

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society
Volume 32, No. 1 July 2006

www.InterlakenHistory.org



*Smith Store & Gas Station
From the Ulysses Historical Society*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AN INVITATION TO THE COVERT HISTORIC TOUR

Hello again. I could hardly wait to let you know about the tour of historic buildings and the cemetery in the Hamlet of Covert coming up August 5, 2006 from 9AM to 2PM. Every building has its own interesting, important story that will come to life as you read the special edition newsletter available that day, visit the buildings and hear the docents reminisce.

The Old Covert Cemetery has a story of its own to be told by Diane Bassette Nelson, one of the best interpreters in the area. From research over many years Diane has become very familiar with the families whose ancestors are buried there. The research has culminated in a book, *And Let My Memory Cherished Be*. This little book provides genealogical information, family stories, photos of grave-stones, interpretation of art on the grave-stones and much more. It will be published by the Interlaken Historical Society, released for the first time and available for sale on August 5th. Diane will be at the Old Covert Cemetery to welcome you.

The event will provide a personal touch for about 30 individuals who were kids growing up in Covert in the 1940s and 50s. One of those kids, Mary Gregg,

now living in Syracuse, has written about their antics and fun. We will have to wait to read the rest of the story until August 5th. The *Between the Lakes* Special Edition will feature: *The Covert Kids*.

Committee members from both the Interlaken and Ulysses Historical Societies are very enthusiastic about the buildings. I had the "fifty-cent tour," in Tom Salm's words, of the Pratt/Gregg/Salm home and can say with confidence that you are in for a great treat. The Cole/McDaniel home is equally impressive. You will read about it elsewhere in this newsletter.

One of the most beautiful structures in the hamlet is the Covert Baptist Church.

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Organized in 1803, construction of the church building that you see today was begun in 1850. The interior has just been

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completely redecorated. Mary Louise Stillwell and her daughter June Vonderchek beamed with pride as they showed committee members through the church. Big smiles appeared as Yve Park, Marion Hoffmire, Mary Fairchild and Kitty Ritter envisioned the period quilts and clothing they will display in the church.

With honor and trepidation, on August 5, I will ring the historic bell that was placed in the belfry and rung for the first time on July 4, 1876. The trepidation recalls my one and only experience ringing a church bell as a teenager. One of the many homes that my family lived in was across the road from the community church. The church officials asked if I would ring the bell on Sunday mornings for the 10 o'clock service. They showed me where the rope was located and that is all. When I rang the bell the first Sunday, I got a long "bong" and a whole series of short "bongs", repeated ten times- long bong and short bongs. It was pretty much the same the second and third Sundays. After the third Sunday the church officials asked me to NOT ring the bell. The plan on August 5, if everything goes well, is to ring the bell every hour during the Covert Tour.

The first stop on the tour will be at the Interlaken Grange Hall for registration, exhibits, coffee and goodies. The building was originally a church in Steamburg, relocated to Covert to serve initially as a home for the Covert Grange and then later the Interlaken Grange. A very important rural institution for a century, the grange was a vehicle for dispersing the latest ideas and practices in agriculture and home making. As important was the social networking. I am especial-

ly indebted, because my Mom and Dad met at a grange function.

Also on the tour is the Old Covert Town Hall. Built with funds from conscription and given to the Town of Covert by its citizens, this building has had many uses and its walls could tell many stories. Until 2003, voters in District #1 came to the Town Hall to vote and then to the Grange for chicken and biscuits. Included in displays at the Old Town Hall will be samples of early town records, an original patent for a spike tooth harrow granted to Jacob Delong, great grandfather of Margaret Huckle, and a sheet metal container with original padlock and May 23, 1933 ballots in favor of or against repealing the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution. (Prohibition) Information from local, state and national preservation organizations will be available for owners of property in the Historic District who may be looking for guidance or assistance.

Unfortunately, the Old Town Hall is no longer in use and is deteriorating. Hesitant to use taxpayer money to maintain a building that is no longer in use, the Town Board asked the Interlaken Historical Society to explore options for the building. The trustees in turn would like to talk with as many of you as possible on August 5 or any time, to get your ideas about how the building could be used either in its present location or elsewhere. I expect to be at the Town Hall most of the day on August 5 (except when ringing the bell) and will welcome your suggestions.

As with most of our larger programs in recent years, the Interlaken Historical Society is indebted to Sally Gregg Hubbard for her ideas and huge amount of her

valuable time. The Covert Tour should be especially sweet for Sally. She is a native of Covert and a descendent of Colonel Chauncey Pratt. Sally's interest in historic barns will lead us to our final stop on the tour, the relocated and restored post and beam barn at Americana Winery where a light lunch will be available.

