

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society
Volume 31, No. 4 April 2006

www.InterlakenHistory.org

Ink Sketch donated by
the Interlaken American
Legion, see article on
page 3.



Spring Meeting to be Held **May 8th.**

Don Olney Toy Maker & Top Collector

Don Olney has been a toy maker for 32 years and a spinning top collector for about 14 years. Don likes nothing more than sharing many of his favorite tops with people of all ages. He has performed in nursing homes and schools, in church, at Scout meetings, at museums of all kinds, and has run top spinning workshops at the International Jugglers Association Annual Convention. Don's Top Cart is home to over 100 tops...many of his favorites from his personal collection of over 7,000 tops from all over the world.

During his Top Show, he demonstrates, explains, plays with, and tells stories about spinning tops from all over the world. Everyone will have a lot of fun, and will be amazed at the variety of tops in the world. Learn about tops from different cultures, tops that make music, tops that spin upside-down, tops with magnets, tops with string, tops with springs, gyroscopes, tops that spin without touching them, tops that grow in the garden, tops to play games with, and tops that draw pictures. Learn about the 7 tops that made a little boy cry, and how Don made him happy again!

Please join the Interlaken Historical Society on Monday, May 8th at 7:30 p.m.

at the Interlaken Reformed Church for this enjoyable program. The meeting is open to the public and refreshments will be served.



Plan now to visit the Interlaken Historical Society Museums when you visit Interlaken this summer. They will be open Saturday 10-1 and Sunday 1-3 in July and August, or by appointment, call 607-532-4213 For a preview of the exhibits visit our website: www.InterlakenHistory.org

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President's Message

This morning, February 17th, we woke to a very unusual fifty degrees with a strong wind out of the west. The wind continued to build and whistled through the cracks and knotholes in the horse barn where I held our reluctant gelding Luke, while the blacksmith did his work. Pretty soon the light bulb went dark, probably a tree down across the wires someplace. How long will we be without power? In more practical terms, will the power come back on before the cattle's watering tub is empty? At least it has been unusually warm and there is no ice on the pond to break before dipping out water by the bucketful.

Expecting the wind and much colder temperatures, the plan for the day had been to stay inside and start drafting an article about the Old Baptist Church in Covert for the April newsletter. However, without electricity, the computer doesn't work and you can't draft anything without a computer, right?

So I put some more wood in the stove and inventoried the little pile of books and magazines by my chair. *His Excellency George Washington* by Joseph Ellis, *The History of the Town of Covert*, compiled by Wayne Morrison, Sr., *Farming Magazine*, published by Friends of the Agrarians, *Diary of an Early American Boy*, by Eric Sloane, and *Small Farmers Journal* published by Lynn Miller. Surely the power would be back on soon so I chose *Farming Magazine*, maybe time for an article or two.

Although the article I selected is not in a local setting, it could easily have come from our little corner of the world. The article is titled "Sabbath Farming" written by Norman Wirzba, chair of the philosophy department at Georgetown University, Georgetown, Kentucky. Professor Wirzba

recalls his grandfather who spent a lifetime farming in Poland, Germany and finally Alberta, Canada. "Opa" as the grandfather was referred to, came to southern Alberta with his family in mid-life "after suffering the bitter violence and deprivation of war, the pain of family separation and the humiliation of being a prisoner of war."

To "Opa" the Sabbath was more than just a day for church, rest and recreation. "His world informed as it was by peasant virtues of thrift and humility demonstrated patient acceptance of life, and an ability to rest and to find peace in the midst of hard work." While other family members would relax after their noon meal, "Opa" would "grab his scythe and bucket, search out a patch of fresh green grass, mow it down and head over to the chicken coop." The author observed that the chickens knew what was up and he is sure they came running with grins on their faces for these chickens surely loved the offering of fresh cut grass. They gobbled it down as "Opa" grinned in sheer delight.

These chickens had the run of the farm so it was not necessary but this daily ritual demonstrated "Opa's" care for the flock and speaks volumes about his view toward life in general.

I am sure we each can recall some memorable event such as described above in our own lives right here in our own community that paints a picture of the values and caring that we have observed.

The power still isn't back on. However, I sure have enjoyed this opportunity to read a bit and share this message. Maybe,



instead of waiting for mother nature to make it happen, we should power down a little more often to give us a chance to read, reflect and write down some of our stories for our family or to share with others.

Editor's note- The power didn't come back on until 3 AM so there was plenty more time to read- by kerosene lamp. Can anyone provide information on the proper procedure for trimming a wick?

Two Gifts from the American Legion

By Ann Buddle

An unexpected gift was received by the Historical Society at the January program. Gerry Messmer, Commander of the Interlaken American Legion, presented several items relating to military history. These pieces were discovered by the members of the Legion and thought to deserve a wider audience. The Society wholeheartedly agrees.

