

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society
Volume 31, No 1 July 2005



These Model Plows were made for the Paris Exposition of 1863. The collection now resides at Cornell University and was loaned for a Plowing Day exhibit.

IHS Summer Program Monday, July 25, 2005 – 7:30 PM Interlaken Reformed Church “Some Revolutionary War Patriots and Their Descendants in Seneca County, New York”

Soon after the Revolution, New York’s Finger Lakes Region was on our new nation’s western frontier. When this rich and beautiful land was opened to settlement, pioneers poured in from all over the East. Many of these settlers had served the American cause during the Revolution.

For the past seven years, Trumansburg native Mike Tunison has been actively investigating his family’s roots. So far, he has discovered forty Revolutionary Patriot ancestors. Fourteen of these patriots, the children of another ten, and eventually the descendants of all of them moved to Seneca and the surrounding Finger Lakes counties.

On July 25th, Mike will share the results of his research on these patriots. His presentation will focus on their contributions during the Revolution and their subsequent settlement in the Finger Lakes Region. Families to be discussed include: Cole, Covert, Crisfield, Frisbie, Hall, King, Miller, Porter, Sawyer, Schooley, Sherwood and Tunison.

Mike’s parents are Lewis and Jean (Wiggins) Tunison of Trumansburg. Mike graduated from Trumansburg Central School. He has degrees from Mohawk Community College and the University of

Rochester and worked as a Quality Engineer and Manager for Kodak from 1967 until retiring in 1998. A member of the Sons of the American Revolution since 2001, Mike is currently first Vice-President of the Rochester Chapter and is working with a team of Livingston County historians on a book about the 1779 Sullivan Campaign in Livingston County.

The program is co-sponsored by the Chief Taughannock Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the Finger Lakes Chapter Sons of the American Revolution.

Please come and bring a friend to learn about our patriot ancestor families. The program is free and open to everyone. Refreshments will be served.

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President's Message

A month has passed but Plowing Day is still a vivid image in my mind. My shoes are almost dry. Nelson Delavan came back from the field covered with mud just like everyone else. In a very complimentary letter a few days later he said: "The Day of Plows and Plowing was fascinating to enjoy in a way no amount of rain could dampen."

The widespread expression of interest in the Plowing Program demonstrated by participants, volunteers and visitors alike is encouraging. As we explore the future of the Society and develop a long range plan, it seems ever more clear that a facility is needed where hands-on, living history in the home, the shop, the barn, the field and all the supporting enterprises can be the vehicle for rediscovering the heritage of our area.

The Society is so fortunate to have such an excellent, enthusiastic cadre of volunteers. The Trustees believe introducing liv-

ing history such as the Plowing Day and the Fashion Show during Olde Home Day will encourage participation by even more volunteers of all ages. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who endured the all-day rain on Plowing Day and the extreme heat and humidity on Olde Home Day.

Continuing the discussion in earlier issues of the newsletter, the Trustees are still searching for a property that can fulfill the future needs of the Society. The Trustees are about to embark on a capital campaign beginning with the creation of an advisory committee of knowledgeable individuals from the community.

Once again, many thanks to those who have contributed items for this and other issues of the newsletter. Please keep them coming. They add so much interest.

Ellen Buddle

New Members

Barbara and Al Redman, Interlaken, NY
Richard E. Boyer, Holley, NY donation &
membership given by his daughter
Robert L. Dickerson, Auburn, NY
Charles French, Slaterville Springs, NY
Lewis G. Moore, Jr., Romulus, NY

New Life Members

William P. Huttenbach, Houston, TX
Valerie Bassett, Interlaken, NY,
given by Howard and Helen Bassett
Donald Betzler, Interlaken, NY

Recent Donations

The Historical Society is fortunate to have a large collection of items representing the community's history. Monetary donations and donations of artifacts, books and other items continue to come in. The Trustees would like to acknowledge these recent donors.

The Children of Pat and Ferne Patterson

A 19th Century Grain Drill and Seeder.

