

WALPACK

historical society

*"Preserving a Fine
Tradition of Caring"*

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Newsletter of the
Walpack Historical Society

Published Quarterly

Winter 2023

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON NINTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

by Sharon Spangenberg

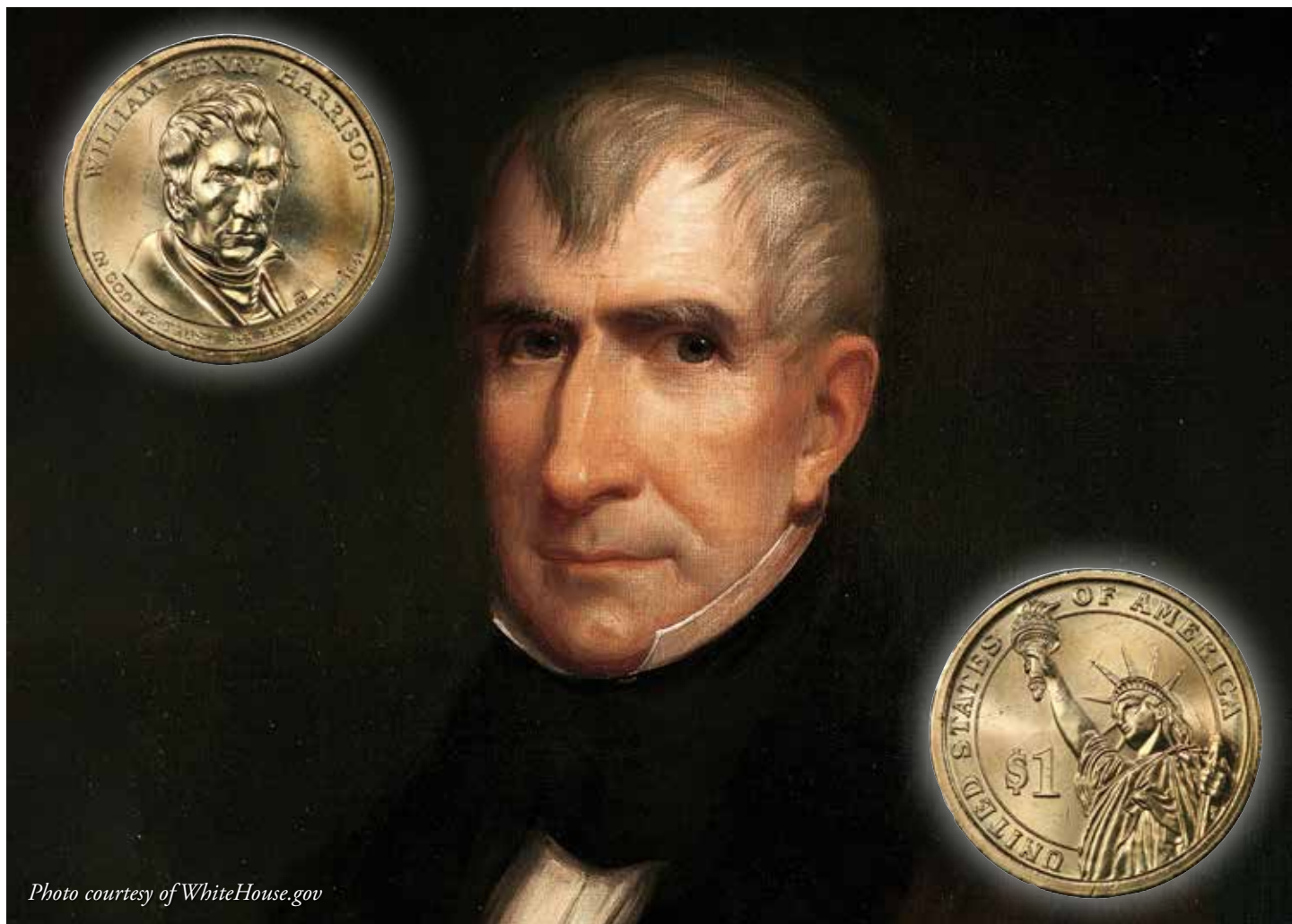


Photo courtesy of WhiteHouse.gov

As the last president born a British citizen, William Henry Harrison rose to national prominence for leading United States forces to victory during the War of 1812 at the Battle of Tippecanoe.

