



Founded in 1899

VOL. 98, NO. 1

# ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

January/February 2021

## OBI staff member led to deliver God's love during shut down

When schools closed in March, 2020 due to Covid, an OBI staff member felt compelled to help some of our local students. "Susan" (not her real name) recalled, "The Lord kept dealing with me about checking on the kids. With them not being in school, there was no way to see if they had the food they needed or other needs."

Because of Covid guidelines, Susan sought the approval of the OBI president to take meals door-to-door in the county. Though nervous about making the request, she persisted, explaining, "When the Lord puts a burden on your heart for something you better take action because He has a purpose." It was approved and donated snack items committed.

Another staff member volunteered to ride along to deliver weekly lunches to about 50 children—OBI students and other children in their households. The lunches included snacks, fresh

fruit and a sandwich—sloppy joe, BBQ chicken or peanut butter and jelly. Assisted by her daughters, Susan added, "We always tried to include a scripture each week. The Word says we can't live by bread alone but spiritual food is necessary for strength especially in these uncertain times."

Schools reopened in September, and our local students could have breakfast and lunch five days a week. A month later, schools were forced to close and Susan once again felt a tug by God to resume her meal ministry, but this time to every OBI student. She recalled, "The Lord impressed on me an urgency about sharing the Gospel and the love of Christ. ... I just felt so convicted to go and see each family, ... to pray with people, share scripture and let them know they are not alone."

This time, Susan and her growing team assembled about 100 lunches a week. OBI provided a van and the



commercial kitchen. OBI elementary teacher Pam Price recounted, "I really enjoyed the smiles and conversations as we delivered the food. I found that all are in need of something, [from] a lunch ... to furniture and even vehicles. God allowed us to help with all the requests and then some."

Susan stated, "GOD is so faithful; I cannot praise Him enough for all of His provision! The world is changed one heart at a time. Share God's love with everyone you can; it does matter."

## Cross Country goes to state competition



Alex Gritton, Brayden Thomas, and Coach Steve Grant

Congratulations to OBI senior **Brayden Thomas** for advancing to the state cross country meet in November. Brayden finished as first runner-up out of 81 runners at the regional cross country meet in October. He said, "I was pretty excited about taking second, but I was trying for first. I am overall very happy with the work that I put in this year."

Freshman **Alex Gritton** also participated in cross country this season, and represented OBI at regionals.

Brayden is looking ahead: "I can't wait for track season!" □

Mark your calendar!  
**HOMEcoming 2021**  
is scheduled for Saturday,  
October 23rd!

### Also in this issue:

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## Donors Commit Funds for Renovation of OBI's Outdoor Athletic Complex

We are excited to announce that two separate donors have committed 1.5 million dollars to use toward an outdoor athletic complex at OBI.

The pledge of one million dollars

from **Bob and Susan Walker** in July, 2020, was designated for a brand new regulation track, elevated out of the flood plain. (See *Descendent* below.)

While plans for a new track were

underway, Oneida received a visit from representatives of a family foundation interested in making a significant gift to the OBI ministry. Not knowing the plans for the track, \$500,000 was offered with the stipulation that it be put toward the athletic program. This second gift opened the door for consideration of an upgrade to all of our outdoor athletic facilities.

To fully develop the athletic complex, we will need donors for each additional area (see chart left). Any group or individual who provides funding for a specific area will have "naming rights."

Covid and 2020 was a setback, but God has a future and a hope for the Oneida ministry! If you know of a group, organization or individual who may be able to give to this project, share this information with them! ☐

