



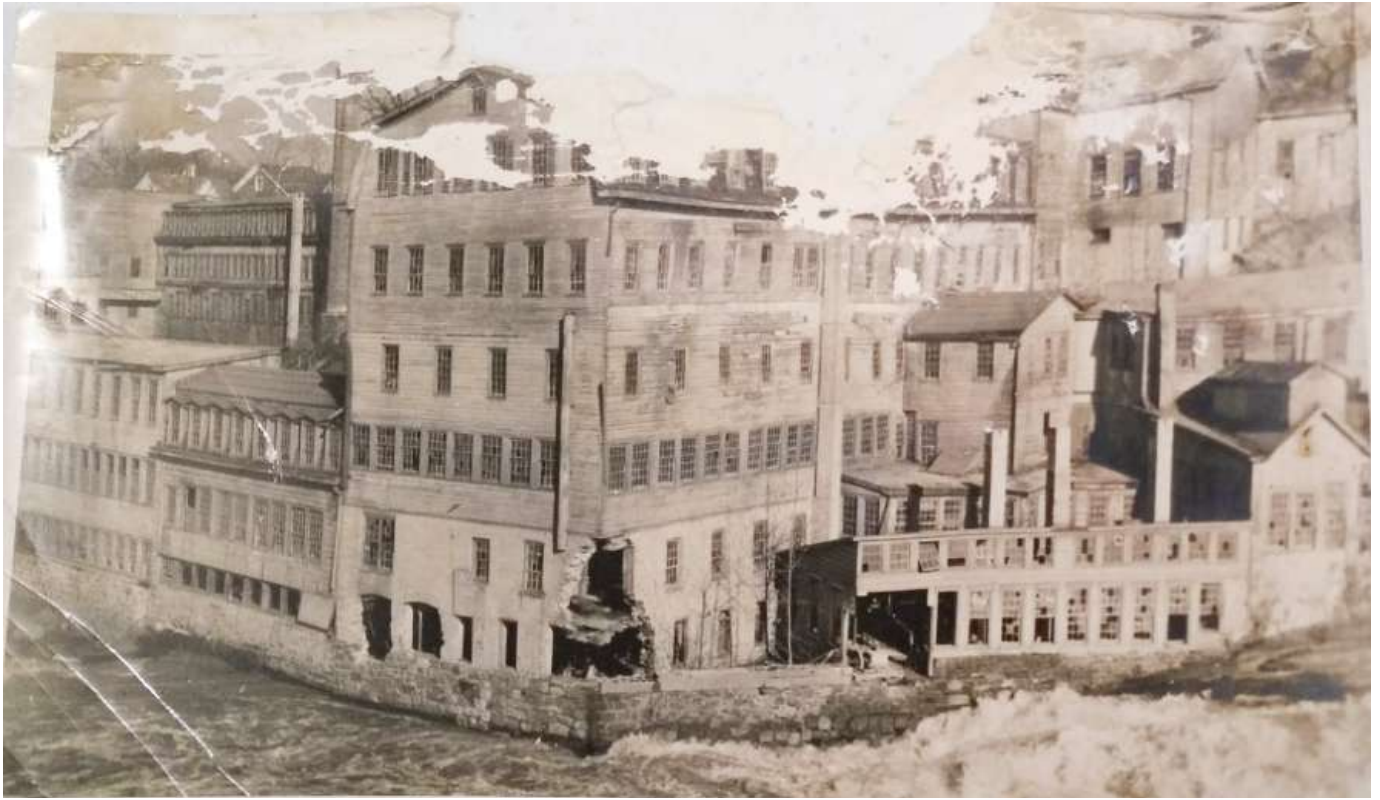
# *The Walden House Tattler*

*The Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley*

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*(Photo property of Historical Society Archives)*

## **RECORD ICE JAM WREAKS HAVOC SATURDAY – WALDEN, NEW YORK** THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1936. EXCERPT MIDDLETOWN TIMES-HERALD

*Eighty Five Years Ago this month!*

**MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup>**

A mighty avalanche of ice, released earlier in the day by blasting at Montgomery and accumulating thousands of tons more on the way, reached Walden about 1:45 Saturday p.m. pushed steadily onward with relentless pressure by a record high tide of angry water. A temporary blockade of ice had formed just above the power house of the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation.

