, you can pay online with a credit card simply by visiting www.walpackhistory.org and then click/tap the Memberships & Donations button.

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

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

THANK YOU!

To everyone who becomes a member, makes a donation, sponsors the newsletter, attends a dinner, or buys a book, we sincerely appreciate your support.

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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 to speak with Jen Wycialek to learn more about how you can help play a part in history.



WALPACK CENTER RENEWED IN 2022

By Audrey Schwab

Time stood still for a good long while in sleepy Walpack Center, New Jersey. Following many years of steady decline, a much hoped for renaissance has brought a sense of renewal and promise to what was once a lively and productive turn of the 20th century village. A dynamic partnership between the Walpack Historical Society (WHS) and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) has resulted in roofing, foundation, and carpentry repairs to the parsonage and the Losey-Robbins house, with work ongoing at the Hendershot house as well. Most dramatic is the freshly painted white clapboards and rich forest green trim paint newly applied to the parsonage and Losey-Robbins house.

Even as the village slept, the WHS and DEWA were compiling and submitting detailed work project proposals as

required by the National Park Service (NPS), engaging in the tedious and often frustrating search for respected contractors, performing myriad contract reviews, and then seeking more NPS approvals. The beginning of 2022 began by waiting. Finally, contractors with very busy and tight client schedules, were able to commit to the summer of '22 and work could begin in earnest.

The following pictorial array shows the chronological sequence of repair work and painting that has reawakened our no longer slumbering village. We thank our many Walpack Historical Society members and friends who have so generously donated to the renewal effort over so many long months of patient waiting. We welcome your continued support as we still have more to do!

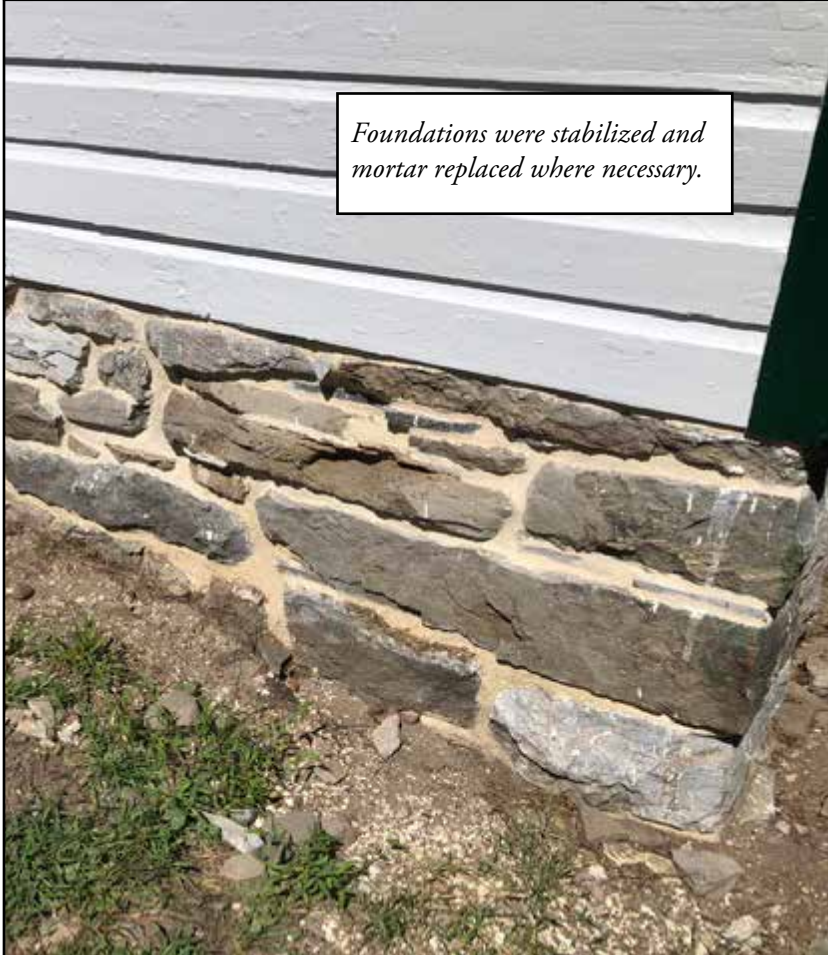
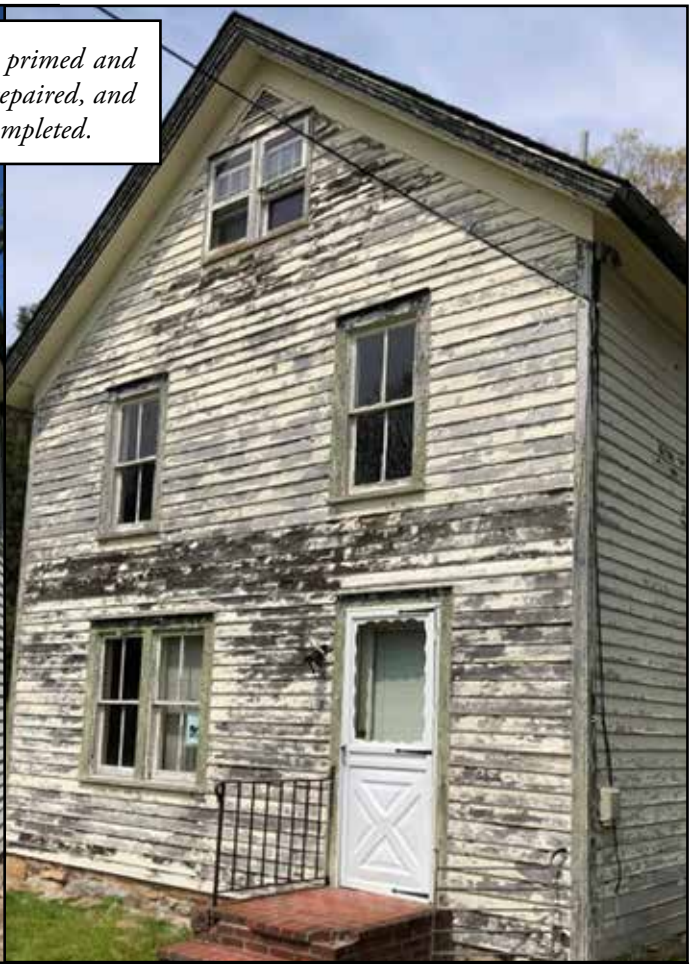