A framed "Roll of Honor" lists the names of our military buried in Lake View Cemetery, Farmer, New York prior to May 30th 1894. It includes those who served in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War.

What a splendid piece of history! There are many family names still familiar to the town of Covert. Farmer has become Interlaken but many of the family names remain the same.

Hidden in the frame behind the "Roll of Honor", the members of the Legion found a finely drawn pen sketch. This too was gifted to the Society. It depicts a Grand

Army of the Republic veteran leaning on the arm of a young soldier. Perhaps someone can identify the uniform of the young soldier. World War I? Who is the artist? The sketch is unsigned. We'd be pleased to have someone try to answer these questions!

The Historical Society plans to feature these wonderful pieces in a summer display at Olde Home Days and in the museum. But our "Roll of Honor" is incomplete. Many more men and women have served our country, and us, by enlisting in the various military organizations of the United States.

We invite you to send a copy of a photo, or an original to be scanned and returned to you, of a service person to be included in our exhibit. We would like to frame the "Roll of Honor" with an expanded roll of honor. It's our hope to surround the "Roll of Honor" with photographs of our military personnel up to the present day. There certainly have been many such men and women between 1894 and 2006!

Please send a photo of someone who has served or is serving in the military, listing the name, date, branch of the military and location. The picture may have been taken in your backyard at home or in some faraway place like Baghdad. Help us to feature and thank those you have won our freedom and continue to defend it today.

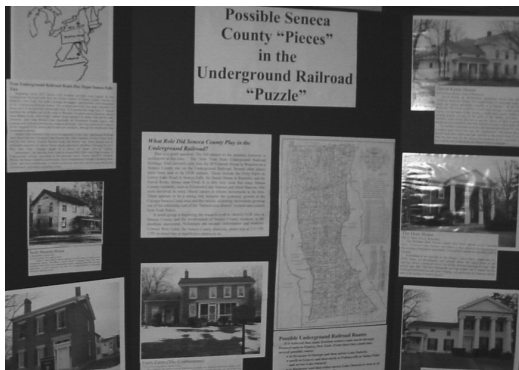


Library News

Thought I'd give you a look at the Book-Mobile in the country of Turkey – I think it is great how “books” travel country wide. Our son is over there in Adana and sends me interesting items every now and then. Our library doesn't have a book mobile but you can come visit us most days of the week. We have more books on CD for you to enjoy, now that most new cars have CD players.

Our children's story hours are going great. Connie Pell was our reader for February, along with Wendy Barrows.

One of our new board members, Chris Wolfe, said he would be happy to read if I needed someone. I think board members need to get involved more in library activities. Our president is traveling again so Scott



One of the displays at the March 27th Follow the Drinking Gourd Program, presented by the Interlaken, Lodi and Ovid Historical Societies.

New Members

Neil G. Young, Seneca Falls

William J. Woodworth, Painted Post, NY

New Life Members

Mark S. Zaharis, Ithaca

Walter Gable, Seneca Falls



Bookmobile in Turkey June 2005 Photo by Fred Moore.

Diamond is acting president. We had a contractor in discussing what's needed for our building project.

We received many interesting items from the Patterson estate. Some will go into our genealogy section. I put some large type books on our shelves. Donations are a great part of our library. Thank you to all who give and have given items.

Happy Spring!

News of our Neighbors

Ovid Historical Society

April 17 Ovid's Antique Road Show -7:00 pm. at the Museum, 7203 So. Main Street. Bring up to 3 items to be appraised for \$1.00 by Antique dealers, Robert Hungerford & Sara Dawley. There will be a 50/50 raffle and refreshments.

Lodi Historical Society

Monday May 29, Memorial Day Observance 11 am with guest speakers and Color Guard.

Sunday, June 4, 4 pm Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble. Mozart's *String Quartet in D* and Elgar's *Piano Quintet*. Michael Salmirs, artistic director.

Adults \$12; students \$6. Reception.

In preparation for the August 5th tour of the Historic Hamlet of Covert we have featured a number of buildings and spaces in the Newsletter. In the June issue we will feature the remaining buildings and homes that will be open during the self guided tour. For more information on the tour or to volunteer contact Sally Hubbard at 532-3423.

Covert Town Hall

By Doug Barkee

This little Greek Revival building was built in 1848 when Covert was called Pratts Corners. It is situated upon lands donated by Col. Chauncey Pratt. The first Annual Town Meeting was held in the new lecture room on March 12, 1850. It is generally understood that the money was raised by subscription and not by tax on the town. A room on the second floor was occupied for several years by a historical society and debating club, composed of a number of men who were well qualified to discuss the question of the day. In later years it was used for meetings of the Good Templars, Knights of Maccabees, and Grange.

It is a timber framed, 3 bay structure with wood cladding and is still fitted with the original 16 over 12 and 12 over 12 sash. It exhibits typical Greek Revival features such as a 6/12 pitch roof, heavy entablature with gable returns and an interesting door surround.

