

# WALPACK

## historical society

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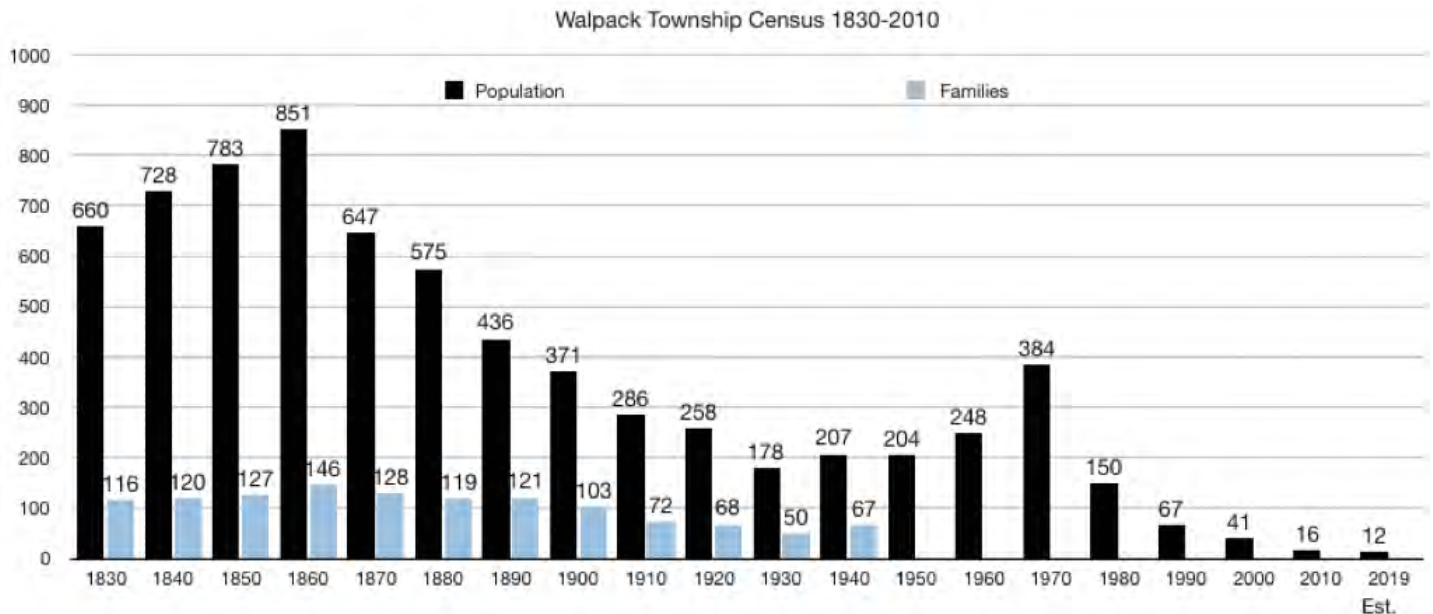
Newsletter of the  
Walpack Historical Society

Published Quarterly

Spring 2021

## THE HISTORY OF WALPACK TOWNSHIP AND ITS RESIDENTS

*by Sharon Spangenberg*



Past historical accountings show that in 1731, “Walpake” was once part of Hunterdon County. It then was annexed by the newly-formed Morris County when that county separated in 1739. Sussex County was formed in 1753, and according to Division Book B page 419, Walpack became a precinct in 1754 with its boundaries beginning at the Gap of the Pahaquarry Mountain called the Water Gap, running along the foot of the mountain, and ending at the “York” line. Thus, at that time, Walpack (sometimes spelled Wallpack) included all of Sandyston and Montague, as well as Pahaquarry in Warren County. In 1824 when Pahaquarry separated from Sussex County, Walpack became the size it is today at just over 22 square miles.