Admission to all buildings and the special edition newsletter is \$6 per person or \$10 per couple. Lunch will be available by pre-registration. Contact Sally Hubbard at 607-532-3423 or email: coverttour@interlakenhistory.org.

Hope to see you on August 5.

4th Graders Visit Farmers' Museum

On May 15th, The Farmers' Museum had some unusual visitors. A plaintive baa... could be heard drawing not only the fourth graders but many interested passerbys as well. A ewe and two lambs, belonging to Kari Lusk of Sheepish Grin Farm in Lodi, nibbled the grass in front of the museum. The children from South Seneca Central School enjoyed patting and watching the animals. John and Anne Knight of Townsendville shared their extensive knowledge of sheep raising.

Carol Harth of Burdett and Kari Lusk discussed shearing, demonstrated carding the wool and spinning the wool into yarn. Many of the boys and girls got a chance to try their skill. The drop spindle was especially popular.

As with all sessions aimed at children, everyone had so much fun and learned a great deal. It's certain the sheep did not need "to count sheep" to get to sleep that night!

Plan to stop in at the Farmers' Museum this summer to see the exhibit on sheep.



Wool: Sheep to Shawl at the Farmers' Museum this summer. See the article on page 10.



This ewe is only partly shorn. This made it easy for students to see the depth of the fleece..

Thank you Bill Gates

Allan Buddle and Bill Gates at the luncheon for Bill and Renee. Thank you Bill for your service to the Historical Society and to the over 3,600 students you taught in your years at South Seneca. Bill's family arrived in this area in the 18th century. Best wishes as you relocate to Virginia



New Members

Mary Jane Burdett, Oscoda, MI
Michele Mannella, Interlaken, NY

New Life Members

Norma Stuck, Interlaken, NY
Doris Coon, Ithaca, NY
Dr. Christopher Kaiser, Holland, MI
James A. Tunison, East China, MI
Betty MacCheyne, Interlaken
*Have you sent in your 2006-2007 Dues?
If not please do so today.*

Recent Donations

Framed color print of the Old Covert Cemetery in Springtime from Linda Clasby of Covert.
1873 to 1878 Diary of Olive Williams Peterson and a photograph of the Peterson home on Main Street by Olive Dickinson of Rochester.
Collection of papers relating to the one room school house, Covert District #6, given by Bob Donnelly.
Papers and slides from the estate of Eva Clapp by Bill Boyes.
Papers, clothing and winter sports equipment from Kitty Ritter.
Ladies driving duster, black hat, shawl and petticoat from Betty Crane.
Family papers of the Hunts and Smiths by Gary Hunt.

News from our Neighbors

Lodi Historical Society

July 27, Thursday Old Fashioned Pot Luck Supper at 6: "Bits & Pieces" with Noel Clawson at 7. Society Bake sale at 6:30.

August 24, Thursday Old Fashioned Pot Luck Supper at 6: Antique Road Show at 7 pm, with Sara Dawley and Stephen Wagner. Society bake sale at 6:30 pm.

September 2, Saturday 10-5 3rd Annual Artisan Show. Area artists with works for sale. Luncheon available by the Society. Contributions welcomed.

Ovid Historical Society

The summer exhibit this year is "Teddy Bear's Picnic" at the museum 7203 Main Street, Thursdays and Saturdays 10 -2. See you there!

Library News

By Pat Moore

Happy summer to you all! Our library has many new books. One most people in the area will enjoy I'm sure is about *Sampson Air Base, Portal to Air Power* by Hopfengardner. Some area guys got their service training there. It has many pictures and is well done.

Another interesting book is about the great depression from the children's viewpoint – *Children of the Great Depression* by Friedman.

"Books, a Treasure", the theme of the summer reading program this year, will have a new night program for teens. It is being put together by Wendy Barrows, and will be in July so watch the paper and look for posters too. We have about 15 new young adult books to share and put on the shelves for it also.

Our story time with pre-K classes went very well. Stop in to see our booklets from the classes – how they liked the stories, snacks, crafts and best of all, Mrs. Carroll's puppets. Their most favorite was Mr. Moose. There's a song that goes with him they just loved and can sing by them-

selves. We have a new book in honor of Mrs. Carroll's many hours of story time called *Useful Moose* by Robinson, that you can enjoy this summer. We have many more new books for children and parents to read. It's a great way to get children to read and listen to stories, so come to the library and see. We will have some story time in July for our little ones. There will be information on posters and in the library.