The Losey-Robbins house was primed and painted with carpentry repairs substantially completed.





The Parsonage was primed and painted, windows repaired, and carpentry repairs completed.



Foundations were stabilized and mortar replaced where necessary.



A FARMER THROUGHOUT HIS SEASONS

by Audrey Schwab

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the fruits of the family's labors as he reminisces about daily fresh salads with his mother's homemade dressing made from mayonnaise, vinegar and sugar. Bountiful dinners of garden fresh vegetables again usually featured some manifestation of his mother's culinary magic utilizing potatoes. For a time, the garden enveloped both sides of the house which one summer resulted in a corn crop that grew so tall it blocked his mother's view from the kitchen windows. That error was judiciously avoided in following years when more land was purchased to the north side of the house and promptly set to use for additional garden space and the planting of seven or eight Bartlett pear trees. Whatever produce wasn't grown on the farm, was purchased on sojourns to Windy Brow Orchard in Newton. Apple seconds were made into sauce and pies, as were elderberries, rhubarb and peaches. Strawberries were purchased from Walpack's much beloved teacher, Abe Aber, who always seemed to have a bumper crop to sell. Ollie's mom canned meats and produce and made jelly from raspberries, grapes and other fruit all summer long to be enjoyed when winter descended and the farm production declined.

Along with the chickens raised for meat and eggs, the family purchased two piglets which were fattened throughout the summer and early fall. Interestingly enough, the pigs were always housed in a pen across the road from the main driveway to the house. No matter that this was state game land, the cows summered there as well and no one seemed to mind at all. To add variety to the meals, Ollie would head to the Little Flatbrook to fish for trout and the occasional bass. A barter system is always a boon to a farmer with excess and eggs were exchanged at the Layton General Store for molasses and other necessities not grown on the farm. Once per month, the family would head to the Big Leader grocery store on the Newton Square for other household needs. The tantalizing aroma of the Eight O'Clock coffee beans, custom ground at the check out counter, can still be imagined and remains fresh in Ollie's mind. In 1939, the nation's food stamp program was initiated. Ollie's mom had to get food stamps for sugar and flour. A stamp system was also in place for gasoline purchases for the family automobile. Ollie recalls the stamps being handed out at the Walpack schoolhouse. He still has a book of unused stamps along with war ration books among his youthful memorabilia.

