

WALPACK

historical society

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Newsletter of the
Walpack Historical Society

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WALK THE LINE

by Jeff Stoveken

One day while visiting the Sussex County Library to do some follow-up research in the local history section, I came across a book that's cover displayed New Jersey divided in half lengthwise. Out of curiosity I put it at the bottom of my stack of books to be looked at later. After finishing my research, I opened this book to see what it was all about. Inside was a detailed report on an original survey dating back to 1743 called the Lawrence Line, along with a more recent re-survey of this line by a handful of talented land surveyors. The Jerseys had been two separate colonies at that time and John Lawrence was hired by their governors to survey an exact line between Little Egg Harbor and the Delaware River so each colony would have an official boundary. This had been attempted many times before but never completed.

The book was called “Division Line, East-West Jersey” and it was a historical project that involved local land surveyors that volunteered their time to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the survey. The group included surveyors from up and down the state that were, of course, interested in our local history. The team of surveyors in the northern part of the state included not only a Sussex County resident but a previous resident of Walpack! He was listed as Edward Drelich. I read this book from front to back and I was so intrigued by it that I immediately wanted to walk this line! I think the most interesting reference in this book was where it mentioned that Sussex County is the only county left in the state that has most of this line intact. It has since remained a division line for a few of the townships. That meant it was largely identifiable even though a good portion of it was in rough country.

The next day I spoke to Dan Tassej and we both decided it would be an interesting adventure to find and follow this line as far as we could. John Lawrence was given very detailed instructions to follow in marking and reporting his survey of The Line. He needed to mark line trees and mile trees with certain hatchet marks. Heaps of stone were to be similar along the line. He also needed to include the details of the land as he saw it. Hills, streams, wetlands and anything else that would accurately describe where this line ran was to be included in the survey. The team consisted of a small group of surveyors who traveled on foot and horseback. This meant most of the markers would have to be made with raw materials. Examples of acceptable markers included prominent trees that were present, and stones of similar size placed in recognizable piles. None of these markers would be obvious until you were very close to them. One notation in this book hinted at how



*Cox's Rock in Sussex County marks the 97th mile of the line.
L to R, Jeff Stoveken, Keith, Jon, Dan Tassej*

challenging this trek might be, “this line is no straighter than a cooked piece of spaghetti.” The prospect of this adventure sounded very difficult, but it could also be very rewarding since some of these clues may not have been seen over the past 250 years.

So the journey began. We set our sights on a rock that was mentioned in the book called Cox's Rock. It was a huge boulder in an area surrounded by other large boulders on the edge of a wetland in a private Boy Scout Camp near Waterloo Village. It was said to have been marked with an X on the top of the rock which was over 7 feet tall and several feet wide. While we waited to be granted permission to access the Boy Scout Camp, we spent hours scouring maps trying to zero in on this boulder. The boulder was pictured in the book so at least we had a chance to make a positive identification. The manager had agreed to give us access to the property with the condition that he be present during the search. He had seen this line and boulder noted on the Camp's property deed and had never been able to locate it.

A few days prior to our appointment at the Boy Scout Camp, a gentleman came into my office on unrelated business. When he said his name was Edward Drelich, I almost didn't believe my ears. After the business was taken care of, I asked him if he took part in a survey of the East West Jersey Line and he hesitated for a bit before saying, “how do you know of that?” I told him how I had come across the book at the library and

Continued on pg. 4

ZINC HEADSTONES – A DEAD AND BURIED TREND

by Scott Yashay
Gravestone of
Henry Berk with
missing plate
(see below)
Walpack Center
Cemetery



*Note that this shape and design is identical to Mary Smith Rosenkrans's grave marker in Lower Walpack Cemetery



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Fellow “taphophiles” – or graveyard enthusiasts – in our local Walpack Center, Lower Walpack, and Hainesville Cemeteries may have noticed that some of the most well-preserved old headstones they’ve encountered seem to have one thing in common: namely a distinct grayish-blue color. Closer examination and a resounding deep clang when knocked on reveal that these stones are not stone at all, but metal! What is perhaps even stranger is that the entirety of these graves were manufactured by a single company during a period of only forty years. Between 1874 and 1914, The Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut was the nation’s sole producer of metallic grave markers – a bizarre funerary trend that had rarely been seen before or has reappeared since.