When the ice avalanche reached this temporary barrier it halted a moment and then broke through with a tremendous roar. A gigantic wave swept over the dam and engulfed the power house. It also directed the force against the abandoned New York Knife works. It battered, broke windows and carried away part of the foundation. The scene was visited by thousands who viewed the torrent and watched the ice cakes go over the dam and lose themselves in the swirling torrent below.

## Record Ice Jam Wreaks Havoc Saturday



Views taken Saturday afternoon at Walden Power House as ice goes out in Wallkill River above the "Upper Dam" — Photo at left shows raging water creeping up to power house windows — Photo above taken from power house bulkhead shows torrent washing away windows at New York Knife plant (black arrow) and corner of foundation (white arrow) washed away by ice and water; damage hidden by spray as picture was snapped.

### MC CRACKEN'S NARROW ESCAPE

Alex McCracken, dayshift man, at the electric plant was outside raking rubbish from the grating leading to the turbines when the ice pack broke. He ran below into the powerhouse to pull the switches and shut off the turbines. It took some time to do this. In the meantime, the water and ice began to rush into the door of the powerhouse and also rise up through the drain holes in the floor. It reached a height of 20 inches in a few moments. Realizing that he could not climb the stairs against the rush of water, McCracken ran to a double door, seldom used, on the west side of the power house which he opened, got outside and threw himself against the bank there and climbed to safety, wet to the skin. The dynamos were drenched and the plant was put entirely out of commission.

### POWER LINES ALSO BROKEN

To add to the difficulty of the power company, the transmission line across the Kill above the power house was broken down when the ice went

*Middletown Times-Herald, March 19, 1936*

Over the banks and snapped off the poles and tore the wires down amid a shower of sparks. This put the finishing touch for the time being, so far as electric current was concerned — the power house out of commission, and with it the lines also whereby it could "borrow" electricity from the Central Hudson Gas and Electric Co.

### THE STRUGGLE TO RESUME SERVICE

With the current off at 1:45 a fight then began to procure electricity. A temporary connection was made near the Schrade Cutlery Company works where a junction was affected on one of the lines serving a section of the village. This connection was made at 6:45 a.m. Monday when the main transmission line across the Kill was replaced. The part of the circuit where the connection was made could handle but 2,300 volts. The normal capacity of the village, with Pine Bush and adjoining farming territory also, is 33,000 volts.

This article appears in full on our website— please visit [www.thewaldenhouse.org](http://www.thewaldenhouse.org) Thank you Mickey Millspaugh for finding this great article.



## ***The Jacob Walden House***



***Then...1958***



***And Now***

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## ***Diseases, Quarantine and Vaccinations***

The word Quarantine is taken from the Italian words *quaranta giorni* which means 40 days. In the 14th century, ships arriving in Venice were held at anchor off their docking port for 40 days if they were arriving from infected ports. This was in an effort to protect coastal cities from plague epidemics.

There is documentation from local newspapers regarding communicable illnesses and occasional implementation of quarantine status. The following appeared in the *New Paltz Independent*, May 29, 1879, in a column "Local Correspondence"

— Walden is afflicted with chills and measles to such an extent that it is hard to tell which is the worse.

In the same newspaper on December 13, 1907, "There have been recently over 30 cases of typhoid fever at Walden and several deaths."

And on March 17, 1927, another clip reads:

The first clinic in the campaign in Walden against diphtheria occurred at the Walden High school on Saturday morning when 377 children were given the first of three treatments or inoculations.

3-17-27

*The Newburgh Daily News*, September 16, 1916 printed, "Walden, Sept 6 ... It was decided to postpone the annual fire parade and inspection of the department from Sept 16, until next year because of the continuance of infantile paralysis, making it impossible to remove the health quarantine by the date set."