According to a *Star Ledger* newspaper article from 2009, William Henry Harrison was the shortest-tenured president in our nation's history and is usually remembered for delivering the longest inaugural speech, lasting almost two hours, on a bitterly cold day. Some historians believe that frigid day contributed to his death from pneumonia exactly one month later. Harrison's presidential campaign slogan was "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too" which "seemed to make more of his running mate and successor, John Tyler." He was a Whig Party candidate in 1840 and defeated incumbent President

Martin Van Buren.

Harrison, as the ninth President of the United States, was the first to die in office. He was honored on a presidential dollar coin that was launched on February 16, 2009. This was the first presidential coin to have "In God We Trust" on the obverse (heads side) rather than on the edge. The front of the coin shows a portrait of Harrison and the reverse side shows the Statue of Liberty. On the coin's edge are "2009" and "E Pluribus Unum."

Walpack Historical Society is fortunate to have two United States Mint coins honoring the son-in-law of Colonel John Cleves Symmes formerly of Walpack Township and his wife Anna Symmes who is buried in the Shapanack Cemetery located on a knoll just north of the Van Campen Inn.

FLATBROOKVILLE HISTORICAL MARKER HAS BEEN APPROVED

by Sharon Spangenberg

It has been over 15 years since a Sussex County sponsored Historical Marker was placed in Walpack. In 2007, a "Walpack, N.J." marker was erected in front of the township's municipal building in Walpack Center. That historical marker covered the township's formation, the Old Mine Road, the Shapanack Cemetery where Anna Symmes is buried, as well as two ferries located in lower Walpack at the bend in the Delaware River.

Last year Walpack Historical Society trustees discussed and approved the submission of an application through the County of Sussex for a second historical marker with the understanding that half the total cost of \$3000 would be paid for using society funds. This marker would be to commemorate the village of Flatbrookville. In May of 2022, the required application was submitted with suggested wording.

Two months later we were informed by Sussex County's Historian, Bill Truran that our application was approved by his committee. All three successful recipients were invited to an awards ceremony that took place at the Sussex County, NJ State Fair on August 6th, 2022, during which a brief power point presentation remembering Flatbrookville was shown.

The ceremony was attended by several members of our society with our president, Don Stieh narrating the power point presentation. Others in attendance were Eugene Rosenkrans, Diane and Dan Tassey, Sharon Spangenberg and Ruth Stieh, as well as several fair goers. We learned that it may take up to a year to have the historical marker made and placed in Flatbrookville. Anyone wishing to make a donation to help offset our share of the cost of this marker (\$1500), please complete the membership/donation form on page 7 of this newsletter. Pending unforeseen circumstances, our society's plan is to unveil the marker at a ceremony to be held in August 2023.

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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.

FLATBROOKVILLE

Flatbrookville was once a self-sustainable hamlet with stores, mills, dwellings, hotel, church and school. Walpack's first post office was est. here in 1828.

Early 1700 sites of Frontiersman Benjamin Barton's mill, Moravian missionary school, Dutch Reformed Church, French and Indian War/Fort Walpack are nearby. Lower Walpack Cemetery was est. here circa 1737.

Walpack was derived from the Lenape word for the whirlpool formed at the Delaware River's bend.

Decker's Ferry used to transport Revolutionary War soldiers, later moved and renamed Rosenkrans, as well as the Smith Ferry operated nearby.

The late 1960's saw inhabitants removed and remaining structures destroyed for the Tocks Island Dam Project.

Erected by the Walpack Historical Society and the Sussex County Board of Commissioners

2023 CALENDAR

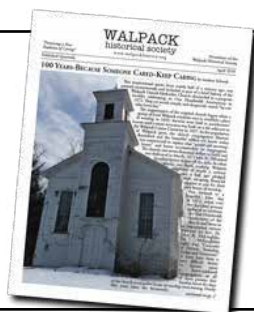
April 23	Spring Hike TBA
April 30	*Spring Dinner
May 6	Peony bed and Walpack Center Village clean up
May 21	Program TBA
May 27	VCI open 12 -3 pm
May 28	Walpack Church and Rosenkrans Museum, VCI open 1- 4 pm
June 25	Program TBA
July 1	Peony bed and Walpack Center Village clean up
July 16	Program TBA
August 20	Flatbrookville Presentation
September 17	Catfish Fire Tower Hike and Presentation
October 8	Van Campen Day (Heritage Weekend)
December 2	Walpack Christmas (museum open)
December 3	*Holiday Dinner
December 9 & 10	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.