Although the Township of Walpack currently has an estimated population of only 12 individuals, 161 years ago there were 851 recorded residents. From 1860 to 1930, census records show a steady decline. In 1962, Congress authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to construct a dam across the Delaware River at Tocks Island. In spite of this, Walpack’s population in 1970 increased to 384 residents which was slightly above what it was in 1900. Over the next 20 years as the Federal Government acquired the land, forcing residents to leave their beloved homes, the population decreased by 83% to just 67 people.

In 1850, the census became more in depth than in previous years. Besides showing only the names of the heads of households and number in each family as in

previous years, the data also included the occupation of each person. In 1850, Walpack had 110 laborers, 62 farmers, 8 carpenters, 7 merchants, 5 shoemakers, 4 teachers, 3 weavers, 2 boatmen, 2 stone masons, 2 millers, 2 blacksmiths, as well as a hotel keeper, a tailor, a cabinet maker, a drover, a wheelwright, and a lawyer. In the following census “laborer” was broken down into more specific categories, such as day laborers, servants, mistresses, domestics, and housekeepers. Besides other occupations as in the previous decade, the 1860 census also showed a nurse and a clergyman residing in Walpack.

It is also interesting to note that the November 1860 Presidential Election results as printed in the New Jersey Herald, show that out of the 184 male residents who voted, Abraham Lincoln, Republican received 27 votes, Stephen Douglas, Democrat, received 25, and John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party – an offshoot of the Democratic party, received 112 votes. Also interesting is how Walpack residents were taxed. The three examples shown on page 2 for 1866, 1870, and 1874, are for the same homeowner.

In 1930, when the population hit an all-time low before leveling off, census enumerators recorded the following information: There were 50 households of which 26 owned their own home, 18 were renters, and 6 were not recorded. Of the 26 homeowners, 14 had a farm. There were also 2 mail carriers, a carpenter, a salesman, a grocer, a state forest laborer, one doing

*continued on pg. 2*

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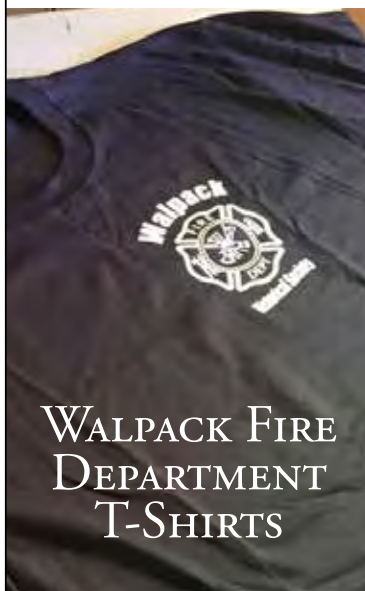
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Event Photos by Tom Dust.  
The Walpack Historical Society  
Newsletter is Designed and Edited  
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# THE HISTORY OF WALPACK TOWNSHIP AND ITS RESIDENTS

by Sharon Spangenberg

odd jobs, and 5 who were not working. The average home value in 1930 was \$2187 with the most valuable being \$5000. There were also 15 homeowners who owned a radio.

Today, an estimated 12 people reside in Walpack, and in accordance with the Real Property Tax List, there are 16 private owners including 2 hunt clubs,

a restaurant, a campground, plus 2 cemeteries and 4 burial grounds.

Although nearly all the historical homes have disappeared, we do have the beauty of the Walpack Valley to remind us why so many of our ancestors settled here in what was once an untamed wilderness.

Your War and Town Tax is.....\$.....  
 The value of your Real Estate is...\$...12.00  
 The value of your Personal Es-  
 tate is.....\$.....0.00  
 Your Real Worth is.....\$...2.00  
 Your State and County Tax is.....\$...44  
 Your Poll Tax is.....\$.....00  
 Your Military Tax is.....\$...2.86  
 Your Road Tax is.....\$...3.1  
 Your Dog Tax is.....\$.....00  
 Total.....\$...36.1

Now due, and payable by the 20th day of December, 1866, to Jacob B. Vanhorn, Collector of Walpack township. The Court of Appeals in cases of taxation, meets at Hauey's Mill, on the 4th Tuesday of November, 1866.