Jane Bowen- Early to Mid-Twentieth Century men's and women's clothing and accessories, a Gladstone Suitcase and travel literature.

Dr. John King, veterinary tools

Library News

Summer is here! And so are the new books for you to enjoy: *Broken Prey* by Sandford; *Light Housekeeping* by (new author) Winterson, *Pretty Woman* by Michaels; *Maximum Ride* by James Patterson; *A Good Yarn* by Macomber; *Count Down* by Johansen; *The Closers* by Connelly; *The Two-Dollar Bill* by Woods, just to name a few.

The Library board and volunteers extend our sympathy to the family of Ferne K. Patterson in her passing. A book of music will be added to our collection in her memory. The book *The Maps of the Civil War* by David Phillips was added in memory of 'Pat' Patterson by Pat Moore.

We welcome Scott Diamond as a new board member. It will be good to have a younger person on the board. Plans are now getting onto paper for our children's room. The "Even Start Program" under Jennifer Gray, has started coming to our library for stories. The children come to the library with their parents. Jen does the GED program, as part of the Family Literacy Project. Her phone number is 869-9636 ext. 2418 if you are interested in finding out about this program.

We want to thank our story readers for the year. They are Chris Carroll and her puppets, Ann Buddle, Wendy Barrows and Marianne Schaffner. They will be helping with our Summer Reading as well. Thanks also to the Pre K teachers for bringing the classes to the library. Mrs. Karen Murphy and Mrs. Darlene Kraemer are great with

the youngsters. They enjoy story books, the crafts and a treat, their favorite thing. They get to have some of our many books for the month in their room at school.

Our Summer Reading Program started on Tuesday June 28th. It is for all children Pre K to 6th grades, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Our theme this year is "Tune in @ the Library". We will be doing stories and crafts about music. Our special program will be "Tom Knight and his Puppets" on July 28th at 10 am, at the South Seneca Elementary School. ALL ARE WELCOME! If you have not seen one of his shows you are in for a treat.

We want to thank Robert F. Voorhees for his donation of two more volumes of the Voorhees Family History. We now have 4 volumes in the genealogy section.

There are more Books on Tape for your enjoyment on your next trip as well. Do check and see what else is new. Also new is the air conditioner system installed in June. Special thanks to board president, Andy Herrela for securing grant monies for this project. Have a great summer!

Pat Moore, Librarian



Sponsored by the Interlaken Historical Society, Interlaken Community Action Group and the Library, Paul Stillman spent Olde Home Day with us. During the morning he brought Dr. Ben Franklin to life, and in the afternoon, Nasty Ned educated children and adults on frontier life.



Dr. John King presented the Historical Society with a collection of Veterinary tools, each one identified as to its use. The tools were on display at the Plowing Day program and will be on display in the Farmers' Museum this summer.

A Busy Spring: Recent IHS Programs

The historical society has been busy with several programs since the last newsletter.

“Plowing the Soil: 1770-2005”

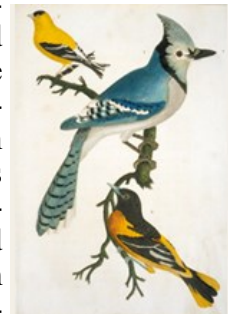
On April 30 one of our biggest challenges in recent years took place at the Hunt/Usher Barn with the John and Grace Hunt family as host and at the Persoon Farm with the Jack and Jennifer Persoon family as host. There were many exhibits in the barn relating to plows and the animals and tractors that provided the power. A collection of model plows from the 1863 Worlds Fair in Paris, was acquired by A.D. White, the first president of Cornell University. The collection was on display in the barn. There was also information on the history of the Wells Barns, and slate roofs. The Seneca County Dairy Princess was represented. At 10 AM people gathered to hear the keynote address by Professor Peter McClelland who has recently written a book about the industrial revolution in agriculture from the late 1700's until about 1840. We hope to have Professor McClelland back for an evening program.