Having come into existence shortly after the Civil War, The Monumental Bronze Company quickly became profitable through its production of generic “infantryman” monuments, which could be taken to represent either a Union or Confederate soldier and were a popular way for Northern and Southern communities alike to honor their fallen. The company’s greatest success, however, would come from their production of metal headstones. What was marketed as the elegant-sounding “white bronze” was actually pure zinc. Graves were made-to-order and offered multiple customizable elements such as urns, inscriptions, and symbolic images that were advertised to the public through company catalogues. Components were cast in sand molds and later fused together on-location to create a hollow metal grave. Prior to their

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The Walpack Historical Society
newsletter is designed and edited
by Tom Dust. Photographs are provided
by the author, unless otherwise noted.

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 6	Peony bed and Walpack Center Village clean up
July 21	Presentation - Two Local Creameries - Sharon Spangenberg
August 18	Unveiling - the Shapanack Marker - Sharon Spangenberg
September 21	The Spirits of Lower Walpack Cemetery
October 13	Van Campen Day (Heritage Weekend)
December 7 (Saturday)	*Holiday Dinner
December 14 & 15	Walpack Christmas (museum open)

**Members and their guests.*

All events are subject to change. Current CDC & NPS Covid guidelines may affect events. 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.

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Allison Yashay
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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.



WALK THE LINE

Continued from pg. 1

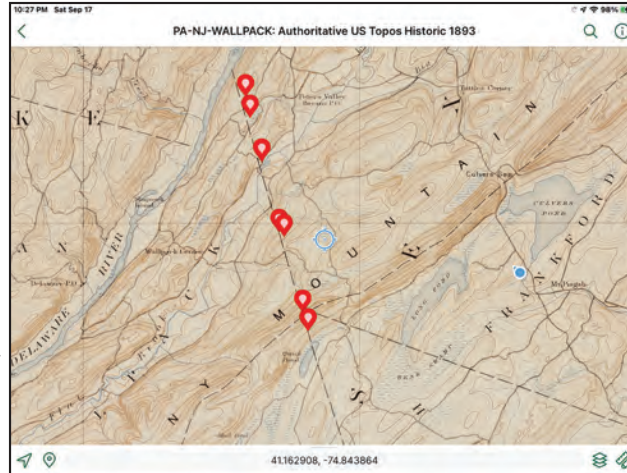
by Jeff Stoveken

that being interested in local history I had already made it a point to research The Line myself. I also shared our plan to start walking The Line in just a few days. We spoke about the East-West Jersey Line briefly and ended our conversation with a handshake goodbye. About two days later Mr. Drelich showed up at the office with rolls of paper in his hands. He had made copies of the maps that he used for the survey, so we could use them to assist us in our survey of The Line! I was thrilled! That was very nice of him and helped us locate that infamous rock very quickly.

From there we decided to track The Line from the east side of the Kittatinny Ridge over to the Delaware River. A lot of this route would've been untouched, making it easier to find a tree still standing and an intact random pile of stones. We located the heap of stones that was described as being near the north end of Quicks Pond at the base of the mountain. As we came over the top of the mountain crossing into Walpack, we found a larger, flat topped white rock that appeared to be very near the line. There was a description of a marking pine tree in this vicinity. The description mentions that it was so many links from a rock. We narrowed down the area he described for the tree but of course it was long gone; however, we do believe that the rock nearby was the one Lawrence referenced. Towards the bottom of the mountain were two more markers, one being an older concrete township division marker between Walpack and Sandyston. It also had an older ring of stones with a set stone in the middle of it. While the marker was most likely not of John Lawrence, it was still very old and gave us a clue as to the location of The Line.

Another day we entered the woods from Mountain Road and headed up the hill towards where we had left off previously. We were unaware that we were so close to The Line when we happened on a heap of stones which fit the description. Sure enough, when we pulled up the 1860 Map on our phones, the blue dot of the GPS showed us right on the Walpack/Sandyston border! The heaps of stones they described were created by finding a larger base stone that would be located on The Line. The surveyors would then pile some medium sized stones on top of it. The pile was not very high, as the point was to have the stones remain above the ground and not sink down over the years.