At the present time it is unoccupied. The Town of Covert is now conducting its business and elections in Interlaken at the American Legion Building because the old



Covert Town Hall, photograph from the Society Collection

town hall was hard to heat, had no indoor plumbing and was not handicap accessible. Hopefully it will pass into someone's hands who will fix it up or restore it.

Local memorabilia will be on display at the Town Hall on August 5th, be sure to stop and see the displays.

The Old Baptist Church at Covert

By Allan Buddle

Weekly services continue to be held at the historic Baptist Church in the Hamlet of Covert led by Pastor William Estes. Mary Louise Stillwell, Secretary of the Baptist Church says "we have twenty to thirty members and have a good attendance every Sunday." A recent funeral service for Louise Stevens Stafford of Lodi brought her many family members to the church on a Sunday afternoon. Following the service where many of her family recalled her life and talents the congregation filed through the fellowship room to fill their plates before returning to the sanctuary to sit, eat and visit before beginning the trip home.

Continued on page 6

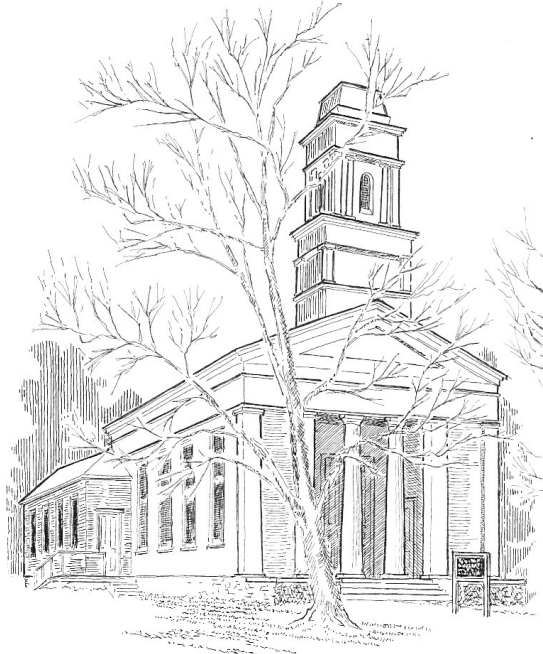
The Old Baptist Church at Covert

Continued from page 5

Although the present edifice wasn't started until 1850 and dedicated during the pastorate of Elder Wardner, the Covert Baptist Church began much earlier. The original meeting house was a large barn-like building with lumber enough in the heavy timbers to have built several modern buildings of the same size. However, the story of the early church is mostly a story of Minor Thomas, an early settler. Minor Thomas lived in Albany County at an early age and then moved to the Covert area in 1798. The place now called Covert took his name and was first called Thomas' Settlement. After the Covert Church was organized in 1803, he became the first pastor.

From a paper read at the 100th anniversary, it is learned that a number of brethren of the Towns of Ovid and Hector, headed by Minor Thomas, sent delegates to the Seneca Association. As a result "the Covert Baptist Church was constituted February 16, 1803 being known at first as the Baptist church of Ovid and Hector." Minor Thomas was ordained to preach. There were twenty-eight constituent members of sixteen different surnames. It is interesting to note that a current scan of the area telephone books finds ten of those same surnames still here in south Seneca County, two hundred and three years later.

On April 26, 1804, a month after Seneca County was formally organized, the Church Covenant was adopted. The first few lines follow: "We, a number of



Sketch by James Parks, Ulysses Historical Society

Baptist brethren in the towns of Ovid and Hector-holding the Doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Eternal and Personal Election to holiness here, and Eternal Life hereafter-..." The document is reproduced verbatim on page 35 of *The History of Covert, Seneca County*, by Wayne E. Morrison, Sr., 1983.

Minor Thomas earned most of his living as a farmer. From *Twenty Five Early Settlers* by Wheeler Bassett we learn that he "was a great worker. There was not a lazy bone in his body. When not at work for himself he would assist his brother farmers. In the harvest field at lunch time, none could tell a story better than he. He was noted for his skill at breaking oxen and always owned a nice yoke of steers.

During his pastorate the old church at Covert was often filled in summer while a congregation of several hundred gathered about the open doors and windows outside the church.”

On March 9, 1805, the name of the church was changed to the Second Baptist Church of Ovid and on November 1, 1807, it was voted that Barzilla King serve the church as chorister, “to set the psalms in our public worship.”