Despite the rain which fell all day, plowing began in the field at noon with Gould Colman, retired Cornell University archivist, as narrator. Demonstrating their skills were draft horses and teamsters with a walking plow and a two way sulky plow, a Case 50 HP steam traction engine with a 6 bottom gang plow, steel wheeled tractors with trailer plows, rubber tired tractors with mounted plows and finally modern tractors pulling 7 and 10 bottom plows. About two hundred years of plowing history passed our eyes in a couple of hours. Several individuals came up, covered with mud and asked if we were going to do it again next spring. Our response- maybe in a couple of years.

Of Plumage and Poetry

“Alexander Wilson’s 1804 Ornithological Exploration of the Finger Lakes”

On May 23 the Ovid, Lodi and Interlaken Historical Societies sponsored a program at the Ovid Federated Church on America’s first ornithologist. David Corson, Librarian at Cornell University, lectured and showed slides on the development of ornithology in America and Wilson’s role in it. Marty Schlabach, librarian at the Cornell University Comstock Library of Entomology, read and commented on the “The Forester”, an epic poem written by Wilson on his journey from Gray’s Ferry, Pennsylvania, to Niagara Falls. He passed through the Ovid area with his nephew William Duncan who owned a farm in Ovid. It is believed that Wilson owned land in Ovid but documentation on its location is still to be discovered.



On display were maps of Alexander Wilson's trek, reproductions of the many prints of birds that Wilson later painted from his notes and specimens that he gathered along the way, and an original copy of the "Forester". The program concluded with a lively discussion relating to the extensive representation of Wilsons in the Ovid area.

Olde Home Day – 2005

This annual event is sponsored by the Interlaken Community Action Group (ICAG), a small collection of community spirited individuals that work very hard to put on a day long event each year. The Interlaken Historical Society becomes involved to keep the "Olde" in Olde Home Day. This year the Society took the lead in cosponsoring, with ICAG and the Library Board, presentations by Paul Stillman in the historic characterizations of Dr. Benjamin Franklin and "Nasty Ned the Frontiersman". The Society also presented a well received show demonstrating women's and men's fashions from the late 1700's through the 1970's. The show was narrated by Gould Colman, who recently retired from Cornell University where he enjoyed a career as archivist. The script for the fashion show and many of the garments were created by Nicole Nelson. Some models also created their own period costumes from patterns for authentic period clothing. Despite the heat and humidity of the day most of the models marched in the parade. Also in the parade was Doug Barkee with his 1937 Dodge Pickup Truck representing the Historical Society and transporting Town Councilman Gary Hunt and Martha Kotun representing Charles Moore who has been selected "Citizen of the Year".

The Farmers' Museum was visited by

over a hundred individuals who came to look at the exhibits, watch Howard Barrows at work in the woodworking shop, listen to Beth Buddle Bevars' violin folk music, visit with each other about the "good old days" and look over the ever growing number of books that Mary Willers presented for sale by the Society. The volunteers who enthusiastically staffed the museum for the day included David and Jean Powell, John Brooks, Tom and Barbara Duffee and Bill Gates.

Thank you to all who helped make the day a success.

Below: A young woman in her Civil War era outfit enjoys a few minutes of conversation with Paul Stillman, also known as Nasty Ned before the afternoon parade.



News From Our Neighbors
Ulysses

On view this summer are exhibits featuring the Trumansburg Telephone Co.--its equipment and employee photos, Main Street Memories and Souvenirs from Entertainment Events, and the quilted wall hanging, "Coming and Going", for which tickets are available. The Museum is located at 39 South St, Trumansburg, Monday 9-11 am, Friday and Saturday 2-4 pm.

Lodi

July 24th 4:00 p.m. Organ concert: Justin Hartz, Lodi Historical Building;
July 28th 6:00 p.m. Old Fashion Pot Luck Supper and Antique Road Show.