Once we reached the Flatbrook area it was not uncommon to find a Fish & Game Marker that was very close to or on The Line. When we climbed to the top of the next hill, which was the last before the Delaware River, we found another marker that matched Lawrence's exact description. The description



The points on this map are markers found on the line just in Walpack.

indicated that the marker was on the edge of a bluff and was a heap of stones with the larger base stone pointing to the south. That's exactly what we saw here. While facing west we saw a large base stone to our left and a pile of stones on the right-hand side. This one most likely would have been built just after they got to the top of the steep hill. While crossing this ridge and coming to a road, which we believe is Thunder Mountain Road, the description stated that smoke from

a chimney at the local blacksmith shop can be seen from here. We believe that could be the blacksmith shop that still exists and operates in Peters Valley. It is also said that they spent the night in a stone shelter not far from the river. That could possibly be Bevan's Rock House which is 2/3 of a mile from The Line. The Native Americans could very well have invited them for the night, shown them where to find water and anything else these travelers could've been looking for during their journey through the wilderness.

The great White Oak Tree was perhaps the most significant marker that we came across. Dan had spotted this tree during another walk, and it was so large that he knew it had a purpose in life. Not many trees have survived an estimated 450+ years. This tree was so protected that the barbed wire sat around the base of it and was not nailed into the tree like almost any other one that you see in the woods. This tree sits very close, if not on, the Walpack/Sandyston border. There are a couple marks in this tree that could be extremely old



Full map of New Jersey shows all the different line variations with dates.

ZINC HEADSTONES – A DEAD AND BURIED TREND

by Scott Yashay

Continued from pg. 2



*Clark
Gravestone
Hainesville
Cemetery*

shipment, the individual pieces were sandblasted to give the metal a slightly rough finish resembling stone before being coated in an oxidizing solution which gave it its trademark blueish hue. Plates displaying information about the deceased, poems, prayers, or specially requested symbols were cast separately and fastened to the grave with ornamental bolts. Over time, plates could be replaced to account for additional deceased family members. In some cases, including one zinc headstone in Rahway NJ, the plates were removed and re-bolted by Prohibition-era bootleggers who used the hollow headstones as a drop-off point for smuggled alcohol.

The Monumental Bronze Company made several bold claims regarding the everlasting properties of white bronze, even boasting that its memorials would outlast the pyramids. Despite these promises and the fact that they were made relatively affordable to the middle class, the stigma surrounding metallic headstones prevented them from becoming a true competitor or alternative to stone. The more elite members of Victorian and Edwardian society saw white bronze as cheap and gimmicky, arguing that millennia of human history had proven stone to be the only respectable way to memorialize the dead. But with the high cost of marble and granite, the only stone alternatives available to the common man, such as sandstone, proved not to fare so well over time.

Whatever success The Monumental Bronze Company enjoyed during its brief existence came to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of World War I, when the U.S. Government seized control of its facilities in order to produce gun mounts, munitions, and other wartime necessities. By the end of the War, the novelty of metal grave markers seemed to have passed. The company continued to make placards and minor household appliance components, but eventually went bankrupt in 1939 after struggling to endure the effects of The Great Depression.

White bronze headstones remain some of the most remarkably preserved graves to be found in our local ancient cemeteries, seeming hardly to have aged in one hundred and fifty years. However, they have not completely withstood the ravages of time. Many have fallen victim to missing parts, cracks, and bulging at the seams resulting from thermal expansion, buckling under their own weight, or changes to the surrounding area. In some cases, the hollow metal graves were filled with concrete to improve their structure and keep the individual pieces from separating, a practice which ultimately did more damage than good. Yet when most of their stone contemporaries lie broken, illegible, or covered with growth, white bronze headstones have more than lived up to the promises of The Monumental Bronze Company a century and a half ago.



