

WALPACK

historical society

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Newsletter of the
Walpack Historical Society

Published Quarterly

Fall 2024

A TRACTOR'S JOURNEY

by Mark Miller

Around 2018 I came upon a 1951 Farmall Cub I will call Elmo. I call it Elmo because it's red and well...I think it looks like Elmo! Elmo was a well-traveled adjustable wide front farm tractor sitting in the garage of Eugene Rosenkrans, not far from where it spent most of its life. I met Gene Rosenkrans through another friend and local historian Robert L. Williams about two years before that. It was then that I spotted red iron and a pair of round eye-like headlights peeking out from inside his garage at 11 Old Mine Road. I would shortly learn this was no ordinary garage. More to follow below on that below...

The tractor had an Edison's lab appearance to it. It was extremely well traveled and obviously well looked after. Gene spoke of how he'd spent countless hours running it up and down the fields at his family farm which was just down the road a bit. I told him about another old tractor I had and how I enjoy them. He then asked if I would be interested in his. He said he drove it down the road and parked it inside the garage many years before, but it had not run since. It had that classic old gasoline and oil smell to it with a dose of neat old garage aroma and a mud wasp nest or two attached. I thought about it for a bit thinking, what would I do with another old tractor and where would I keep it and would I even be able to work on another one? But something about this one was special. It was intact and came



*Photo of Mark Miller working on Elmo
the Tractor*

with a 5-foot-wide mower. But Elmo's biggest selling feature was its history. It spent its life and was deeply rooted in my favorite place, Walpack, New Jersey! I took Gene up on the offer, showing up a week or so later with my trailer. As we loaded the tractor Gene talked more about his place and how it was the Flatbrookville Garage and Service Station when Flatbrookville was a thriving village within

Walpack, New Jersey. His father operated the garage up until the 1960's. I love the area and I'm a huge fan of local history and was enjoying hearing his firsthand account of growing up and living here. We continued packing up Elmo along with the 5-foot-wide mower and various brackets and pulleys. The thought of "what will I do with this tractor?" was in the back of my head. It needed to run again, it needed to be restored, and Gene expressed sincere interest in seeing it run again. This was no ordinary old tractor. I was now in possession of a true piece of Walpack history.

While hauling it the short distance over the mountain back toward my farm in Hampton Township I felt as if I was removing a piece of history. The tractor had more of a purpose than sitting in my barn and occasionally going out for a run. Elmo needed to do more. I continued down Old Mine Road watching Elmo in my mirrors making sure it stayed secure in the trailer. I daydreamed of getting it running and using it in my official NPS - Historic Property Stewards volunteer duties perhaps doing occasional mowing with it. I brought Elmo back to my place and rolled it off the trailer into an open bay in my barn where I would begin working on it immediately.

A few days later I found myself peering down into the empty spark plug holes of the antiquated flathead little 4-banger. Rolling the motor over by hand I could see the valves were stuck in their guides and some were being held open by carbon. There was a fair amount of gunk inside the crankcase, so I began soaking the engine, filling the crankcase and combustion chambers up with diesel fuel and rolling it over by hand several times a day. A literal wake-up, rinse and repeat process. After draining down the mess and recycling it I noticed the valves were still not moving properly. They were sticking in their guides.

I tend to be a slow-working, shade tree mechanic and over the next few weeks I would work on it off and on and between other tasks and chores and getting out with my bicycle. I would pass by Gene's place on Old Mine Road and stop by with some fresh picked veggies and to chat and he would always ask "Did you get that old tractor going yet?" I always shared where it was in the process and really looked forward to the day I could tell him it was running again. All the while in the back of my head I kept thinking about "zero compression on all but one cylinder"

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The Walpack Historical Society
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and edited by Allyson Schwab.
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A TRACTOR'S JOURNEY

Continued from pg. 1

by Mark Miller

and how it might take a while if I must disassemble the engine and rebuild it. I had not taken a motor apart or put one together in a few years. I also thought how Bob Goss, a well trusted local engine builder and machinist, was no longer around. Bob's Machining was where I would bring various engine parts and other metal that needed machining.