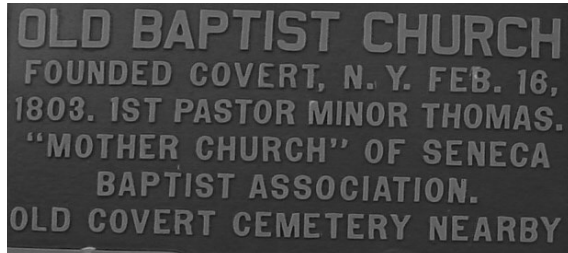
As the sparsely settled area developed and the population grew, additional meeting places were needed. In 1809 meetings were held one half of the time at the home church in Thomas’ Settlement, one fourth of the time at Samuel Hanley’s in Hector and one fourth of the time at Peach Orchard or other stations. The words, “Mother Church of Seneca Baptist Association” on a NYS Historical Marker near the Old Baptist Church, hint at the effectiveness of the Baptist movement at the time and Minor Thomas’ important contributions. By 1818, when Minor Thomas and many of his church families moved to Fayette County Indiana, new Baptist churches had been established in Bennettsburg, Ulysses, Mecklenburg, Enfield and three in Hector. Additional churches were formed in Trumansburg and Farmer (Interlaken) in 1819, Peach Orchard and another in Ulysses in 1820, Rushford (Allegheny County),

and Lodi in 1821, twelve in all.

From the biography of Franklin Y. Thomas, Minor’s grandson, we learn that “Minor entered land in Harrison Township, Fayette County, Indiana. He improved a farm and passed the remainder of his days there. He was affiliated with the Primitive Baptist Church, and did pioneer work in its establishment throughout eastern Indiana, his main object in life being the elevation of his brother men.” (Provided by Ron Branson, Fayette County History Preservation Society).

“On September 2, 1821, the Baptist Church of Covert appointed J.P. Woodworth, Nathan Cole, Daniel Cole, William Stillwell, and Lewis Porter, to represent the church at the Seneca Association, with authority to unite with that body, and on Wednesday, September 5, the union was effected.” In 1822 Elder Obed Warren was engaged as pastor, his salary to be two hundred dollars and “fire-wood fit for the fire”. At that time services were held in the school house at Hall’s Corners, now owned by BZ Maranca. In 1853, the 50th anniversary of formation, the members voted to “celebrate with appropriate services.”

July 4th 1876 was a notable day in the history of the Covert Church. “Nearly one thousand people assembled to witness the raising of the centennial bell into the belfry and hear for the first time the melodious tones of one of the finest bells



from the Meneely foundry.”

During the Second World War, the Chaplin's Division at Sampson donated hymnals which are still in use. Including student pastors in the 1960's and 1970's, thirty-seven pastors have served the Covert Baptist Church between 1803 and 1976, with service ranging from only a single year to that of Minor Thomas who served fifteen. The year 1976 also became very important for the Church. In need of a sprucing up, the Interlaken Grange painted and repaired the Church as a Bicentennial Project with donations from the congregation and much of the work done by Grange members under the leadership of Phil Stannard. At this time, after a “slow down” in services for a few years, Reverend Larry Dean arrived and services were once again held on a regular basis.

Another Bicentennial Project in Covert was the creation of the Covert Historic District which resulted in a corridor of historic buildings being listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Old Covert Church was one of more than twenty places on the list that comprises the District.

The 175th Anniversary of the Old Covert Baptist Church was celebrated on Sunday, February 19, 1978 with a special service led by Pastor Dean. In his address, Pastor Dean stated that “the true church is people (Christians working together) rather than a building. The church building is not meant to be the goal of faith; it is simply a

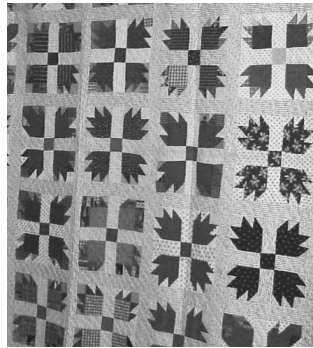
meeting place where Christians can learn to follow Christ.”

As one reviews the 1803 to 1849 records of the Old Covert Baptist Church which are now located in the Rare Books and Manuscripts collection at Cornell University, Pastor Dean's comment above is clearly born out. Churchgoers of those times were discussing issues such as: how cases of public and private morality are to be handled, family problems, holding the doctrine of election, desiring open communion, intoxication, equality, members discharged for holding Universalist views, disagreements over Mason membership, exclusion after joining the Methodists, the care of a destitute woman, revivals, and many more. Although not stated in the print we know that the pioneers of our area lived in relative isolation and church provided a very important opportunity for socialization and sharing. Can you imagine a life with interaction with other humans only occurring once every week or two?

On August 5, 2006 the Old Baptist Church at Covert will be open to the public along with many other historic buildings there. Quilts of the era will be on exhibit in

the Church compliments of the Ulysses Historical Society. Everyone is invited to share in this very special day in the Hamlet of Covert.