New Members

Fred Aun
Linda Huey
Lisa & Don Martin
Erik Mollenhauer
Patricia Mueller

New Donations

Anonymous
Barbara Brown
Richard F. Castro*
William G. Clark
John F. DePue
Art Glaeser
Jane Hill-Rosato
Tom & Nan Horsfield
Lori Jo Jamieson
David & Patti Makosky
Erik Mollenhauer
Michael F. O'Brien
Lea Rawson*
Kathleen Rivers
Gerald M. Sliker, Jr.
Maureen Verbeek
Sarah Verbeke
Kathleen Roe Weakland
Stan Yashay

**Newsletter Sponsor*

Thank you to all of those people who have chosen to support Walpack Historical Society through anonymous donations on Facebook.

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 973-948-4903 to speak with Jen Wycialek to learn more about how you can help play a part in history.



SALAMOVKA HOUSE

By Sharon Spangenberg

Located in lower Walpack, across Flatbrookville bridge and about three-quarters of a mile up the mountain, this house stands on the east side of Old Mine Road on the corner of Flatbrookville/Stillwater Road. The Salamovka house, as it is known today, once had a commanding view of the Delaware River and Walpack Bend, thus the reason it is also referred to as the Delaware View House. Today, because of the growth of the trees, the Delaware River cannot be seen. However, during the autumn months, one can view the trees' beautiful colors from the parking area across from this house.

Each time a photo of this large house appears on social media, many followers seem to focus on the deteriorating condition of the dwelling that they remember being used by artists or as a small general store. But, how many of our readers know the history of this house?

During the winter months of 2021, Bob Williams, founding member and Walpack Historical Society's first president, prepared a comprehensive study of this two-story building. The following has been abstracted from Bob's study.

The property consisted of the house and several out buildings when acquired by the Federal Government over fifty years ago. When purchased it was in habitable condition, but as with so many others, it has been mercilessly ravaged by vandals with windows and doors smashed to pieces. Despite the vandalism, the house retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Historical research shows that the property was initially part of the McIntire estate and in 1810, it consisted of 539 acres that sold for \$1200. The property went through numerous transfers thereafter and was gradually whittled down to smaller tracts. Between 1832 and 1835 Charles Yetter purchased several parcels of land from Uriah and Sarah Hill totaling about 14.5 acres for the sum of \$207. In 1836, Yetter and his wife sold



The original section of the house, built by Charles Huff, is the lower-roofed part with four eyebrow windows. 2023

four tracts to Charles Huff for \$575.

The 1840 census reveals that Charles Huff and his wife were "Free Colored Persons." The 1850 census, which provides more detail, lists him as a "laborer." It is interesting to note the household at that time consisted of ten people; Charles and his wife, Susan, and their seven children ranging in age from 1 to 11. All were listed as mulatto. In addition, Phebe Huff, age 80 was listed. Color is not provided so it is assumed she was white. By 1860, 10 children were listed in the house – a lot of people for a rather small house.

While the African American population in Walpack was not large, there definitely was a presence extending back to the days of early settlement. The Charles Huff house is only one of two houses noted to have been built by the early African American population in Walpack, giving it extreme significance. (The other is the Johnson-Losey house about one mile south of the Van Campen Inn, formerly owned by Enos Johnson.)

The dwelling and property left the Huff ownership around 1870 and the property was transferred several times. In 1904, it was acquired by Samuel V. Garriss who significantly enlarged the house by adding the Queen Anne Victorian sections of the building. Garriss operated it as a hunting lodge. At one point Garriss leased it to the Losey family who operated it as a boarding house. In 1926, Garriss sold the property to Andrew Salama.

According to Bob Williams, Sandy Van Doren of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies put together a biographical sketch on Salama which explains his fascinating life and his interaction with the house. She wrote "In the late 1920s Salama traveled to New Jersey, where he bought a hunting lodge from the Garriss brothers. He converted the lodge, which he called 'Salamovka,' into a kind of summer resort for White



Circa 1910

WHO WAS JOHN CLEVES SYMMES?