I will be at the following places, at the time specified, to receive taxes: At Isaac M. Loeg's, at Walpack Centre, Dec. 15; at Samuel D. Smith's, Flatbrookville, Dec. 19.

Received Payment.

Acres of Land.....30  
 Value of Land.....\$...2.00  
 Value of Personal Property.....\$.....  
 Real Worth.....\$...2.00  
 Your State, County and Town Tax is \$...0.58  
 Your School Tax is.....\$...1.22  
 Your Poll Tax is.....\$.....  
 Your Dog Tax is.....\$.....  
 Your Road Tax is.....\$.....  
 Total.....\$...1.73

The Commissioners of Appeals in cases of Taxation will meet at Hauey's Mill, on the fourth Tuesday of November, 1870. Aid taxes must be paid by the 1st of December, 1870.

I will be at Peter H. Snook's Store, Walpack Centre, November 29; at Jonas K. Smith's, Hotel, Flatbrookville, November 30, 1870, to receive the said taxes.

Received Payment,

*J. Van Horn* COLLECTOR.

Acres of Land.....30  
 Valued at.....\$...1.50  
 Value of Your Personal Property is \$...1.50  
 Real Worth.....\$...1.50  
 Your County, State, and Township  
 Tax is.....\$...1.15  
 Your Poll Tax is.....\$.....  
 Your Road Tax is.....\$...4.4  
 Your Special School Tax is.....\$...2.25  
 Total.....\$...4.67

Now due and payable on or before the 20th day of December, 1874, to Elias Gariss, Collector of Walpack Township.

The Court of Appeals in Cases of Taxation, meets at the hotel of Isaac Bunnell, on the 4th Tuesday of November, 1874.

I will be at the following places on the days named to receive taxes. At Jacob S. Roc's store, Walpack Centre, Dec. 17th; at J. Bunnell's hotel, Flatbrookville, Dec. 18th and 19th. All taxes must be paid by the 20th of Dec. 74.

Received Payment,

*Elias Gariss* COLLECTOR.

# 2021 CALENDAR

April 18	Spring Hike: Pompey Ridge to Chado
April 25	Spring Dinner at <i>The Walpack Inn</i>
May 16	A presentation by Jennifer Palmer
June 5	<i>National Trail Day</i>
June 27	Walpack at the Movies
July 18	Lower Walpack Cemetery by Sharon Spangenberg
Aug. 15	The 2020 Anniversary of 1955 Flood by Don Stieh
Sept. 19	Fire Tower hike by Dan Tassey & Mike Orłowski
Oct. 10	Van Campen Day
Oct. 31	Fall Hike - Military Road East
Dec. 4	Walpack Christmas - Church and Museum
Dec. 5	Holiday Dinner - Walpack Inn
Dec. 11 & 12	Walpack Christmas - Church and Museum

TENTATIVE\*

*\*Visit [WalpackHistory.org](http://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 on-going project for the trustees of 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."

*The Walpack Historical Society would like to particularly thank the Wards of Montclair, NJ for their most generous support of our Newsletter.*



## 2021 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOW DUE

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

1. Visit [www.walpackhistory.org](http://www.walpackhistory.org), click on the Membership tab to pay your 2021 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 address on the form.

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

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU

*To everyone who becomes a Member, makes a donation, sponsors the newsletter, attends a dinner, and/or buys a book.*

### New Members

None this quarter

### New Donations

Joan Lombardi Logan  
Lea Rawson  
Richard F. Castro  
Albert E. Fiacre, Jr.  
Elaine Hamilton  
Ruth Repko  
Sarah Verbeke  
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The Walpack Historical Society would like to acknowledge and express its appreciation to our many Lifetime Members for their generous support.

## BE A PART OF HISTORY - DOCENTS & VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

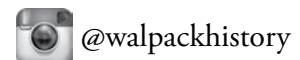
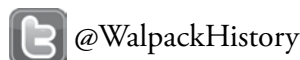
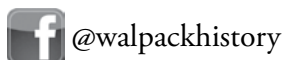


A docent is a person who acts as a guide, typically on a voluntary basis. We are always looking for new people to help us at our events and meetings throughout the year.