The Bear Claw quilt is only one of many allegedly used as guides along the Underground Railroad. Quilt from the collection of Gail Snyder

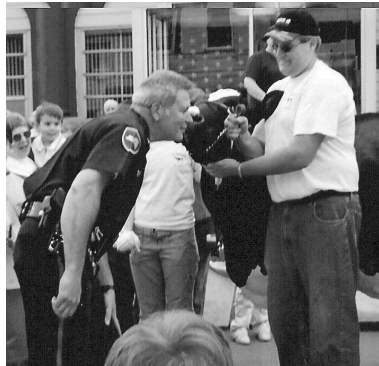


Olde Home Day 2006

Some changes will be evident this year on Olde Home Day which is scheduled for June 10, 2006. The intent of the Interlaken Community Action Group which organizes Olde Home Day is to have all activities concentrated at the Firemen's Field. The parade will start at the school, travel along Main Street to West Avenue, go up West Avenue to Knight Street and then along Knight Street to the Firemen's Field.

The Historical Society will open the Farmers' Museum until the parade starts and will have a number of activities and exhibits at the Firemen's Field before and following the parade. Elsewhere in this and previous newsletters there have been articles about some of the historic buildings in the Hamlet of Covert which will be open for tours on August 5. In anticipation of the August 5th event in Covert, there will be a float in the Olde Home Days parade featuring enlarged photos of some of those buildings and some buildings that no longer exist but were important in Covert's history. There is a lot of competition to see whose old tractor will pull this float. Come and see who wins.

Also representing the historical society will be Doug Barkee's 1937 Dodge Pickup Truck. We will



have to see who gets to ride with Doug this year. There is also a move afoot to see if we can get some of the tractors of all vintages that were in the Plowing Day Event last April, to be in the parade and on display at the Firemen's Field.

As noted in this newsletter, the American Legion has presented an "Honor Role" to the Historical Society. The Honor Role, surrounded by photos of veterans from all services, will be on exhibit at the Firemen's Field. Come and help us pay respect to those who have served our country helping to maintain the freedoms that we enjoy.

For the youngster's enjoyment and the oldster's entertainment, there will be "Old Fashioned Games" such as the one-legged race, the sack race, rolling hoops and others that we are still researching. There has been a suggestion that we have a cow pie pitching contest but even though we are a farming community, there hasn't been too much enthusiasm for that game.

Come for the day. One more chance for all of us to get together, eat and enjoy each others company.

Do you remember this Olde Home Day Celebration? Police Chief Jeff Bond kissing the cow at the 2004 Celebration of the Centennial of the Village of Interlaken and the Bi-Centennial of Seneca County.

Old Covert Cemetery

By Diane Bassette Nelson

The Old Covert Cemetery, or the Covert Baptist Cemetery, is a small knoll on the east side of Schier Road and remains a testament to the early pioneers of our community. A look in the 1876 Seneca county history shows no mention of this place. Pat Patterson's 1976 *Between the Lakes, The History of South Seneca County* reprints Carl Fischer's account from *Some Cemeteries of the Between the Lakes Country*. "Practically every old family of the Covert-Trumansburg area has an ancestor in this cemetery...the cemetery has been in a bad state, undergrowth had practically reclaimed it." That status changed in the 1975 when David Burkleo of Covert undertook the cleaning up of the Cemetery as a Bicentennial Eagle Scout Project. The cemetery today is a pleasant place to visit, explore and find information about those early pioneers.

Historical records and old grave-stones provide information on seven cemeteries within the Town of Covert. The 1874 Town of Covert map shows only three cemeteries. By that time the others had been abandoned by all but a few visiting families. The Old Covert Cemetery is one of those three cemeteries. By 1874 all of the now known burials but one had been made in the cemetery. Additionally, by 1874 some of those recorded as buried in the Old Covert Cemetery had already been moved to Grove Cemetery in Trumansburg, re-interred with other members of their families.

Some Cemeteries of the Between the Lakes Country records 109 names at the cemetery and nine names associated with

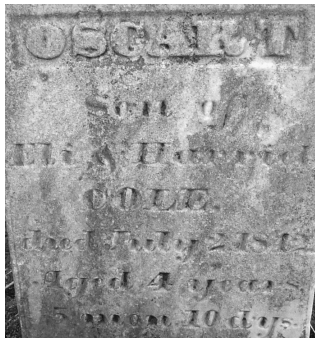
the Pratt Family Vault. The vault was not part of the cemetery, but a private family burial ground. The remains of the Pratts, Greggs, and Nobles originally buried there have been moved to Grove Cemetery. The vault, with its brick and ironwork reminds of us of an earlier time when burials were made on the family's home place.

There are 54 family names associated with the Old Covert Cemetery. The names are familiar, beginning with Archer, and running to Woodworth. The burials themselves begin in 1800 and the last known burial occurred in 1882, when Philip Frost died and was buried with other members of his family. The monument to Philip and Maria Frost is most noticeable as it is a block multi-piece marker at the front of the cemetery rather than the traditional headstones found throughout the cemetery.