### OBI Athletic Complex Naming Opportunities

**Baseball Field**  
**\$250,000 Donation**

**Softball Field**  
**\$250,000 Donation**

**Swimming Pool**  
**\$150,000 Donation**

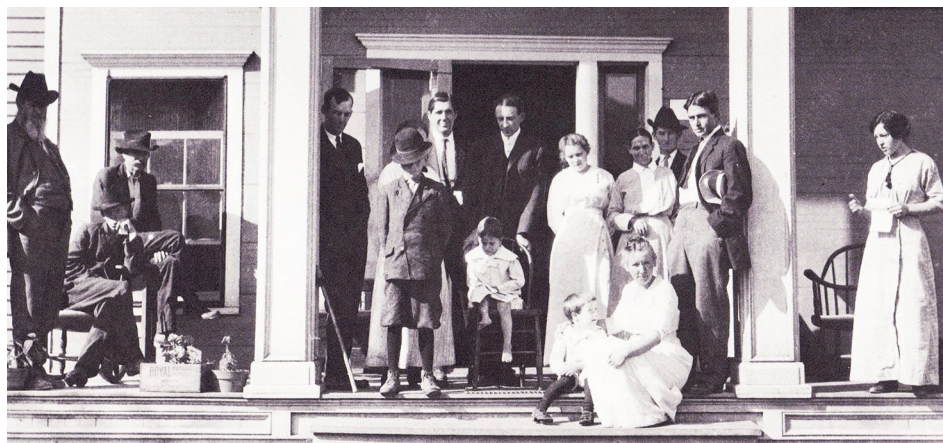
**Fieldhouse/Concession**  
**\$100,000 Donation**

**Questions? Email: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)**  
**Telephone: 606-847-4111**

### Descendent of OBI founding pioneers pledges large gift

**Bob Walker** grew up hearing about Oneida and had even visited in his youth. "It was part of my heritage. My dad was born in Oneida and lived there until he was 11 or 12 years old. ... We always had copies of *Dawn Comes to the Mountains* in the family," he said. The historical book he referenced contains photos of Walker's father and grandfather, **John Henry Walker**, "the first full-fledged college graduate to join in the work" (*The Oneida Mountaineer*, February 1937). Arriving at a crucial time in OBI's founding, J.H. Walker served as the principal from 1903-1920.

Walker remembers his grandfather fondly having spent many Sunday afternoons as a boy playing checkers with him. Later, Walker learned more about him through OBI's historical documents and publications, particularly a 1958 alumni mailing which memorialized J.H. Walker. "I could see him through the eyes of the people he impacted. It was unbelievably moving to see how he affected all those



**John Henry Walker** is looking at the camera and standing to the left side of the doorway of Anderson Hall, a structure which stands on the OBI campus to this day. Photo is circa 1912 and printed in *Dawn Comes to the Mountains*.

people. ... He gave people clothes and food. He rode up in the hollers to get kids to go to school. He gave the best years of his life to that organization," Walker said. Throughout J.H. Walker's life, both at Oneida and in Bracken County, Walker added, "His focus was on helping people and education, Christian education in particular."

Walker has yet another tie to Oneida's founding. His paternal great-

grandmother is **Martha Bowling Coldiron Hogg**, a widow in 1899 who sold a hotel in Manchester, Kentucky and acquired extensive holdings in the Oneida valley including the 10-acre knoll upon which **J. A. Burns** envisioned building his school. When approached about its use for "such a worthy purpose," she readily gave the land (*Mountain Rising*, p. 140).

*Descendent continued p.4*



## John Henry Walker 1879-1958

**John Henry Walker** was the first college graduate to join the Oneida faculty. Originally from the "Martins Creek" area, south of Manchester, Kentucky, he arrived in Oneida by mule and announced to OBI founder **James A. Burns**, "I am John Henry Walker. You influenced my father to send me to Georgetown College. I have come to work with you if you need me."

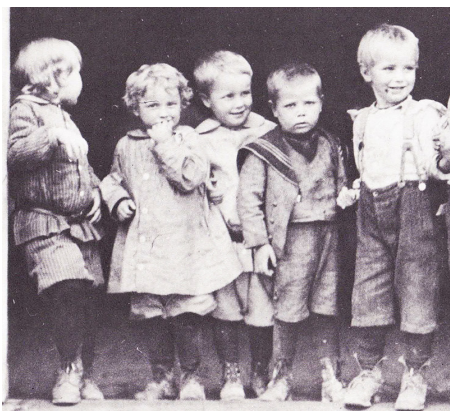
This was an answer to prayer for the handful of teachers who were studying lessons by lamplight in order to teach the high school pupils. Walker served an entire year with no remuneration. The pioneers of Oneida Institute often went without pay and supplemented their living by farming, hunting and fishing. When they did get paid, the average salary for a teacher was \$14 per month. Walker was the principal of the Oneida school from

1903-1920. Burns called Walker a "prince of teachers" and "a son of the mountains, one of the most efficient teachers I have known. He became the pride and prodigy of our school."