Please call, **973-948-4903**, to speak with Jen Wycalek to learn more about how you can help play a part in history.



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## WALPACK CENTER'S GIVING TREE by Audrey Schwab

*For those Walpack Historical Society members and friends who know and love our Walpack Center street scape, we are honored to present artist, Marie Liu's beautifully rendered painting memorializing our historic village and "The Walpack Giving Tree." As an introduction to Marie's work, we have reprinted the following article from our Fall 2019 WHS Newsletter. Marie's description of her artistic process follows the archive article below...*

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 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 elicit 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 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 CREATION OF THE GIVING TREE PAINTING

by Marie Liu

My first impression of the old apple tree standing alongside Main Street through Walpack Center was that of a charming old woman. The curve in her trunk seems suggestive of a slim, graceful body, clearly old, with most of her limbs gone, and just a few remaining branches reaching toward the sky. When Audrey met me at the tree, she was beaming as she told me of her delight in being able to eat one of just a few apples the tree produced the prior year, despite its less than perfect texture.

When Audrey proposed the idea of a painting I thought for a while about the tree, its meaning, and the imagery I might use. I soon realized that the tree was a metaphor for Walpack Center itself. When the tree was young and bursting with life, the town itself was likewise filled with life. Now, after so many years, the tree has watched the town all but disappear. She herself surely senses that her days, too are numbered. She has been a centerpiece of that town and has given her delicious fruit which no doubt resulted in many, many apple pies enjoyed by the residents. I can imagine the smell wafting through the kitchen windows now.

Being that my initial impression of the tree was that of an elegant older woman, I decided to incorporate a doily pattern somewhere in the painting to reinforce that idea and also give the tone of days gone by or memories of grandma's house. I ended up using doilies as stencils to create the foliage on the apple tree.

I learned from Audrey that Jimmy Heigis of the Walpack Inn was the one who nicknamed the apple tree the "Giving Tree," inspired by the well-known book by Shel Silverstein. Jimmy himself had grown up knowing the tree, spending time on its limbs amongst its leaves, blossoms and fruit (as would his future daughters). This information spurred the idea that he should appear in the painting. Even though the time period which I chose to depict was before little Jimmy was born, he appears as the central character, sitting on the "lovers' limb" as a boy with his little dog, Skippy. You will also note the heart motif beneath the lover's limb; a subtle nod to shared affections of long ago.

I chose to make the background in sepia tone to give the feel of sometime in the past, like an old postcard, but I wanted to use color in the foreground for the tree and Jimmy, giving life to these two characters who have known each other for so long. Audrey later pointed out that it reminded her of the movie, "Schindler's List," in which they used a similar sepia vs. color palette concept. I hadn't seen the movie and was delighted that that fact added yet another facet to my idea. The bright green color that is so singularly used in the Silverstein book for the foliage of our tree creates a further connection between the two. Anyone who loves that book would instantly remember that very unique color.

To reinforce the concept of giving, I painted the branches holding out an apple to the viewer in the painting foreground. I wished to include some lovely apple blossoms in the painting but wondered how to logically have the tree producing both blossoms and apples simultaneously. I decided to make the blossoms appear to be rings on her branchy, boney fingers.

Audrey requested that I include Julia Ellett, who lived in the house next to the post office (now the WHS Rosenkrans Museum). Julia loved school, was a good student, and is pictured heading off to school with her mother, Mary in the doorway. Julia is re-enacted during museum tours by a Walpack Historical Society docent and is a key historical figure in our village history. Such is the nature of painting commissions; formulating ideas with a client can be an interesting challenge. My experience of working with Audrey on her "Walpack Giving Tree" painting was one of the most rewarding for me (paralleled only by The Great Council Tree painting with Danny Tassej). Her enthusiasm towards the tree and the history of the town, coupled with her knowledge and assistance in gathering information and photos helped the creative process unfold into what became a meaningful image.