During this time, I had the carburetor disassembled and in my parts washer, fuel tank removed and soaking and was putting the distributor back together with new wires, cap, condenser and points. At that time, I was also draining and refilling the gearbox with fresh 90 weight gear oil and the hydraulic system with fresh 303 hydraulic fluid.

Convinced the bottom end was good and clean I overfilled it with fresh 30-weight oil and rolled it over by hand a bunch of times to circulate it as best I could and rinse away any residue from the cleaning process and get a coating of oil on everything. I then focused on the valves working them through the spark plug holes using a wooden dowel and gently tapping and pushing and lots of solvent until they began moving on their own when I rotated the engine by hand. I performed a compression test and now had a whopping 70-80 PSI on all four cylinders! Far from new but not too shabby for a 70+ year old tractor and this 50 something year old shade tree mechanic!

By this time the solvent had eaten away all the varnish in the fuel tank and the carburetor was ready to be reinstalled. I gave the engine a final drain and refill of fresh oil to remove any solvents and grime, reinstalled the carburetor, distributor, plugs and wires. Time for another bike ride. This time when I passed by Gene's place in Flatbrookville I was able to tell him the good news. It had compression and spun freely. It had spark and was almost ready to go. By this time, he located a bracket for me that I needed to install the mower deck. The bracket holds the idler pulleys for the mower belt.

The next day I poured fresh gasoline into Elmo's tank along with a healthy shot of lead substitute. I picked up and installed a fresh 6-volt battery. I rolled the engine over by hand with the distributor cap and rotor removed to set the points to .020 with my feeler gauge. After reinstalling the parts I climbed up and sat on the metal seat and took some time to reflect. I love old iron and have a feeling in my chest whenever I start an old tractor for the first time in decades. I pulled the choke out, gave it a little bit of throttle and pulled the starter rod..RUH-RUH-RUH-PUT---PUT-RUH-RUH...PUTTER- PUT-PUT-PUT-PUT PUT along with some smoke. I waited a few seconds then repeated. A moment later the little flathead 4 cylinder began to come to life first misfiring and smoking a bit due to all the excess oil from the cleaning process then evening out. These old International flathead 4's have a distinct note about

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Funding has been made available in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, through the State/County Partnership Block Grant Program, as administered by the Sussex County Arts & Heritage Council.



2024 CALENDAR

April 21	Spring Hike - TBA
April 27 (Saturday)	*Spring Dinner
May 4	Peony bed and Walpack Center Village clean up
May 19	Presentation - East/West Jersey Line
May 25	VCI open 12 -3 pm
May 26-27	VCI open 12 -4 pm
May 26	Walpack Church, Rosenkrans Museum, and Barn open 1- 4 pm
June 23	Presentation – WHS 40th Anniversary
July 21	Presentation - Two Local Creameries - Sharon Spangenberg
August 18	Walpack at the Movies
September 21 (Saturday)	The Spirits of Lower Walpack Cemetery
October 13	Van Campen Day (Heritage Weekend)
November 10	Fall Hike - Details TBA
December 7 (Saturday)	*Holiday Dinner
December 14 & 15	Walpack Christmas (museum open)

**Members and their guests.*

All events are subject to change. 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, payment can be made online with a credit card by visiting WalpackHistory.org. *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.

New Members

- David Beidler
- Tom Decker
- Ken deLodzia
- Natalie Dube
- Anne Dumschat
- Lawrence Gioielli
- Scott Gordley
- Douglas Hahn
- Elizabeth Radimer
- Joan Rumpf
- Jennifer Van Campen
- Paul Weiss

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Be a Part of History - Docents and 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) 552-8880 to learn more about how you can help play a part in history.



A TRACTOR'S JOURNEY

Continued from pg. 2

by Mark Miller

them that is music to my ears. I could hear the whirring of the engine fan and the gentle putter of the little flathead with a pop-pop every few seconds. By now my spouse spotted all the smoke coming from the barn and walked over and was standing in the doorway smirking. It was that classic I look at him, he looks at me, he's happy I'm happy. It's an unspoken communication thing with us. He made a funny choking face and waved his hand saying "smells like gasoline" in a cartoon funny voice we share. I laughed and said "there's a screw for that" as I gave the mixture screw a turn or so, which cleared things up.