During the Influenza Epidemic of 1918, New York City took the approach of "identify and isolate those who fell ill but did not issue closure orders." In her article "Lessons from the Past," Mary Ellen Matise, describes the actions of the members of the Walden Board of Health on October 13, 1918. The primary action was to implement a quarantine – closing churches, schools, moving pictures, hotels, etc., and prohibited congregation in all public places. Violations were punishable by a fine of up to fifty dollars. The quarantine was lifted on October 26, 1918.

At this time we are all living in a history-making health crisis. The Village of Walden along with the World is experiencing a major health crisis that has included a quarantine of over 365 days. Scholars will study and document this pandemic, its long term affects on health, families and our lives will be studied for years to come.

Mary Ellen's article follows. She does a wonderful job of describing the involvement of the Walden Women's Club and the actions of the Village of Walden during the Influenza Epidemic of 1918. The Walden Women's Club was focused on "civic improvement paying special attention to public health measures." Their actions were notable as the community was seeing many communicable diseases such as scarlet fever, typhoid fever, diphtheria, polio and tuberculosis.

In early America, little was done to prevent the importation of infectious diseases. Individual municipalities were allowed to create a variety of quarantine regulations for arriving vessels. In 1878, due to continued outbreaks of yellow fever, Congress passed quarantine legislation which did not conflict with individual state rights but did allow for federal government to be involved in quarantine activities.

~Barbara Imbasciani, Society President

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### **Lessons from the Past, by Mary Ellen Matise**

Several years ago, I produced a slide program, "The History of the Walden Woman's Club and the Village of Walden in 1909," the year of the founding of the club. I focused on whatever I could find in the club's records that would shed light on what life was like in the Village.

One of the primary areas of concern for the women in the club was civic improvement paying special attention to public health measures. Their focus on child welfare led the Walden Woman's Club to secure and pay for the services of a Village Nurse whose main task was home visits caring for the many families at the time who suffered from communicable diseases such as scarlet fever, typhoid fever, diphtheria, polio and tuberculosis.

Of these, scarlet fever was one of the most prevalent, especially among children. The minutes of the club are full of references to the presence of the sickness in the community. In 1910 the women attempted to start a gardening club for the students in the Walden Elementary School but had to abandon the plan that year because of the number of cases of scarlet fever.


Authorities sometimes closed the school to check the spread of the disease. If the number of cases did not warrant such measures, children with the fever were quarantined to their homes and it was the job of the Village Nurse to ascertain that the quarantine regulations were followed.

**The Walden Woman's Club supported a Village Nurse**

During the Presidency of Mrs. J. W. Crowell (1911-1913), the club undertook the support of a Village Nurse at a salary of \$50 a month for six months.

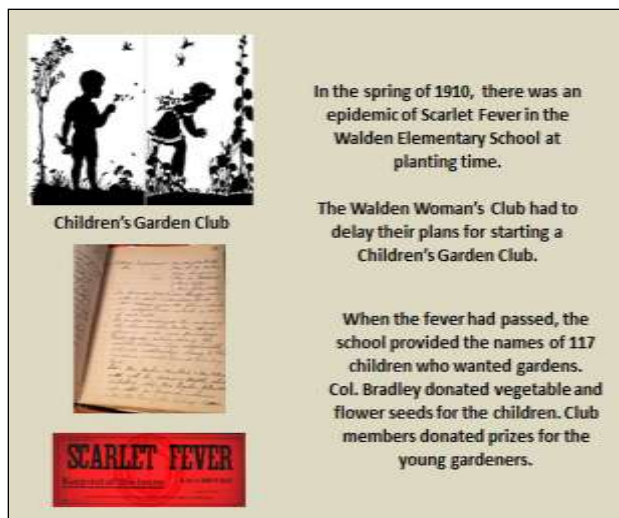
Many people benefited from her services and her salary was raised by various fund raising means plus gifts and contributions. The club's January, 1912 minutes recorded that the Village Nurse made 57 calls in November and 21 in December, 1911.

When it finally became impossible to maintain a nurse on a regular basis, an Emergency Nurse Fund was created by the Club to aid worthy causes.