The Old Covert Cemetery will be part of the Hamlet of Covert tour, and research is being done to broaden the story of each of the people buried there. Both Harriet Cole Bowen in the 1940s, and Jessie Finch in 1952, read and recorded the names and information found on the headstones in the cemetery. Carl Fischer, in compiling *Some Cemeteries*, used both of their transcriptions and included many notes from his own research. So it was with some surprise in January 2006, while working on materials for the guide to the cemetery, several stones were found with names not shown in the published lists.

Cornelia Ann Crandall died August 29, 1839 age 1 year, 2 months and 2 days. She was the daughter of George and Aner J. Crandall. Stephen Smith died July 25,

1825 age 55-2-25, his wife, Sarah Smith died March 29, 1800 age 34, making her death and burial the earliest noted in the cemetery. Also found were Oscar T. Cole died July 2, 1842 age 4 years, 5 months and 10 days, and Harriet Arsula [sic] Cole died February 19, 1837, age unread. Both are the children of Eli and Harriett Cole. Like the other names engraved on headstones, the lasting memory of these people, it is challenging and exciting to fill-out the story of their lives and that of their families.



The February 22, 1837 issue of the *Trumansburg Advertiser* included death notices for five Covert area residents: Mrs. William Rappleye February

18th, Wealthy Bardwell daughter of Robert died February 15th age 11, Ebenezer Elwell a Revolutionary Soldier died February 13th age about 80, Samuel Hopkins died February 16th age 46 and “On the 19th inst. Ursula, infant daughter of Eli Cole.” *The Descendants of Elisha Cole* notes that Eli and Harriet Darrow Cole lived in the Town of Covert from their marriage in November 1831 until 1878, when they moved to Cedar Springs, Michigan. Harriet died there February 13, 1893 and Eli died March 21, 1895. Like his daughter, Eli’s death was recorded in the local newspaper, letting people who knew him, know of his passing. His obituary in the *Trumansburg Free Press* April 13, 1895 make reference to his brother, Milo V. Cole who was still a local

resident, and to his father, Nathan Cole.

Please plan to join docents from the Interlaken and Ulysses Historical Societies at the Old Covert Cemetery on August 5th as we explore and identify these oldest families in the Hamlet of Covert.

The Interlaken Historical Society is pleased to bring you the many articles in this issue of our Newsletter. In order to conserve space the following bibliography represents works used in one or more of the articles. If you would like specifics on any of the articles please contact the editors at: Newsletter@InterlakenHistory.org.

Ball, Martha, *Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings of church activities*, (Loaned by Phillip Stanard)

Bassett, Wheeler, *Twenty Five Early Settlers*, 1930’s

Blayney, Don P., “The Changing Landscape of US Milk Production” USDA Electronic Report from the Economic Research Service

Churches of Seneca County with Sketches of their Pastors, 1896 Courier Printing Company,

Guide to the First Baptist Church of Covert Records, 1803-1849 Rare and Manuscript Collections- Cornell University,

Fischer, et al, *Some Cemeteries of the Between the Lakes Country*, 1974.

Morrison, Wayne E. Sr., *Early History, &c., Town of Covert, Seneca County*, 1983

Patterson, Maurice L. , *Between the Lakes, The History of South Seneca County*, 1976

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Area newspapers on microfilm in the collection of the Interlaken Historical Society.

Editor's Note- This research paper by Eric Hunt was written for his anthropology course at Cornell University. Eric chose a community, identified a number of questions, researched and analyzed the questions and finally constructed the paper. It is presented in two parts, the second part to appear in the July, 2006 newsletter.

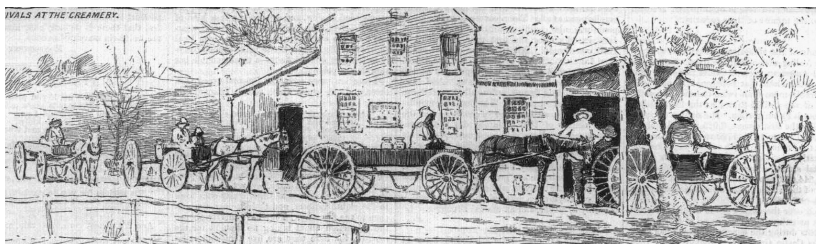
Dairy Farming and Interlaken
December 8, 2005
Contributed by Eric Hunt

The decline of dairy farming has forced Interlaken, New York to evolve as a community. Where dairy farming once existed as the “tie that binds”, other communal institutions have had to rise to fill the void. In the past, dairy farming served to bring people in the community together, whether farmers discussing something over breakfast or community members meeting up at the now closed Agway. The community was very interconnected since each member had a tie to dairy farming, and therefore everyone knew everyone. However, people have taken up many various unrelated professions since the move away from dairy farming, resulting in less common ground between the people. In response, many other smaller communal institutions exist, such as the school, churches, and the Interlaken Historical Society. These institutions have replaced farming as

the focus of community life but do not include everyone.