I pulled it outside and drove it down the road from my barn to the house and started the blades up and mowed a few swaths of our front with it, saying to myself "do I really need to mow my lawn with a 70-year-old tractor...NOPE, but it sure is fun!"

A year or more would pass before I figured out the best use for Elmo. It needed to return to Flatbrookville. Today Elmo is used to mow the open areas and access lanes at the Lower Walpack Cemetery. I often send Gene Rosenkrans pictures and videos of it in action, and he shares stories of countless hours he spent on that tractor in that exact place, but also mowing all the fields up and down the Delaware on the family farm.



Elmo the 1951 Farmall Cub Tractor at Lower Walpack Cemetery



*Mark Miller with Elmo in working order
Photo by Allyson Schwab*

REMEMBERING JENNIE SWEETMAN

It is with sadness that we share the recent passing of Jennie Sweetman, renowned history columnist for the New Jersey Sunday Herald.

Jennie wrote many articles about historical buildings in Walpack and promoted most of our society's historical hikes, events and presentations. She enjoyed face to face meetings at her home in Warwick, NY. Over tea and homemade cookies and cakes she would discuss all aspects of local history and never hesitated to share what she knew. It is because of her columns that the history of Sussex County, especially Walpack remains alive.

Her legacy will live on forever through her weekly columns that are available on microfilm through the Sussex County Library System. Jennie was a great supporter of the Walpack Historical Society and was an honorary member for many years. Jennie will surely be missed.

VAN CAMPEN INN'S FIREBACK

by Sharon Spangenberg



Original Fireback

Photo by Karen Stevenson

Those who have visited the Van Campen Inn have undoubtedly seen the fireback that is on display in the first-floor south room or the right side of the hallway. That fireback is a reproduction and an exact duplicate of the original that was found hidden behind boards that covered the front of the fireplace in the north room (across the hall), then called the keeping room.

In 1954 Russell and Beatrice Utter Rourke, who resided at the Van Campen Inn at that time, removed the boards exposing the fireback. When found, the fireback had a crack.

In 1987 the National Park Service removed the fireback off premises for safekeeping. Each year it was transported back to the Van Campen Inn for the annual Van Campen Day. Over the years as the crack got larger the fireback became fragile. In 2013 the National Park Service was able to have an exact replica cast which is what is on display today. The original fireback has since been archived by the National Park Service.

by Sharon Spangenberg



Photo Courtesy of Lazear-Smith & Vander Plaat Memorial Home

FIGURES ON THE FIREBACK

Resting in a hearth at the Van Campen Inn is a reproduction of the fireback that once protected the fireplace and reflected heat back into the cold stone house. Like the original, a product of the Oxford iron furnace in Warren County, the replica panel bears the image of an elaborate coat of arms and the words "Oxford 1746." While the latter refers to the place and date of its casting, the crest itself is less suggestive. Is this the arms of the Van Campen family? If not, whose is it, and what does it mean?

The panel actually depicts the personal royal coat of arms of King

George II (1683-1760), who ruled Great Britain and its colonies (including New Jersey) at the time of its casting. For the Oxford furnace, it was a generic but popular design at a time when revolution was far from anyone's mind and local homes and establishments were proud to display the arms of their king. Many panels nearly identical to the one at the Van Campen Inn still survive today, though age has made them difficult to read.

The crest at the center of the coat of arms is divided into four quadrants. The upper-left one combines the royal banners of the Kingdoms of England (left) and Scotland (right), both of which depict lions and date back to the 13th Century. Both kingdoms are also represented on either side of the overall crest by a lion and unicorn, respectively.

The lower-left quadrant features a winged harp, the symbol of the Kingdom of Ireland. At the time of George II's reign, all of Ireland was still a territory of Great Britain. A non-winged version of the harp still appears on the now-independent Republic of Ireland's coat of arms (and is also recognizable on bottles of Guinness!).