*"The Walpack Center Giving Tree," by Marie Liu  
Marie's painting can be viewed in color on our Facebook page.*

her mother, Mary in the doorway. Julia is re-enacted during museum tours by a Walpack Historical Society docent and is a key historical figure in our village history. Such is the nature of painting commissions; formulating ideas with a client can be an interesting challenge. My experience of working with Audrey on her "Walpack Giving Tree" painting was one of the most rewarding for me (paralleled only by The Great Council Tree painting with Danny Tassej). Her enthusiasm towards the tree and the history of the town, coupled with her knowledge and assistance in gathering information and photos helped the creative process unfold into what became a meaningful image.

*Note: The Walpack Historical Society is working to have 16" x 20" color prints of Marie's painting available soon.*

# BRONZE HISTORICAL MARKERS ALONG OLD MINE ROAD

by Sharon Spangenberg

How many of our readers have travelled the Old Mine Road and stopped to read and photograph a monument with a bronze marker?

On September 22, 1934, the Sussex County Historical Society and the Chinkchewunsk Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) unveiled five bronze markers along the Old Mine Road. The markers were the gift of Ralph and Amelia Stickney Decker. At the time, Ralph Decker was the President of the Sussex County Historical Society and Sussex County's Superintendent of Schools. His wife, Amelia, was Regent of the DAR Chapter. She also authored the book "That Ancient Trail."

Each marker briefly explains the history of the area in which it is placed along the Old Mine Road. In spite of the rain that took place on that Saturday morning, a pilgrimage led by the Deckers began in Montague.


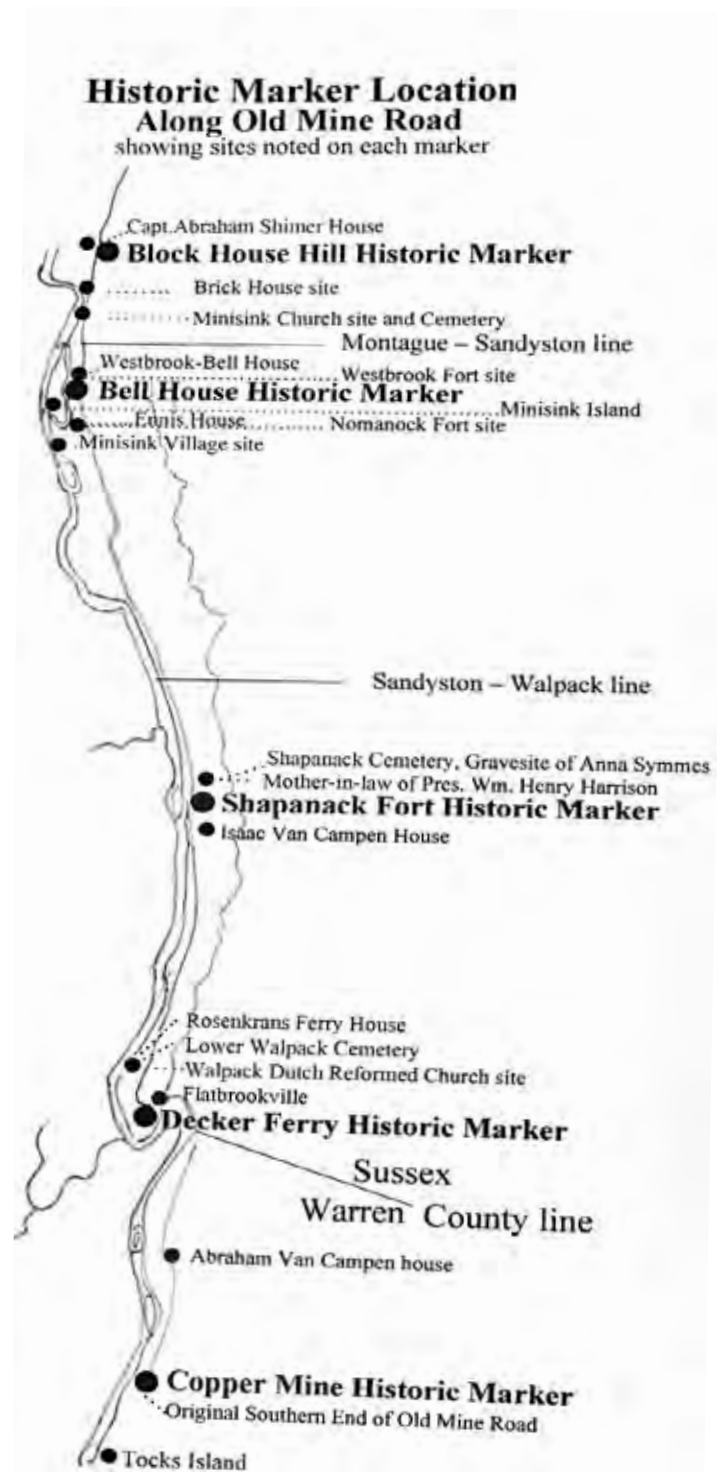
At 9:30 a.m., "America" was sung and the first marker - **Block House Hill** - in Millville was unveiled by Mary A. Cole - 5th generation descendant of Abraham Shimer, a Capt. in the Revolutionary War. The address was given by Amelia S. Decker.