In this paper I will discuss how the Interlaken community has changed in relation to the decline of dairy farming. In my research for this paper I conducted three interviews, one each with John Hunt, Dave Powell, and Allan Buddle. John and Dave were long time dairy farmers who grew up and farmed in Interlaken. They both still live next to their former farms. Alan Buddle, president of the Interlaken Historical Society, has been a resident of Interlaken for 30 years and has had an orchard, beef cattle, and currently owns two Belgium draft horses. Many other secondary sources also aided in my research for this paper.

Interlaken is a small village located between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes in the fertile Finger Lakes region of New York State. Interlaken was part of the military land tracts given to revolutionary war soldiers in payment for their service. Many soldiers sold their tracts to a few hearty pioneers who moved in and settled the land in the 1790s (Patterson). Interlaken, which is within the township of Covert, officially became part of Seneca County in 1804 when the county was incorporated. As of the 2000 census Wikipedia listed Seneca



Sketch from the May 1882 Harpers Weekly showing farm wagons arriving at a creamery.

County with a population of 33,342 and 375 square miles in size. Wikipedia also lists the town of Covert as having a population of 2,227, with the village of Interlaken accounting for 674 of those people. The name Interlaken usually refers to an area that includes the village and immediately surrounding area. Interlaken's former names of Farmer, Farmerville, and Farmer Village evoke how central farming had been in the area. The name Interlaken was ultimately chosen in 1904 as a result of a contest to rename the village something more appealing for the sake of tourism (Patterson).

Dairy farming in Interlaken has followed the national trend of decreasing numbers of farms and increasing herd size. According to Blayney's USDA report, the number of dairy farms in 1940 was 4.6 million, while in 1997 the number was down to 116,000. In regard to the herd size, the average number of cows on a farm in 1940 was five, while in 2000 the average was 88. In Interlaken this trend was described by Dave Powell, who believed that there were around 30 dairies in the 1950s compared to about eight now. Dave also commented on how herd sizes have increased from approximately 25 cows in the 50s to more than 90 cows now.

The conditions for dairy farming began to change noticeably in the sixties and seventies. Increasing overhead expenses and decreased milk prices gradually forced many farmers out of business. Increases in overhead expenses included larger and

more technologically advanced machinery for growing crops and for milking cows, and the rising cost of diesel fuel. The decrease in dairy farms paralleled the trend of larger dairies developing for increased efficiency through more specialization. The dairies that averaged five cows in 1940 were not in business solely for milk production and usually also included pigs, sheep, chickens and horses. Today, dairies are highly specialized in milk production since technological advances in machinery have allowed them to focus more time and effort on milk. In addition to larger milking herds, there are also larger numbers of dry cows, heifers, and calves. These other cows effectively double the number of cows on the farm.

The village of Interlaken was, and remains to some extent, the true center of the community. The following services existed in the village of Interlaken's past: grocery stores, tannery, blacksmith, harness shop, cabinet shop, wagon shop, saw mill, grist mill, foundry, hotels, school, shoe store, hardware stores, dentist, restaurants/diners, automobile dealership, bank, insurance provider, funeral home, feed mill, jeweler, dry goods store, telephone office, theater, barbers/beauty salons, opera house, service stations, bars, drug stores, cannery, creamery, post office and a train station (Patterson). These services would bring people into the village, giving them an opportunity to socialize and interact with each other. As dairy farming has declined, so to has the population of the vil-

lage of Interlaken. Wikipedia stated that the population has decreased from 780 people in 1960 to 674 in 2000. This marks the decline of the village as the true center of the community. Other factors such as the combination of the Interlaken and Ovid school districts into the South Seneca School District has also contributed to this decline. The elementary school is located in Interlaken, and the middle and high schools are located ten minutes away in Ovid.

Community groups such as the Grange Hall, Farm Bureau, and Eastern Milk Producers specifically served dairy farming in Interlaken. Dave Powell discussed how these groups held events that usually included a meal, a presentation dealing with dairy related business, and socializing. The purpose of these events was to strengthen farming community ties and communicate happenings and new ideas. Many impromptu community meetings occurred when two or more farmers and other individuals would meet up in town. These meetings could take place anywhere; in any of the shops or out on the streets.

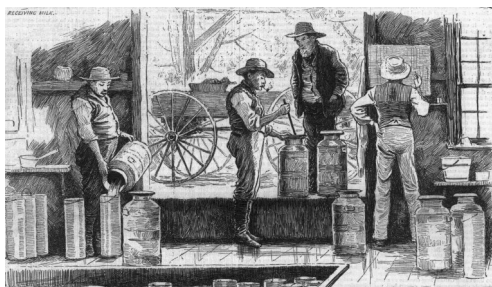
The dairy community groups have also become delocalized as the local granges have closed, local Farm Bureau meetings are now held in Syracuse, and Eastern Milk Producers no longer meet locally (Powell). The Interlaken Creamery is another example of the industry's move away from Interlaken. John Hunt spoke about the daily trips he made as a boy to take their cow's milk to the creamery. The creamery

served as a gathering place for dairy farmers for many years. The farmers would bring their milk in cans and put them on the loading dock. They would then have a little time for socializing as they waited at the other end of the plant for the cans to be emptied and washed. Eventually, the creamery's services also left Interlaken. Milk began to be shipped to Watkins Glen in cans, and later bulk pickup became available. Today milk is picked up by various processors and shipped at least an hour away. What once was a social activity has become rather impersonal.