The bottom-right quadrant relates to George II's noble titles in modern-day Germany, where he and his father had been born and raised. The German-speaking

George I had been called to rule England when his predecessor, Queen Anne, died childless. Though a very distant heir, he was the only Protestant with a claim at a time where Scottish Catholics threatened to take back the throne. Throughout their reigns, George I and II



Reproduction fireback at the Van Campen Inn with George II's Arms (Image courtesy of Jeff Stoveken)

electors had become German Protestants who preserved tradition for political reasons.

Finally, the upper-right quadrant features three fleurs-de-lis, which are traditionally associated with the French monarchy. Why, on the eve of the French and Indian War, would any British monarch sport the symbol of England's greatest historic enemy? Unlike the German imagery, the fleurs-de-lis are not a reference to George II's ancestry but represent something far more bizarre. For a period of nearly five hundred years, British rulers claimed the throne of France as their own... Following the Norman invasion of England, there wasn't much to differentiate French and English monarchs. In fact, it wasn't until Edward III in the 14th Century that England had a king who spoke English instead of French. He initiated the infamous Hundred Years War as a means of asserting his questionable claim to the French throne. While the French eventually won, the English continued to assert Edward's claim,



George II of Great Britain's Royal Coat of Arms

if only amongst themselves. It served no meaningful purpose beyond national pride and was occasionally used as an ideological means of justifying war with France. As both countries moved past their medieval conflicts, the English claim seemed more and more ridiculous. The French Revolution abolished its own monarchy entirely, but the claim only came to a formal end in 1801 with the Acts of Union. This joint act between the Parliaments of Britain and Ireland created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. During the legal

processes that came with the unification, King George III took advantage of the reworking of his lengthy royal title to drop the pretense of calling himself King of France. Fleur-de-lis were removed from his and all subsequent British monarchs' coat of arms.

by Scott Yashay

maintained their role as rulers of Hanover in Germany. This was the namesake for the British House of Hanover, the dynasty which lasted through Queen Victoria. The three outer portions of this quadrant represent German lands under Hanover control: Brunswick, Lüneburg, and Westphalia. At the center of the trio is a shield with Charlemagne's crown, since Hanoverians nobles were among those chosen to elect the Holy Roman Emperor. Though the emperor himself was typically an Austrian Catholic, religious reformation throughout Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries meant that many

SHARON SPANGENBERG HONORED AS DEWA 2024 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

by Audrey Schwab



Sharon Spangenberg after being awarded the DEWA 2024 Volunteer of the Year honors.
Photo by Diane Tassey

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area annually bestows the honor of their Volunteer of the Year Award upon a deserving member of an organization working within the recreation area. The award is based upon the contributions nominees have made to their respective organizations and to DWGNRA over the past year.

The Walpack Historical Society is proud to announce

the 2024 DWGNRA Volunteer of the Year recognition was recently awarded to our Trustee, Sharon Spangenberg. Sharon's efforts in local history research; her contributions to the WHS newsletter; and as author of several books are known to many of the members and friends of the society. Her endless hours spent contributing to the restoration and maintenance of the Lower Walpack Cemetery, joining in group work activities and preparing exhibits for public display are some of the behind-the-scenes efforts that further support the mission of the Walpack Historical Society.

The society is honored to have Sharon's talent and selfless devotion of her time to better our organization and support our mission to protect, preserve and present the heritage of the Walpack area for future generations and all who hold the area dear.

FIGURES ON THE FIREBACK

Continued from pg. 5

The following year, the United Kingdom would formally recognize the fledgling Republic of France as part of a peace treaty, thereby renouncing its claim to the world. When the monarchy in France was restored after Napoleon's defeat, the British chose not to reassert their claim. While many in the British government saw this as a long overdue surrender of a worthless title, there were a few members of Parliament who felt that it was a betrayal of an ancient right that had been won on the battlefield half a millennium before.

A WELL-DESERVED RETIREMENT

by Sharon Spangenberg

Those who attend our annual Van Campen Day have an opportunity to participate in a parade up the Old Mine Road. That parade, lead by the Colonial Musketeers Fife and Drum of Hackettstown takes guests to several historical sites where they learn about this area of Walpack Township which was once the frontier.