Ovid

The Museum opens July 7 and continues through August 27 with an exhibit of memorabilia from the Sampson Naval and Air Force Bases on loan from the Military Museum. Hours are 10 am until 2 pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

RED DOTS!

Not spots in front of your eyes, but a red dot on the mailing label of this issue of the newsletter. If there is a red dot, your dues for 2005-2006 are due.

Dues are \$10 per year for a Family, or \$100 for an Interlaken Historical Society Life Membership. Your support through a Life Membership insures that Society activities will continue for many years to come.

Ferne Elizabeth Kitson Patterson
May 5, 1918 — May 27, 2005

In our last newsletter we reported the passing of M.L. "Pat" Patterson. On May 27th 2005 Ferne Kitson Patterson died at the age of 87. We will miss this lovely couple. To all who have made gifts in memory of Pat or Ferne we say a heartfelt thank you. Donations received since the April Newsletter in memory of Pat and Ferne Patterson

Barbara H. Bell
Kim Atkinson
John S. Genung
Judy and Doug Barkee
Everett and Diane Bassette Nelson
Tom and Pat Fredette



Cousin Hunting

Can you identify the location of Mount Airy? This picture was taken in March 1937. Shown at Mount Airy are H.P. Minor, Fred Usher, Jack Johnson and John Kellogg. There is a companion picture to this one, its difference is only in one person. John Kellogg was in front the camera and Lyle Van Arsdale was taking the picture.

An afternoon chat with Miriam (Rickard) Yarnell and her sister Ellen (Rickard) Hawkes Daughters of Charles D. Rickard. Continued from Volume 30 No 4. By Bruce Clark

Miriam loved mechanical things and loved to talk about them. She remembered each detail very accurately.

Miriam: We did not have power company electricity here at the farm on the Interlaken Beach Road until the late 1950's. The electric company wanted \$3,000.00 to run wire down here from Rt. 89. We could not afford that. Instead, we generated our own electricity. We had a separate generator house half way between the house and the barn.

The first generator was a Delco system and was semi-automatic. It was a nice system and ran at 600 RPM. Nice and slow and did not race and wear itself out like many of the faster speed generators. It had sixteen glass batteries and the charging generator had to be started manually. It would turn off automatically when the batteries were fully charged. It was not really enough.

We added a second generator. It was built by Willy's-Knight. Oh, it ran nice and smooth and it had sleeve bearings. We never had any trouble with it, even in the coldest winter weather the glass batteries never froze if they were kept charged. It was fully automatic. It would start itself using power from one battery when the batteries were low and charge them. Both systems produced 32 volts DC. When we were drawing too much of a load of electricity at the barn or house, and ran down the batteries from the semi-automatic, the automatic would take over. Both the house and barn were wired for a 32 volt DC system. The wires had to be heavier than those used today for AC, so when we eventually got electric from the power company we were more

than adequately wired for it.

The batteries would last about two years. The automotive batteries were a lot cheaper than the glass batteries because you were just paying for the glass. Each battery had a little ball indicator that floated up and down indicating the amount of charge they held. We tested them often. I had several 32 volt appliances. I had an iron, a mixer, and an electric butter churn. We also had a 32 volt refrigerator out in the wood shed. The compressor was belt driven. One night a rat got caught in the belt and what a mess we had!

When we wanted a television set in 1949 they did not make 32 volt DC models. We bought a regular television set and needed 120 Volts AC to run it. We bought a stationary 120 volt generator mainly to run our television and a few other 120 volt appliances. It had no batteries, it just produced electricity when it was running. The gas tank held one gallon. It started by turning a crank. We would start and use power from it when we were in the house and needed 120 volts. One gallon of gas would run it most of the evening, or until about 11:30 PM. By then the news was over and the generator would run out of gas. The television picture tube would darken and go out, and we knew it was time for bed.