Those in attendance then traveled to Sandyston Township and stopped at the entrance of the lane leading to the **Bell House**. At 10:00 "Jersey Land" was sung followed by the unveiling of the second marker by Herbert J. Wilson, 9th generation descendant of Capt. Peter Westbrook. Charles A. Philhower, Superintendent of Westfield Schools, provided the address.

Continuing on to Walpack Township, the next program began at 10:45 at the west end of Military Road. After singing, "America the Beautiful," Ruth Rosenkrans, 6th generation descendant of Col. John Rosenkrans, unveiled the third marker representing the **Shapanack Fort** site. Col. Rosenkrans served in the Revolutionary War and commanded Fort Shapanack/Headquarters. The address was by Addison P. Rosenkrans, 5th generation descendant of Col. John Rosenkrans.

Attendees then traveled to Walpack Bend to the entrance to the **Decker Ferry**. At 11:30, the fourth marker was unveiled by Camp Pahaquarry Boy Scouts representing Martin Decker, Jr. who was a 7th generation descendant of Daniel Decker who established the first Ferry in Walpack. "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" was sung followed by the address by Ralph Decker, 5th generation descendant of Daniel Decker.

A picnic lunch followed near Millbrook Village, then the group drove to the **Pahaquarry Copper Mine** in Warren County. "America" was sung and the 5th marker was unveiled by Trenton Boy Scouts. Addresses were provided by Mrs. Wycoff Cummins, Regent of the D.A.R. Chapter in Belvidere as well as Mrs. F.C. Hoffman, Historian of the D.A.R. Chapter in Bloomsbury, Warren County. Singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" concluded the ceremony.



Since the Summer of 2020, we have been offering a free copy of "A Stroll Down Old Mine Road" to those who make a donation of at least \$50. Recently we reprinted this book and hope you will take advantage of this offer which will benefit our general fund.

continued on pg. 7

## MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

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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.*

## BRONZE HISTORICAL MARKERS ALONG OLD MINE ROAD

*continued from pg. 6*

Although there are five historic markers at their original designated locations, two of them are replacements. In February 2000, the marker near the Decker Ferry site was stolen and the concrete base completely destroyed. The Shapanack marker disappeared many years prior to that. An advertised fund raiser was conducted by the Walpack Historical Society. Wolfe Granite Memorials in Sussex supplied and installed the new markers as well as the granite monuments on which they were mounted. A dedication ceremony was held on Sunday, November 3, 2002; however, on the following day, it was discovered that the Shapanack marker was intentionally tipped over

by vandals.

A third marker had also disappeared, but was returned by the Trenton Boy Scouts in 2001. Apparently, in 1971, the Boy Scouts took the marker for safekeeping. When visiting the Pahaquarry Copper Mine site, you will notice that it is mounted on a secured post as the original concrete monument had also been removed.