As dairy farming began to decline and change, the Interlaken community had to change as well. Where once everyone's supplies could be purchased within town, advances in transportation made it easier and cheaper to travel to Ithaca and Geneva to buy goods. Allan Buddle commented on how it once took most of the day just to go to Interlaken to buy goods but now, in the same time or less, it is possible to travel to Ithaca to purchase supplies. Gradually, the many shops in Interlaken were no longer in as great demand and closed for good. Currently all that remain are a small convenience store/gas station, a service/gas station, a post office, a bank, a library, Gun Black (a company that does metal treating), Hipshot (a company that makes guitar bridges), a diner, a bakery, and Jay's variety store. With the disappearance of the other shops, the number of community meeting places has diminished. As Dave Powell remarked, he no longer knows everyone in

the area. With the lack of common ground provided by dairy farming he has no reason to know everyone. Community relations have changed from, “everyone knows everyone” to, “you only know a few people you interact with.”

The school remains an institution that brings people together. Though the school is no longer local to Interlaken, its importance as a place for people to interact has increased. A family with children in school who are involved with sports, plays, and other activities are connected with similar families. Now that the schools are spread out between two towns, parents spend much more time driving kids to extra-curricular activities. Additionally, children are participating in more school activities since they are not needed to help out on a farm. Without dairy farms to keep the family busy more time can be allocated to school activities (J. Hunt). People use these school activities as their main social time and rarely meet other than at these events. Residents who are involved with the school, especially in multiple areas, are more connected to the community than those who participate in minimal activities. John Gray, an anthropologist who has done research in rural Scotland, came to similar

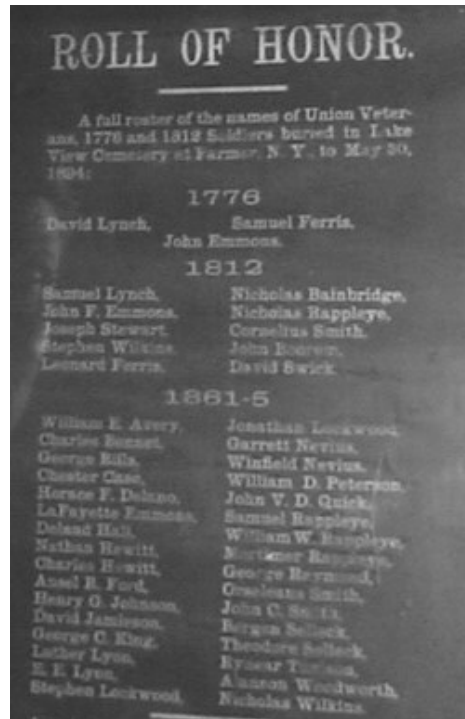


conclusions on the importance of the school in the community. One person he interviewed described the importance of the school to the community as, “The school brings together families – children, parents and grandparents – and neighbours” Activities that bring people together at South Seneca include sports, especially girls’ and boys’ basketball during the winter season. Another important activity is the theater productions, which involve many members from the community, whether through participation or attendance. The individuals involved in these activities form strong bonds with each other as they practice and perform for many hours. These various school events bring a wide range of people together in the absence of dairy farming.

Another organization that has made it their goal to build up the community is the Interlaken Historical Society (Buddle). Through historically focused community events, people have the chance to socialize with each other and learn about local history. The Interlaken Historical Society maintains two museums that are open on the weekends and on special occasions. One museum is quite small and has local artifacts, and the other is a little larger and has many agricultural related items and displays.

Receiving milk cans at the Creamery, Harpers Weekly, May 1882

1894 Roll of Honor, listing names of soldiers buried at Lake View Cemetery. Given by the Interlaken American Legion. Help us salute soldiers from all generations by sharing pictures of area veterans for a display on Olde Home Day, and then throughout the summer.



The Historical Society

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Interlaken Historical Society
PO Box 270
Interlaken, NY 14847-0270

Mark your calendar:

May 8th Spring Meeting with Don Olney, Toy Maker & Top Collector

June 10th Olde Home Day, Firemen's Field (send in pictures of your veterans of all generations)

July 1st Send in 2006-07 dues

August 5th Tour the Historic Hamlet of Covert with the Interlaken and Ulysses Historical Societies.