by Sharon Spangenberg

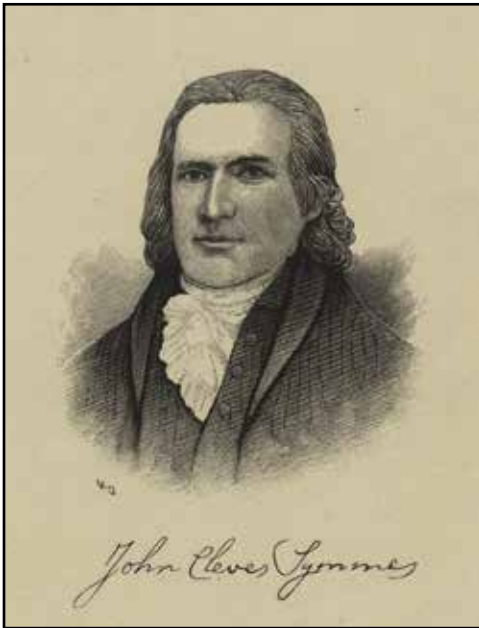


Image from Findagrave.com

John Cleves Symmes was born in 1742 on Long Island where he was educated and then married Anna Tuthill in 1760. They were the parents of two daughters, Maria, who was born in 1763 and married Peyton Short and Anna who was born in 1775 and married William Henry Harrison.

Symmes arrived in New Jersey and

purchased land in Newton adjacent to the courthouse on High Street. He was a teacher, surveyor and was licensed to practice law. Symmes also purchased several tracts of land on both sides of the Flatbrook in Walpack¹.

According to William E. Drost² in his publication titled *Reply to a Letter*, "It was in Walpack where he constructed a house that he called 'Solitude' in which his second daughter, Anna, was born. In 1776, Anna's mother³ died leaving baby Anna motherless. Anna's maternal grandparents, who lived in Long Island raised her to young womanhood. During the time of Anna's absence her father, John Cleves Symmes, became a very important figure in New Jersey history.

Besides being Chairman of the Committee of Safety of Sussex County in 1774, according to information found on *Founders*

Online,⁴ "John Cleves Symmes (1742 – 1814) of Walpack, NJ was a colonel of the 3rd Sussex County militia regiment, was a member of the New Jersey

convention, and served on the state's legislative council from 1776 to 1777 and from 1780 – 1785. On February 14, 1777, he became an associate justice of the state supreme court, a position that he held for the next ten years. He was also a member of the Continental Congress from 1785 to 1786. In 1788 Congress named him one of the three judges for the Northwest Territory, an appointment that George Washington renewed as president of the United States in 1789."

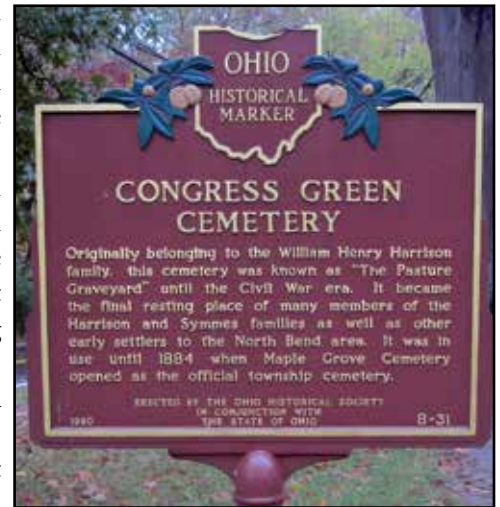
Although Symmes married two other times, it was his third wife, Susannah Livingston, daughter of William Livingston, the first governor of New Jersey, who accompanied him and Anna to North Bend, Ohio near the close of the 18th century. While Symmes' house was being built on his property between the Great and Little Miami Rivers, Anna and her stepmother lived with Anna's sister Maria Short in Kentucky. It is here that Anna met Lieutenant William Henry Harrison and much to

Symmes' objection they eloped in 1795 after which 10 children were born to the couple. In 1841 William became the 9th president of the United States but died after serving only one month. His wife, Anna lived another 23 years passing at the age of 88 years.

She is buried with her husband in North Bend in the William Henry Harrison Tomb State Memorial.

John Cleves Symmes died in 1814. According to his will available online, he was buried with military honors at Congress Green Cemetery in North Bend. He has been recognized with historic markers in New Jersey⁵ and in Ohio.

Although there is a wealth of information about John Cleves Symmes and his family available online, as you research, please keep in mind this quote by Mr. Drost in 1970: "The disposition of well-meaning 'historians' to copy from each other (including errors) creates by mere repetition a legend that in turn becomes folklore and tradition."



¹ Symmes' land holdings did not include what would one day become the village of Walpack Center as that was owned by Isaac Van Campen.