*Kyte Gravestone
Hainesville
Cemetery*



*Gravestone of
Mary Smith Rosenkrans (front)
Lower Walpack Cemetery*



*Gravestone of
Mary Smith Rosenkrans (back)
Lower Walpack Cemetery*



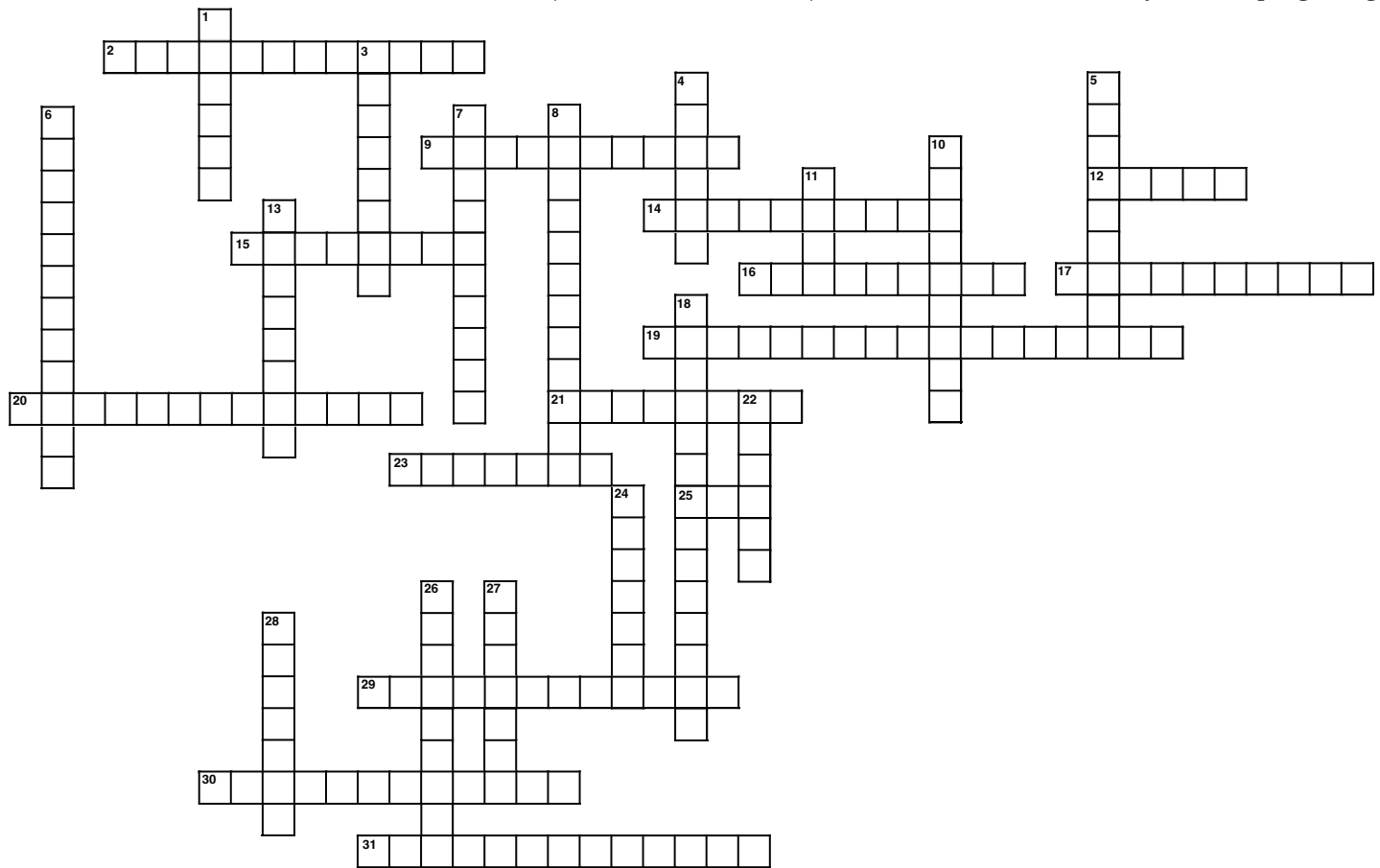
*Gravestone of Charles E. Van Sickle
(front) Brink-Colesville Cemetery
Note the broken shell-shaped urn



*Gravestone of
Charles E. Van Sickle (back)
Brink-Colesville Cemetery*

WALPACK CROSSWORD PUZZLE (WITH ANSWERS)

by Sharon Spangenberg



ACROSS

2. Camp overlooking Flatbrookville. (2 words)
POKONO RAMONA
9. It was formerly located within Walpack's General Store.
POST OFFICE
12. Beautiful old summer bed in Walpack Center.
PEONY
14. Quarterly publication.
NEWSLETTER
15. Family name of two presidents connected with Walpack.
HARRISON
16. It empties into the Delaware River.
FLATBROOK
17. Rustic restaurant. (2 words)
WALPACK INN
19. Elevated community in Walpack. (3 words)
BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKES
20. Also known as the 1812 house. (2 words)
RICHARD LAYTON
21. Name given to the Symmes mansion.
SOLITUDE
23. Corner on Flatbrookville/Stillwater Rd.
DONKEYS
25. Number of active cemeteries in Walpack.
ONE
29. Never happened rock festival.
HARMONYVILLE
30. Slave who did not want his freedom. (2 words)
CAESAR SOULTS
31. Walpack's western border. (2 words)
DELAWARE RIVER