The local press reported the location and duration of outbreaks and the number of cases of scarlet fever. Quarantined families were required to post signs in the front window of their homes; families were confined to their homes, and visitors were prohibited. Preventative public health campaigns were conducted by the Woman's Club, including "Swat the Fly" and anti-spitting campaigns, as well as urging the Village government to enforce stricter garbage inspections and litter clean-up in public spaces. The club paid for and installed garbage cans on Main Street.

However, none of these efforts could prepare the Village for the impact of the Influenza Epidemic of 1918. The first cases of the "Spanish Flu" were reported in New York City in September. In an attempt to lessen the likelihood of influenza spreading to New York's population, health commissioner Dr. Royal S. Copeland placed the entire Port of New York under quarantine on September 12. On September 17, the city's Board of Health added influenza to the list of reportable diseases, thus, according to the sanitary code, requiring all cases to be isolated. Copeland's strategy for combating the epidemic was not to issue closure orders, but rather to quickly identify and isolate those who fell ill.



The Village of Walden took a different approach. The Walden Board of Health reported on Oct. 11 that 130 cases of flu were being treated and that a large number of students were absent from school.

On Oct. 13, 1918 the members of the Walden Board of Health met with Dr. Laidlaw, the Sanitary Inspector of the District, representing the New York State Dept. of Health. Dr. Laidlaw stated that "the situation relative to influenza was grave and in order to prevent the further spread of the disease in Walden he had promulgated the following regulations."

- Closing of churches, schools, Sunday schools, moving pictures, Lodges and all public places and gatherings.
- Hotel open to guests of the hotel, congregation in the barroom prohibited.
- Poolrooms closed.
- Congregation in cigar stores, ice cream parlors, clubs and all public places prohibited.

"People afflicted with colds, grip, influenza, or so called Spanish Influenza, all of which at this time must be considered one and the same, are earnestly requested and recommended to remain at their homes until they have recovered from such illness."

The members of the board ordered the clerk to have posters printed and distributed. On Oct. 19 the Board of Health adopted the above regulations: they shut down the Village. To enforce these regulations the Board adopted the following: that any violation of the foregoing

resolution shall be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed fifty dollars; and, that the foregoing resolutions take effect immediately." However, violations by hotel keepers were reported to the Board. They met again on Oct. 20 and adopted the following resolution: That all bar rooms within the Village limits be closed and remain closed until further notice.

The Board's minutes state that "the Chief of Police and the State Police was (sic) ordered to see that the commands of the Health Board was (sic) strictly complied with or measures would be taken to compel them to do their duty."

As the epidemic continued, Village Health Officer Dr. L.J. Merritt was instructed to notify undertakers and the Clergy that all funerals be private and limited to family only. Finally, at a meeting of the Board of Health on Oct. 26 members acted to lift the quarantine as the number of new cases showed marked decrease. The crisis was over, and Walden's response to one of the greatest health emergencies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ended at midnight.

Having grown up in the post-war years of modern medicine, it is hard to imagine the sense of fear and helplessness that unchecked epidemics must have on a community. Yet, I remember the many summers of maternally imposed isolation that my sister and I endured, restricted to playing in our own backyard away from crowds for fear of contracting polio, a disease for which there was not yet a vaccine to protect us. Our pleas to go to the playground, or worse yet, a community pool on a hot day, fell on the deaf ears of our mother, who had grown up with stories of family members who died from the flu, or who were quarantined for an assortment of diseases from fevers to measles.

Now it seems as though we have come full circle. The current outbreak of Corona virus will certainly test our ability to respond to a widespread health emergency. Will we be up to the task of protecting ourselves? Will we learn from the lessons of the past?

Mary Ellen Matise, February 26, 2020



## Calendar 2021

As we go to press, Dining to Donate continues as our only remaining fundraiser for the time being. Events have been postponed until we can safely meet again at the Walden House. With many events planned, we will resume as soon as possible. Our thanks to FRANCO's Dining to Donate, a **Take Out Only event** on the **LAST Tuesday of every month - coupons are required** and available on Facebook, our website [www.thewaldenhouse.org](http://www.thewaldenhouse.org) and at the Josephine-Louise Public Library.