At Oneida, Walker married **Kay Coldiron** who was the daughter of **Martha Bowling Coldiron Hogg** (1846-1915), the widow who donated the land upon which the school was built. The Walkers left Oneida in 1920 to rear their family of three boys and a girl on a farm in Bracken County where Walker was also the principal of Brooksville High School. He returned to Oneida in 1928 with his wife and daughter, leaving his sons to run the farm, to serve as Dean and help Oneida through the dark days of the Great Depression.

They served until 1939 and returned to Bracken County where they were active members of Germantown Baptist Church—John Henry as a Sunday School teacher and Kay as the pianist/organist. John Henry died in 1958, and Kay lived until the 1970s. □

*Information taken from Mountain Rising, by Darrell C. Richardson, Dawn Comes to the Mountains, by Samuel W Thomas, the February 1937 issue of The Oneida Mountaineer, and an interview with Bob Walker, grandson of J.H. Walker. The books are available for purchase by contacting OBI.*



Bob Walker's father, Calvin (left), and two uncles are pictured in doorway of Marvin Hall, Oneida circa 1906.



## Looking Forward

For the 2020-21 school year, OBI has supported the academic progress of approximately 100 local students, both in-person and online, as well as 50 online-only learners from seven states and 10 countries.

We have begun taking applications for high school dormitory residents for 2021-22.

## Bits and tidbits

### Our mission statement

The mission of Oneida Baptist Institute is to provide a Christian living, learning and working environment in which each of its students, Christian or non-Christian, is diligently challenged to grow mentally, physically, socially and spiritually in order to acquire an *Education for Time and Eternity*.

### Connect

**Web:** [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org)

#### Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/OBI.KY>

#### Twitter:

[https://twitter.com/Oneida\\_Baptist](https://twitter.com/Oneida_Baptist)

#### President Gritton's Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/@lgritton>

#### Email:

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**Phone:** 606-847-4111

### Want an easy way to give?

**Visit** the OBI website at:

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

**Click** the "Give/Volunteer" tab.

**Click** the "Donate now" button to give via credit/debit card or PayPal.

### Want to receive OBI newsletters via email?

Send your name, mailing address, email address and the 5-digit number above your name on this issue's mailing label to:  
[diane.dimsey@oneidaschool.org](mailto:diane.dimsey@oneidaschool.org)

### More ways to support OBI:

#### • Tyson's Project A+™

Labels are worth 24 cents each!  
<http://projectaplus.tyson.com/>

#### • GM's Box Tops for Education™

Box Tops are digital!  
<http://www.boxtops4education.com/>

#### • Amazon Smile

Earn and send 0.5% of your eligible purchases for OBI.  
<http://smile.amazon.com/about>



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*Descendent continued from p.2*



*Martha Bowling Coldiron  
Hogg, Bob Walker's  
great-grandmother*

Wanting to contribute to OBI to honor his grandfather, Walker did some research to learn about the ministry today. He found a video on

a Kentucky Baptist church website of OBI President **Larry A. Gritton, Jr.** speaking about OBI. "I was very impressed with his presentation. It was very consistent with what I knew about OBI and the impact they have on people's lives." Walker stated.

Traveling through Kentucky in December, 2020, he decided to take a detour to visit the campus. It was Christmas break for OBI, but Walker

met a teacher who gave him a tour. Gritton contacted Walker after the new year, and the two met and began talking about how the school could benefit from the Walkers' gift.

Recent large donations to Oneida have been used to fund two new dormitory/classroom facilities and a cafeteria. The next major renovation is the track and field area.

On Walker's second trip to campus in July, 2020, he visited the grave of his great-grandmother on Cemetery Hill which overlooks the OBI campus.

Retired for five years, Walker added, "I knew that OBI depends on a lot of charitable gifts to sustain it. I never dreamed I'd be in a position to do something for the school, [and] I really wanted to give back in [my grandfather's] honor, my wife and I did. ... My wife is a person of strong faith, and OBI was very appealing to her."

Amidst the challenges of 2020, we witnessed God working through people to preserve and to continue the work of Oneida Baptist Institute. □

### More Campus Improvements

#### ← In the Works →

- Underwood Hall (cafeteria) completion--Summer 2021
- Burns Hall demolition Fall 2021
- Painting Sparks Hall exterior Summer 2021
- Courtyard between dormitories landscaped--Spring 2021
- Campus entrance security gate, fencing and sign--Winter 2021
  - Paving campus roads Fall 2021
- Re-upholstering chapel pews Spring 2022

**Your giving makes it possible for Oneida to keep improving to meet the needs of the next generation!**