DOWN

1. Connecting road from Rt. 615 to Old Mine Rd.
POMPEY
3. Road to Buttermilk Falls.
MOUNTAIN
4. First ferry in Walpack.
DECKER
5. Mrs. Symmes' burial ground.
SHAPANACK
6. Also known as Salamovka house. (2 words)
DELAWARE VIEW
7. Last name of the lone resident in Flatbrookville.
ROSENKRANS
8. Small green house south of Van Campen Inn. (2 words)
JOHNSON LOSEY
10. The pastor of Walpack Center lived here.
PARSONAGE
11. Acronym for Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.
DEWA
13. Lower Walpack Cemetery 2021 seedling. (2 words)
SALEM OAK
18. Former village in lower Walpack.
FLATBROOKVILLE
22. Tour guide.
DOCENT
24. Former campground well driller.
BATTALI
26. Lenape word for Walpack.
WHIRLPOOL
27. Military rank of John Rosenkrans.
COLONEL
28. Walpack's last schoolteacher. (2 words)
ABE ABER

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WALK THE LINE

Continued from pg. 4

by Jeff Stoveken



"PL" stands for Partition Line or Province Line and was set in 1719.

hatchet marks. It also appears to sit at the end of a mile. We believe this tree was seen by Lawrence and other surveyors after him. You cannot ignore this tree. Dan's measurements and calculations also make this tree one of the largest and oldest in the area. The age estimation, which includes many factors, suggests this tree may have sprouted around 1565. That is the same year that Saint Augustine, Florida, which claims to be the oldest city in the Unites States, was founded!



A heap of stones high up on a bluff across from the Roy Tract bridge.

Near the end of our walk, we read a description about a pile of stones in a field before reaching the river, where the surveyors slept for the night. We remembered coming cross an interesting pile of stones a couple years ago in a field near the river. It was near a tree line and Dan remembered it being close to a large cherry tree. We scoured the edge of the field

and could not spot the cherry tree that we remembered. We then cut in along the edge of the woods and had no luck until we spotted a cherry tree lying on the ground. It had been felled by old age or a storm. We climbed over and under every part of this tree until finally we spotted a ring of stones underneath it! We can't say for sure that this is where the surveyors camped, but it fits the description pretty well.

Our final destination was the north end of the East-West Jersey Line located in Cochetton, New York. Back in 1719, a multistate committee met here and dedicated this location to be the northern most border of Jersey. A huge rock lying in the Delaware River was marked with a PL, designating it Province Line. This was one of the earlier borders of New York and New Jersey, so the Lawrence Line had to correspond with that. The current line was settled in 1769 when it was designated to be lower on the Delaware River across from Port Jervis. The PL rock brought us to an interesting area because it was once part of New Jersey, but the area with most of the historic markers that we came across was Walpack!

We really need to commend the land surveyors and everyone else who put this book together. The book shines a light onto a very interesting time in New Jersey's history that we otherwise may not have known about. We would also like to recognize Ed Drelich and locals like him who continuously go out of their way to teach us a little more history about Walpack, our county and even our state!



This heap of stones is dead-center on the line, based on Phone GPS.

www.walpackhistory.org

DAR HONORS SHARON SPANGENBERG

Sharon Spangenberg, a Walpack Historical Society Trustee, was honored with the 2024 History Award given by the Chinkchewunska Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) at their Annual Awards Ceremony on March 2, 2024. Sharon is an active member of WHS, tireless researcher, the author of several books and a map detailing the burials at the Lower Walpack Cemetery, all of which are for sale at the WHS Bookstore. The work on the cemetery alone entailed several hundreds of hours in researching, probing and documentation.

Sharon is now part of an accomplished group of WHS women and men who have been honored by the DAR with awards over the years. Some past awardees include Jen Wycalek, Myra Snook, Len Peck, Gerald DeGroat, Alicia Batko, and Robert Longcore. WHS was the recipient of the Historic Preservation Recognition Award in March, 2019.

Congratulations to Sharon for her dedication, endless energy, and commitment to saving the history of Walpack.



*L to R, Sharon Spangenberg and past DAR Regent, Wendy Wyman.
Photo provided by DAR.*

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.