In the late 1920's we lived up at the other house, corner of Rt. 89. (The former Bement house) Asa and I put a water-powered generator down at the foot of the

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 7

falls and generated our own electric with water power. Using a system of ropes and pulleys, the two of us hauled that big water powered generator down over the bank and set it up at the foot of the falls. It worked

**Plowing the Soil: 1790 — 2005
A Day of Plows and Plowing**



Photographs, clockwise from upper left

1: Gould Colman narrating the plowing demonstration
Marty Schlabach looking on.

2 The McMinn Farm Belgians with Sulky plow
weather isn't stopping them.

3: Professor Peter McClelland before his presentation
plowsthrough the ages.

4: Dick Ross checks the field behind his John Deere

5: Bob Collins with his Ford 2N

6 Larry Swank drives Jerry Barrett's McCormick

7: Bruce Austic's modern plow and Bobby Tomlinson's
Deere passing in plowed field.

8 Tom and Ed Curtis' Steam engine driven by
Special thanks to Todd Welch for hauling the engine
from Pompey.

Photo credits: 1 Albert Schlabach; 5 Carolyn Zogg; others on

*Special thanks to John & Grace Hunt and Janice
soon for allowing us to use their
barn and field for this
ful day.
We would also like to thank
shot for the use of the
lot and the 4-wheeled
traffic.*

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rmick Deering 10-20.
Tompson's John

by Jack Persoon.
he Steam Tractor here

ers on this page Nicole Nelson

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allowing us to use the
fields for this wonder-

also like to thank Hip-
e use of their parking
e 4-H'ers for directing



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Treasures in the Collection

By Nicole Nelson

Earlier this year an inquiry went out in my online newsletter for the Costume Society of America. They were looking for historic costumes for their 2007 Historic Fashions Calendar; “Costumes: Historic Fashions from the Performing Arts.”

I had gone through the Historical Society clothing collection a few years back. I knew just the piece that could be submitted for consideration. In 1961, Miss Hilda Horton gave the Historical Society a three-piece dress of golden cotton with black velvet accents. All the donor knew was that it was worn in in the 1890s in a cantata written by our own John M. Chadwick. This was enough information for the time, but in planning to submit to the calendar series, we needed more information.

Looking at the outfit spread on the table, it had an American West look to it. We used this as a springboard and then started to see if we could find at least a list, if not synopses, of the cantatas Chadwick had



written. We could then try to determine which one the outfit might have been from.

The search began with the items in the collection at the Historical Society, but didn't get very far. From there, we started searching some of the newspapers, but without at least some idea of a date, that wasn't an easy task. We then moved to searching online to see if there was anything. At first the tasks seemed insurmountable and the results not very helpful.

Then we stumbled on an excerpt from a

journal that was about the “Musical Chadwicks of Central New York.” After a little more searching we seemed to hit on a lead. There was mention of a cantata performed in April 1891 called *The Excursion*. With just a title, and no synopsis or summary, it could have been the one we wanted. We went back to the newspapers and looked for the article. We found it, but it didn't give us much more to go on.

Since it seemed that we had a lead we thought it was time to take some pictures for the application. We got the dress out and put it on a mannequin. Still not having any luck on finding anything about *The Excursion*, we thought we'd leave her dressed for the summer as part of the local millinery shop.

One day we hit on a new discovery. We had looked through the picture collection for anything that Chadwick had written. There was a mention of a cantata *Joseph's Bondage*, which is based on the same Biblical story as *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Being familiar with that musical, I was walking past the dress and stopped to look at it from a different angle. With its brass stars and moon trims, I thought, what if it was from *Joseph's Bondage* instead?

This led to a search for the newspaper review found while looking for *The Excursion*. The review did not add anything new, but the picture from the performance did. After examining it with a magnifying glass, we had found the dress.

Standing in the back was a young lady with a two-toned costume that had corresponding trim lines to the one on the mannequin.

We now had the costume, a picture of it from the performance, the title of the canta-

ta, and a review of the cantata. We had everything we needed to prepare an application for the calendar. Unfortunately, confusion about the process resulted in a missed deadline.