Today, while taking your own pilgrimage to the five historic sites, take note that the two replacement markers have the correct spelling of Chinkchewunska. The three other original plaques have the DAR Chapter incorrectly inscribed.

## SEIZING THE SEASON *by Audrey Schwab*

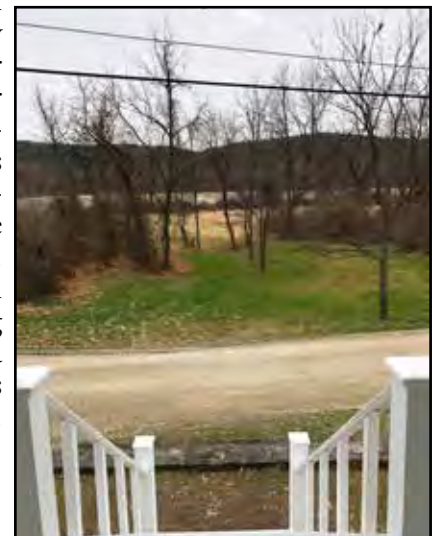


We may have been a bit quiet, but we definitely were not sleeping! The seemingly endless months of Walpack Historical Society's teleconferencing and mostly remote planning sessions have segued to a spring into

action. One of our greatly anticipated spring projects is the revival of the heritage peony bed that has been long neglected and repeatedly assaulted by lawn mowers and weed whackers. The resurrection of the once stunning peony bed across from the Rosenkrans Museum and to the west of the Losey-Robbins House is expected to be underway as soon as the plants' "eyes" swell, redden and erupt as sprouts above ground. A modest bevy of Walpack gardeners plan to attack with a masked and socially distanced assault upon the weedy growth between the sprouts and more sharply define the bed's approximately 6' X 50' plot to better protect it from well-meaning blade wielders. We look forward to a season's promise to be fulfilled by the blooms of mid to late spring!

Secondly, Walpack Historical Society Volunteers

plan to partner with The Historic Property Stewards, another volunteer group within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA) to address the weedy undergrowth that has partially consumed and threatens to overrun the parking area and lawn space across from The Van Campen Inn. Awaiting final approval from DEWA, Park Service personnel would carefully oversee and monitor these efforts in order to assure the non-invasive indigenous plant life and non-human residents of the area are not disturbed. Our summer issue will hopefully be sharing the good news of a return to better times and renewed spaces. Stay tuned!



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

## OUR PANDEMIC SAGA CONTINUES *by Don Stieb, President WHS*



wondering what this means for the Walpack Historical Society in the approaching summer of 2021.

In summers past, we have provided monthly in person programs at the Walpack Center Church, interesting hikes, and enjoyable spring and holiday dinners at the Walpack Inn. This season, due to National NPS COVID regulations, we find we cannot adequately offer programs in the enjoyable manner we have all come to expect. With building capacity limited to 25% occupancy while maintaining strict 6 foot social distancing, anticipated attendance would far outstrip the limited capacity of Walpack Center Church. More importantly, due to strict health and safety mandates, we are advised that NPS is unable to provide and maintain the customary portable restroom facilities at the church and the Van Campen Inn. This, in essence, means the closest restroom facility may be at Blue Mountain Lake and possibly Millbrook

It is hard to believe that over a year has passed since we began to hunker down. We all yearn to return to what was “normal” and many of you are

Village. WHS cannot in good conscience invite you as a guest “in our home” without being able to offer proper accommodations.

However, as you can see from our newsletter and WHS social media, WHS may have been somewhat silent but we have not been sleeping. We continue in our mission of researching local history for the edification of the public. Plans are in the works for a clean up of the parking area at the Van Campen Inn, and reclaiming the legacy peony bed opposite the Post Office in Walpack Center. It is hoped that as circumstances evolve, we may be able to offer programs later in the season and perhaps offer some programs virtually.

Please continue to follow us on our website, our newsletter, and our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Thank you for all of your support during these challenging times.

### **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.