² William E. Drost, Chairman, Research Committee, Union Township Historical Society, NJ - 1970.

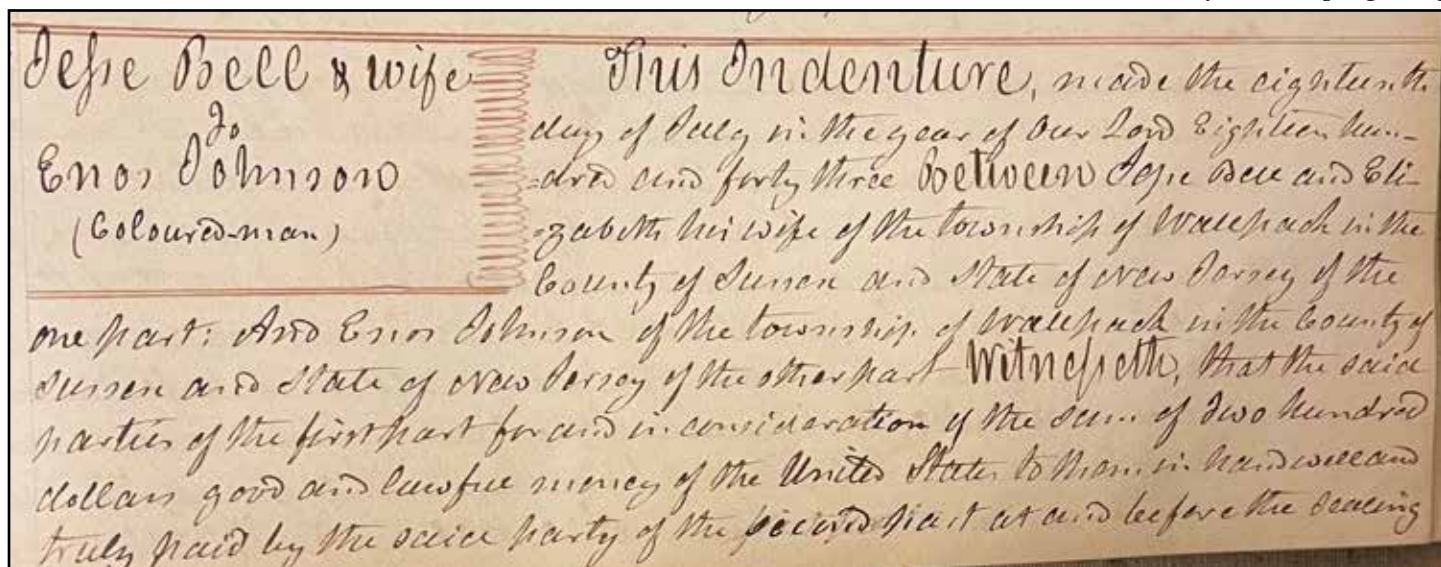
³ Anna Symmes was buried on a high knoll just north of the Van Campen Inn along Old Mine Road in Walpack.

⁴ *Founders Online* is an official website of the U.S. government, administered by the National Archives and Records Administration through the National Historical Publications & Records Commission with the University of Virginia Press, which is hosting that website.

⁵ In 1913, John J. VanSickle donated nine historic markers to be placed within the townships of Walpack, Sandyston, and Montague at historical points. This marker was placed in Walpack at the site of John Cleves Symmes' mansion house.

PROPERTY DEEDS CAN REVEAL A LOT OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

by Sharon Spangenberg



Deed transcription.

Jesse Bell & wife to Enos Johnson (coloured-man)

"This Indenture, made the eighteenth day of July in the year of our Lord Eighteen hundred and forty three Between Jesse Bell and Elizabeth his wife of the township of Wallpack in the County of Sussex and State of New Jersey of one part: And Enos Johnson of the township of Wallpack in the County of Sussex and State of New Jersey of the other part. Witnesseth, that the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of two hundred dollars good and lawful money of the United States to them in hand will and truly paid by the said party of the second part at and before the sealing....."