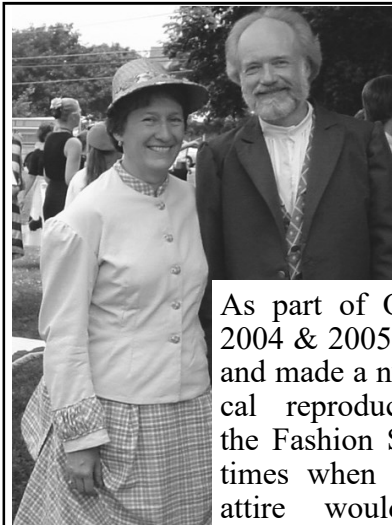


Cast picture from the 1890 performance of Joseph's Bondage. Prof J.M. Chadwick is seated in the front row.

It is unfortunate that we were unable to submit the costume for the calendar, but that though the effort put into making the attempt, we were able to better identify a piece of the collection for future generations. And as previously decided, the costume would remain on display for the summer with some of the information that was uncovered.

You can see the costume, musical score and this cast picture on display at the Museum this summer. Museum hours: Saturday 10-1 & Sundays 1-3 during July and August.

About the Author: Nicole Nelson has been a volunteer with the Historical Society for several years. A 2004 graduate of Mansfield University, (PA) with a degree in Theatre Costuming and an interest in historical clothing, she has inventoried the clothing collection to increase access for use and study by others. This past winter Nicole created a number of programs for use in the Long Range Planning process and for our annual meeting.



As part of Olde Home Day 2004 & 2005 Nicole designed and made a number of historical reproductions for use in the Fashion Shows and other times when the right period attire would be helpful. Shown here are Mary Jean Welser and Marty Schlabach in two of the "new" fashions for this year. Mary Jean is wearing an 1870s bustle dress and Marty has stepped out of the early 1800s to join in the festivities.

real good for a couple of years. Back then, most radios were battery powered with wet cells or an automobile battery.. We had extra power so we re-charged peoples batteries from that generator, for 25 cents. We had a valve we could open and close to control the flow of water going to the generator, using a rope from our kitchen door. One night the valve froze open and we could not close it. You have to have a load on a generator that is running full speed or they'll burn out. We had all the lights in the house on all that night! The next summer we had a terrible rain storm and the flooding destroyed our generator. It washed away, wires and all.

In the 30's the Westinghouse place had a big sale. By then, the electric company had lines down there and they did not need their generator any more. Asa and I bought a lot of old parts, including a volt meter and several big knife switches. They were around here for a long time, but I think after we got (commercial) electricity installed, we sold them with the Delco system.

At the same Westinghouse sale, we bought the pool table from the room over the boathouse for \$35.00 We moved it to our home on Interlaken Beach Rd. We had many wonderful times playing pool. Sometimes until four o'clock in the morning!

Bruce Clark: The tape ran out at this point.

I miss the wonderful times sitting on their porch in summer or sitting by the old kitchen wood stove next to a crackling fire in winter and listening to their stories. I always learned something new and interesting.

I think of other adventures.

One day I was driving by and saw Miriam laying on the ground beside her

car. She was on her back. I stopped and ran to her side. She said: "It's ok, I'm trying to fix a leak in my gas tank! I think I got it fixed".

Miriam's most treasured possessions were her two Ford tractors. With them she plowed the fields, hauled wood home from the woods on her property. One tractor was connected by a belt to a large buzz saw attachment. Miriam often used the buzz saw to cut up firewood for her kitchen wood stove. In the fall, her woodshed was neatly piled to the ceiling with wood to provide fuel for her stove. The stove not only provided heat, but had an oven. She baked bread, cakes and cookies.

Often in summer, she could be seen in her field plowing with one of her tractors, always wearing a summer dress accompanied with a large straw hat.