Even though we are currently unable to host regular monthly member meetings, be assured work in the Archives, Museum displays and Research continues. Findings will be available through the *Tattler* as well as our website and Facebook. Thank you for your interest and patience as we ride out Covid 19 restrictions!

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## Class Rings Photo Collection



Valley Central,  
Class of '65

The Society is collecting photos of the class rings from all

years including Maybrook, Montgomery and Walden and will continue with Valley Central. If you have a ring available to photograph, please do and send to: [gveagle@adprose.org](mailto:gveagle@adprose.org) or the Society's email: [4hswww@gmail.com](mailto:4hswww@gmail.com)

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## Search the Citizen Archives!

The *Citizen Herald* Archives are searchable online at the Josephine-Louise Public Library. Once at their site—go to the “Resource tab,” choose “Local History” and scroll down on that page to the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph about the *Citizen*, —you’ll find the link there or go to <https://walden.advantage-preservation.com/>

Another great resource for NY State history is the NYS Historic Newspapers archive at <https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org> You can choose any county.

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## Children of Orange and Ulster to take part in Polio Vaccine Trials This Spring and Summer

An excerpt from the *Citizen Herald*, March 11, 1954. (Full article appears on our website, [www.thewaldenhouse.org](http://www.thewaldenhouse.org))

Orange, Ulster and Dutchess Counties took part in polio vaccine trials during spring and summer of 1954. It was hoped the new vaccine would provide a key to eradicating polio. It was administered with parental consent to children in the first three grades of schools in participating counties. NY was one of eleven states to take part [which we now know was the successful Salk vaccine developed and named for Dr. Jonas Salk]. One half of the students were given vaccine and the other half received an inactive substance. This allowed an exact comparison between the polio rate among those who received vaccine and those who did not.

It was administered in a series of three injections; the first two doses were given one week apart and the third (a booster) four weeks later. All were in “the arm in the same way shots are given for diphtheria or tetanus.”

The vaccine was not the gamma globulin used the previous year. Called passive immunity, gamma globulin provided temporary immunity (for the few weeks it remained in the body).

The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis provided the vaccine through funds received in the March of Dimes campaigns.

**Have you been following the wonderful stories by Robert Score, Sr. and produced by his son, Robert Score, Jr.?** Thank you, to the Scores for your amazing memories of Walden and our local area! Look for these stories on Facebook or on YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjgKdYMh\\_3M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjgKdYMh_3M)

We have only ONE of Robert's drawings available for sale as a fundraiser from the Historical Society. The remaining print is of the Montgomery Railroad (see, *Fall Tattler*, 2020).

Please contact us through Anita Vandermark at 845-778-7772 or Barbara Imbasciani at 845-220-6606 for this print.

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### **St. Andrew's School House**

(Plains Road at St. Andrew's Road, Walden)

Photos donated by Sharon Eckler Stumpf of **early St. Andrews School House, early 1930s.** The building looks much the same today.

Two different photos, both say 1934 but appear to be two different classes. We only have three identified: Top row, tallest fellow is George Van Leuven, then Sharon's Mom, Grace Van Leuven Eckler in the center behind the fellow in a light shirt/coat and Ethel Van Leuven Ricci (2<sup>nd</sup> from left, same row as Grace), all siblings.

Love the little fellow with a knit cap pulled over his face. Can you help identify any of the other children?





**From the *Citizen Herald***

An excerpt from *Shawangunk Trails* by Vera D. Sheely – October 30, 1952 ...*They tell me that over in our Municipal Building here in Walden you'll see an Elk head hanging in the stair well. It has an inscription on it that explains it was shot in Jackson Hole, Wyoming by A. B. Garrison of Walden who was hunting there with Charles Crabtree of Montgomery years ago. In another early article the date shot is listed as Oct. 18, 1919 and that it was donated the same year. (Photo by Nancy Ohlmer)*

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