For those interested in exploring their own personal family history and/or an old homestead, one source that should be added to the list of research documents is the review of property deeds. Besides showing the name of the person(s) purchasing or selling land, property deeds can include many facts such as:

- Where the grantor (seller, or party of the first part) was living at the time of conveyance. If more than one seller, those are listed as well.
- Where the grantee (buyer, or party of the second part) was living at the time of conveyance. If more than one buyer, those are included as well.
- First name of wife of seller.
- Previous owners.
- State and municipality in which the property is located.
- Acreage. If there are several tracts of land, each one is described separately.
- Date of sale.
- Actual sale price is shown in most deeds except for 20th century deeds that mostly show \$1.
- Whether a mortgage existed.
- Names of those who witnessed the signing of the conveyance.

Other helpful information that may be included in the deed are:

- If the seller inherited the property and from whom.
- Occupation and/or the race of the buyer or seller.
- If the property was leased.
- If there was a divorce decree.
- Description of the property that may include landmarks such as the location of a neighbor's house, buildings, streams, rivers, and even types of trees.
- Map of the property or neighborhood.
- The most crucial item to find in a deed is a name in a related court case, particularly if it was heard in a NJ Chancery Court. This will require research at the NJ State Archives. The information obtained can be golden.

Property deeds are received, recorded, and filed in the clerk's office in the county in which the property is located. The deed is given a book and page number showing where the document can be found. Recorded deeds are also available on microfilm at the New Jersey State Archives in Trenton. Sussex County deeds from 1950 to present are available on the Sussex County Clerk's website by searching the Real Estate/Property Records. Deeds prior to 1950 are available for in-person and/or computerized review at the County Clerk's Office located in the Cochran House Professional Building at 83 Spring Street, Suite 304, Newton, NJ.

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Tear off and return with payment.

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Donations are tax deductible, as allowed by law.

Continued from pg. 4



Andrew Salama

Photo courtesy of Bob Williams.

Russian émigré mostly musicians, artists, or dancers.” (Unfortunately, because of its length the biographical sketch cannot be included in this article.)

After the death of Andrew Salama, (his friend,) Virginia Bartow, who at the time owned the property, continued to summer at Salamovka throughout the 1970s where it remained a place for artists and musicians to congregate. In 1969, the Salamovka site was bought by the Federal Government.

Long-time resident Eugene Rosenkrans, who grew up in nearby Flatbrookville, commented, “Great music was played at that house.” He noted that Virginia Bartow’s son was a classical pianist.

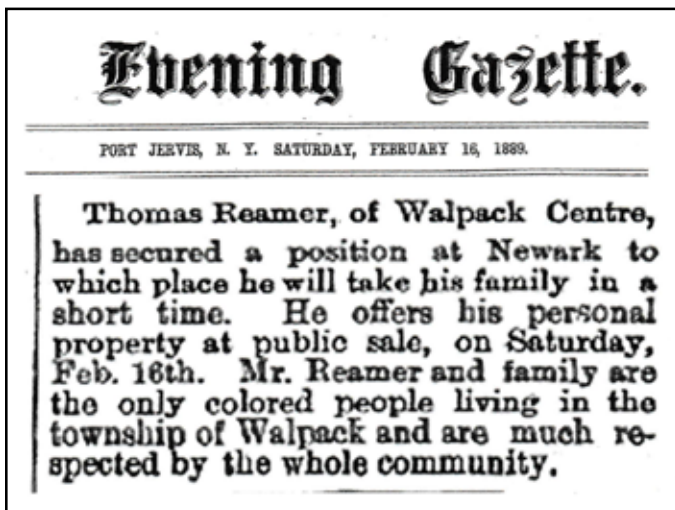
While Artists for the Environment provided a good use for the house, the organization eventually disbanded and the home was abandoned.

Salamovka (which means Salama’s house) stands as a relic of a bygone era. While the house once stood host to fascinating people and the sound of music and life echoed through its rooms and hallways, today it is silent with the exception of vandals and thrill seekers who seem to care little about its storied past.



1977

Photo courtesy of Bob Williams.



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RUSSELL A. SPINKS PASSED AWAY AT THE AGE OF 97



The late Fred Space and Dr. Ted Spinks with Russ.

Walpack Historical Society shares that Russell Spinks, 97, passed away peacefully at his home in Layton on January 5, 2023. Russ Spinks had been a member of WHS for over 30 years and always had a ready smile for all.

Russ retired from NJ Fish and Wildlife Management as a wildlife biologist. He was an avid outdoorsman and gentleman farmer. In his retirement he and his wife, Deloris, worked and managed Valley Brook Farm. He grew the best Silver Queen sweet corn in NJ, winning multiple blue ribbons at the NJ State Fair!

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family. He will be missed by all.

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.