She was an excellent shot with a rifle and knew how to keep the pests from her vegetable garden. "I had to send another rabbit to heaven today, 'hated to do that, but it was eating up my plants"

When I had problems with my water pump, Miriam knew how to fix it! She told me she had a water pump just like it and experienced the same problems, adding "I had that thing apart and back together so many times I could do it blindfolded" She explained that the new rubber replacement valves were not made right. They had to be exactly flat and needed to be smoothed on fine sandpaper so that they would seal properly. I took her advice, came home and sanded the new valves, and my water pump worked perfectly.

I remained friends with Miriam and Ellen for several year after the taped interview. In the following years both ladies became frail. Ellen had a permanent back inju-

ry that occurred during a rare event in 1934 when Cayuga lake had frozen over. Ellen and a group of friends decided to ride a bicycle on the ice. The bicycle slipped and Ellen fell on the ice and suffered a severe injury to her back that remained with her the remainder of her life. That year, Miriam told of skating on the lake. She said: "there was a big crack in the ice way out near the center of the lake, but when I came to it I simply jumped over it"

In the mid 1990's Miriam had a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. There it was discovered she had advanced cancer. At the hospital, I visited her often, and sat with her and we would talk. Ellen was in the nursing home a short distance down the road. I visited her also. One day I asked Ellen if she would like to visit her sister in the hospital. I was very surprised to have her say: Yes. Ellen was unable to walk, but I managed to get her into a wheel chair and into my car to visit her sister one last time. A few days later Miriam lapsed into a coma and died peacefully. Ellen died shortly after.

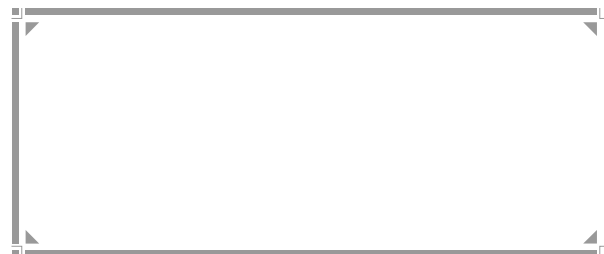
It is now 2005. The old house still remains. I drive past it every day and miss seeing the friendly hands waving in the window to me as I drive up the hill. I miss our friendly visits and the popcorn balls she made and gave to me at Christmas. What was once a happy home for two widows now stands vacant and deteriorated and a shadow of the past.

* * *

The Historical Society was given a bureau by the Yarnell family. This summer it is on display in the ladies hat shop, where a number of original and reproduction hats, as

well as other accessories are on display. If you can't visit the museum during normal hours, contact the Society at 607-532-4213 or at Information@Interlakenhistory.org

The Interlaken Historical Society wishes to preserve, celebrate and appreciate the past and present of our community in order to embrace the future.



“Grandma’s House”

(A story by Bob Dickerson and his time with his Grandmother, Ida May Stout Wixom of Interlaken)

Part of the good old days for me was the time spent with my Grandma Wixom. My Mother was sick for a time and I lived with Grandma for quite a spell during that time.

Grandma lived alone, as Grandpa Ogden Wixom had died at a young age and before I was born. She made her living as a seamstress in her home, as in those days there was no help for a widow, like social security or welfare. She worked hard to keep her home and pay her bills.

I can still picture her today at her treadle sewing machine, with her mouth full of pins. As she needed a pin, it came out on her tongue, and I was amazed she never swallowed one.

One of her customers I remember was a William Wheeler who ran the local bank. If I was there at Christmas time, he always gave me a silver dollar and that was great, as at ten or twelve the most I ever had in my pocket was a nickel or some pennies. He always needed a suit or pants altered. She had many other customers in the village and it kept her very busy.

Her home was on the back street on the east side of Interlaken and bordered on the railroad track. I believe the street name was Clinton but it’s hard to remember. (Phyllis Betzler believes the street to be Leroy between Railroad Avenue and Clinton.)