For the past 15 years, Frank Hennion, a long-time member and volunteer of our society has been sharing his knowledge about the history of Military Trail, Fort Shapanack, and three nearby cemeteries. What many may not

know is that in addition to the Van Campen Day parade, Frank has also been responsible for preparing the historic sites so that guests can enjoy a clear and safe area to visit.

At our last Van Campen Day on October 13, 2024, Frank announced that now, at the age of 84½, he is retiring, and in turning over his book of notes to Hixon Spangenberg to succeed him, Frank received a well-deserved round of applause.

On behalf of the Walpack Historical Society officers and trustees, we wish to publicly thank Frank for his dedication in preserving the history of Walpack Township.



L to R Hixon Spangenberg, Dan Tassey & Frank Hennion preparing for Van Campen Day.

by Scott Yashay

The words that appear on a scroll below the crest, "Dieu et mon droit" (French for "God and my right"), are still used in their French form today on all British monarchs' coats of arms. The motto was adopted by Henry V, and its continued use serves as a reminder that the British haven't fully abandoned their claim.

So the next time you visit the Van Campen Inn, take a moment to appreciate all the detail packed into the fireback's intricate design. Perhaps instead, you'll be more appreciative of the perfect simplicity of our own Great American Seal, with its bald eagle, spangled shield, olive branch, and arrows.

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THE MAKING OF A LOGO

by Scott Yashay



In the past year, you may have noticed a new Walpack Historical Society logo appearing on social media posts and items available at our bookstore. It is one of several of my artworks to be inspired by Walpack and its surrounding areas, though it was the first I created expressly for the Society. Drawn and shared with the WHS on a whim, I'm pleased to find that it has been used to promote the Society and its events. As part of our continued 40th Anniversary celebration, I've been asked to elaborate on the basis for the design.

The logo borrows from familiar Walpack imagery to form the Society's acronym. The "W" is taken from the uppermost louver of the Walpack Center Church's tower. The letter stood out to me from the intersecting arches of the shutter. A frontal view of the Van Campen Inn, with its opposing chimneys, seemed ripe to represent the "H." I chose to depict the Inn with its original "kitchen wing," which was torn down in 1917. A plume of smoke from the kitchen chimney marks the year of the Society's founding in 1984. The "S" comes from the iconic "Walpack Bend" of the Delaware River, which forms a natural Western border of both Walpack Township and the whole of Sussex County. The blue portion represents the river itself, with the thin black lines representing roads on either side of the river. The road to the right of the bend is the Old Mine Road. The little green dot in the bottom of the river is "Sambo Island," which is on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware.

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REMEMBERING ROBERTA SPITZER

1944-2024

Walpack Historical Society shares the passing of member, friend and benefactor, Roberta Spitzer. Roberta passed away September 5, 2024, surrounded by her husband, Janos, her daughter, Julie and her beloved grandchildren, Olivia and Evan.

I met Roberta in 2008, when she arrived for a program about Camp Pokono-Ramona. She delighted in sharing her stories of time as a camper and the friendships that were made. Over the years, Roberta would share her memories with WHS during several programs.

Roberta was a dedicated nurse, instructor and educator. Her smile was infectious (no pun intended) and her sense of helping, caring and

by Ruth Stieh

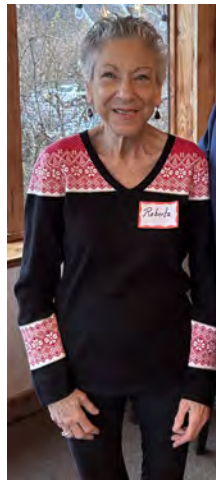


Photo by Allyson Schwab

volunteering were always present.

Our deepest sympathy to her husband, family and friends as Roberta will be missed by all.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR WRITERS



As we continue to keep Walpack's history alive, we are requesting our members consider writing an article for possible inclusion in our quarterly newsletter. Please know in advance that any article submitted must be approved by our trustees and must go through our editing process. If you have an interesting

story to tell or have photos of Walpack that you would be willing to share, please submit them to us by visiting walpackhistory.org/newsletter/

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.