Somehow the livestock, barns, crops and produce seemed to

take preeminence during our tour of the Treible family farm that day. Eventually, we did get around to a walk-through of the house as well. Though walls and rooms may have changed a bit, it was fascinating to be Ollie's guest as he easily stepped back in time to the home he so fondly remembers. Today, the main entry is toward the rear of the porch on the south elevation. Guests are welcomed into a common area which features a sizable living room with a fieldstone fireplace to the left and a dining area to the right. During the Treible era of property ownership, the living room was walled off from the family dining room and living area and seasonally used to board hunters. This provided the family with extra

income and the hunters with a warm family-like atmosphere. Up to five hunters could be accommodated and joined the family for delicious home cooked meals. One summer a young boy working for a neighboring farm joined the family as a seasonal boarder. Opening their farms and homes to paying guests was a common practice among the residents of the area and helped to supplement the hard-earned family income.

Ollie's mother's kitchen is much changed today as it is used by Peters Valley for large group meal service. The first changes to the footprint of this part of the home occurred back in 1951 when electrical service was brought to the Treible farm. At that time, a much welcomed bathroom

was added using borrowed first floor space off of the family living room and kitchen. Though electricity was available in many of the local towns as early as the mid 1930s, it was not at all uncommon for the outlier farms to be dependent upon outhouses, kerosene lamps, coal stoves, hand pumps, and springs well into the 1950's or later; an impressive if not almost unthinkable hardship when conjured by us city dwellers of a certain age!

When Ollie wasn't busy helping to tend to the family farm and household chores, he enjoyed his years spent at the Walpack Center schoolhouse with the much beloved teacher Abe Aber and socials at the Walpack Church which usually included cowboy movies and Ollie's favorite, ice cream from a big freezer in the church basement. Any idle summer farm hours were spent helping at the Addison Bevans Stables and enjoying the frequent horse shows at the Walpack Inn. One of Ollie's fondest memories was of a "skimmelon" (also known in some circles as a shivaree) held for Charlie Fuller, who

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Ollie and his youngest sister, Marie c. 1950

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TREE THREATENING WALPACK SCHOOLHOUSE REMOVED

By Audrey Schwab



Walpack loves its trees, especially the aged and gnarled guardians and watchers from the past. One such maple stood sentry over generations of school children and shielded the Walpack schoolhouse from buffeting winds and drenching downpours...until it no longer did. Over the years weakened limbs, dying branches and sloughing tree bark created a hazard to people and vehicles passing beneath. Ultimately, the remaining skeleton of the tree was in danger of falling. Recognizing the potential peril to visitors to Walpack Center, to their vehicles and the schoolhouse itself, the Walpack Historical Society reached out to Walpack Township and

together we sought to remedy the hazard. The schoolhouse is not federally owned, but is the property of Walpack Township and serves as their municipal building. Walpack Center, in its entirety, is a treasure trove of the collective memories of so many of our society members and visitors. Its street-scape would be greatly diminished if we lost even a piece of the village we see today. The Walpack Historical Society and the residents of Walpack Township would like to thank the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area for seeing to the removal of the looming tree threat and assuring the safety of our visitors and a much beloved historic structure.

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became a bridegroom rather late in life. Charlie's friends and family gathered at the Fish house in Flatbrookville for a very loud and quite festive sendoff for him and his bride. The fire sirens were sounded and much hooting and hollering made for a memorable affair. The last skimmelon Ollie attended was at Lee Rosenkrans' house in Walpack Center in 1954. Today we know this property as the parsonage. Another of the memories Ollie holds dear were the annual two week "work frolics" held at the Potofsky property along the Delaware. Many of the locals attended to perform cleanup tasks along the river, enjoy each other's company, and the fruits of the farmhouse kitchens and ladies' labors served at the pot luck dinners for the workers. One of Ollie's most enduring memories was the end of World War II being heralded by a jubilant Abe Aber, who drove his automobile around the entire area shouting "the war is over," announcing to all of the town and farm dwellers the surrender of the Japanese in 1945.

Memories endure for many reasons; some joyful and others etched by pain and sorrow. Ollie's memories took us on a joyful journey from a young boy growing up in his grandfather's farmhouse (south of Haney's Mill by the sharp turn) through his youthful coming-of-age time at the Treible family farm in Bevans. As is the story of all young boys, adulthood intervenes, lives change and beloved places are exchanged for new. The

Treible farm remained in the family's possession until it was sold to the United States government in 1969. Today it is enjoying a new chapter as an integral part of the highly regarded and internationally-renowned Peters Valley School of Craft complex.

After a brief but very enjoyable time spent as a guest in Ollie's memories and traveler alongside his farm boy footsteps, I asked him if the changes to the area he has witnessed over so many years are in any way regrettable or disheartening. Ollie replied with a wry smile, "If you don't like change, you can't live a long life."

Thank you, Ollie; the pleasure was all mine...

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 and provides tours of Walpack Center and VCI.