It had a central heating system with one large round register in the living room. A two hole outhouse in the backyard and a large garden. No heat upstairs where I slept, but she always put a soap stone in the bed before I went up. This was warmed in a large old coal range in the kitchen, which I

think used wood also.

She was a wonderful cook and could make a great meal out of almost anything. She kept a large garden, which I helped her with at times. Also she kept chickens which I helped her kill and clean. It was something to see the chickens run around with their heads chopped off and then they were hung on the clothesline to flop and bleed out. I then would help her scald them and pull the feathers out. We ate a lot of chicken in those days and even though I felt sorry for the chickens, they sure tasted good at dinner time.

I also helped Grandma make homemade root beer. Not sure how she made it but it sure was good. After it was made, she stored it on some shelves in the cellar. Every once in a while you would hear a loud noise and it was a bottle of root beer exploding. My favorite treat was Sunday night and some popcorn and a bottle of homemade root beer. The popcorn she grew in her garden and I helped her shuck the kernels off the cob when dry. Boy, did that make your hands sore and raw but it was worth it.

She bought her milk and butter from a man down on Lakeview Street on the east part of town below the tracks. Many times I would go down there with her quart tin milk pail and bring it back. The man lived in a home and had a cow where my grandson Karl Westervelt lives today. The milk pail with a handle, I somehow acquired after Grandma died and my daughter Kathy Sweet in Poplar Ridge across the lake has it now. It is in pretty rough shape, but a wonderful memory and close to a hundred years old.

Under my bed upstairs was a chamber pot for my night time use. This had to be

taken to the two hole outhouse each morning and then rinsed out good. There was a train called the Black Diamond that went by, I believe about 11 a.m. each morning. It looked to me like it was going like the wind. If I was out there in the back of the garden, the engineer would wave as he whizzed by. I remember my Dad, Joe Dickerson, and John Kellogg going to either Geneva or Ithaca and riding that train on its last run before it was shut down for good.

On Sunday Grandma and I would walk up to the Baptist Church for Sunday school and church service. She loved the church and my Aunt Carrie Wixom sang in the choir there.

The minister, Kenneth Arnold I believe was his name, had built a replica of the church with a slot in the tower. If it was your birthday that week you went up during the service and put in the slot the number of pennies you were old. Aunt Carrie Wixom never married and lived at home with Grandma all her life. She was a great help and worked at the local canning factory every summer to help with the bills.

Later in my teen years I was a janitor of that church and I believe I got a dollar for cleaning on Saturday and starting the coal furnaces on Sunday morning. But that is another story to be told another time.

While staying with my grandmother, she taught me to crochet, knit and tat, which she was always doing while listening to the radio at night. To this day, although I don't do it, I can remember crocheting and making long strings out of yarn. Also I learned to sew, which came in very handy when my wife died early in her life and left me with three young girls. All of these experiences with Grandma and also my Mother, a wonderful cook, came in handy later in life.

Grandma was a hard worker and a very proud lady and never asked for help to get thru life. My Dad would help her with maintenance things on the house when needed, but again, she never really asked for anything, that I remember.

One little thing that comes to mind is me going with a bucket down by the railroad station and picking up pieces of coal spilled as they filled the tenders on the trains. In those times you did anything to help get by and save a few pennies.

Many nights we sat on her porch and watched the world go by. That is where we talked and she taught me in her own special way.

“I LOVE YOU GRANDMA”



Ida May Stout Wixom died April 2, 1957, age 83. She is buried at Lake View Cemetery with her husband Ogden Cole Wixom who died November 27, 1906 age 45.



Ed Turk guides the walking plow as part of the Plowing Day demonstration. See pages 8 & 9 for more pictures from the day.

Mark Your Calendar

October Newsletter Deadline:
September 13, 2005
October Meeting:
October 24, 2005

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Thank you and best wishes to Barbara Kinne as she relocates in Colorado. Your work on the newsletter has been appreciated.



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Summer Museum Hours
July and August
Saturday 10 am to 1 pm
Sunday 1 to 3 pm
Other times by appointment
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