Some of our new adult books are: *Jansen Directive* by Ladlum; *Hanging Hannah* by Marshall in large type; *Island of Bones* by Parish; *Sea of Gypsy* by Michaels; *Old Wine Shades* by Grimes; *Terror Town* by Kaminsky; *Magic Hour* by Hannah; *Gone* by Gardner; *Blood Hunt* by Raskin; *Cherry Cheesecake Murder* by Fluke.

I want to say thank you to the Historical Society for the recent program on "Tops". It was very interesting and I never knew there were so many tops. If you missed it, you missed a fun evening

Have you noticed the improvements to the front entrance? We have a new railing. No more pink tags! A special thank you to Chris Wolfe for the new sign over



Future Farmers of America Jacket given by Dan and Howard Bassett. These jackets were a mark of distinction to many young people while they were in school and for years afterwards.



the door. We will be getting the trim scraped and painted soon.

THE COLE-McDANIEL HOUSE

Editors' Note: We wish to thank Gretchen McDaniel for her gracious help and information.

An 1898 article in *The Free Press And Sentinel* refers to... "one of the most conspicuous and commodious farm houses between the lakes". The graceful lines of this home still attract admiring glances as travelers pass through the hamlet of Covert on Route 96. Commonly called "The Pillars," the Cole-McDaniel house is an excellent example of Greek Revival architecture featuring a wide porch with fluted columns, a welcoming front door surrounded by narrow sidelights, handsome moldings, a rectangular line of transom lights and a wide band of trim under the main roof. This style of architecture gained popularity in the rapidly settled Finger Lakes area in the period of 1830 to the 1850's. There was great attraction to Greek ideals in the newly independent United States as Greece had recently fought for independence.

The interior of "The Pillars" is light and airy with its tall windows and high ceilings. The colors are soft and muted, reminiscent of Williamsburg. As you enter through the front porch, you find yourself in an elegant hall with pine plank flooring and a sweeping staircase with a lovely curved banister. Immediately evident are the door surrounds and other graceful moldings, mostly original. The downstairs rooms consist of a parlor, dining room, recently renovated kitchen and the great room. As you travel up the staircase, you notice the original wavy glass in the window looking east. Two spacious

bedrooms are handsomely decorated. One features a canopy bed with a hand tied double diamond canopy and a bedspread in the same pattern that George Washington chose for his bride. The silver chandelier in this room was in the house when the McDaniels purchased it.

Throughout the house, two needlepoints done by Gretchen McDaniel's great, great grandfather grace the walls as well as a reproduction of a sampler done by a 12 year old girl in the 1700s. An original page from a 1611 version of the King James Bible hangs below the sam-



pler in the great room. The simple but elegant décor in all the rooms is enhanced by the view of the lovely gardens through the tall windows. The house is surrounded by trees, shrubs and colorful flower beds! Truly it is a much loved home.

It is indeed an old home as well, originally built by Minor Thomas Coburn. Coburn, born in 1817, was an industrious young man who had acquired \$5000 worth of land in the town of Covert by 1850. He had worked as a farmhand and as a boatman on the Erie Canal. Minor



Olde Home Day 2006





From upper left: Society's exhibit "To Honor Those who Serve," Doug Barkee's 1937 Dodge pickup with Town Supervisor Mike Reynolds and Town Councilman Gary Hunt, Antique Case VA Tractor exhibited by David Houseworth, owned by the late Robert E. King, two young ladies try their hand (oops legs) in a three-legged race, more military service photos, Bob MacCheyne's WWII naval uniform, Harmony Falls Women's Barber-shop Chorus and Men's Barbershop Quartet Alacazam.



Summer Exhibits

If you are looking for something to do this summer with visiting family or friends why not take an hour to visit the museums in Interlaken. They are open Saturdays 10 AM to 1 PM and Sundays 1 to 3 PM. If those times are inconvenient an appointment can usually be made by calling 532-4213, 532-9227 or 532-3423.

A new exhibit at the Farmers' Museum this year focuses on the sheep and wool industry that was so important on the small farms in our area in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1850 the census counted 11,000 sheep in the area now included in the Towns of Covert, Lodi and Ovid. At that time wool was used at home for clothing and other articles for domestic use and as a cash crop. Wool pools became popular where producers would collect to pack their wool into large lots for shipment. Wool pools are still in use today. There are many photos and other documents on display of wool pool activities.

John and Anne Knight who live in Townsendville have been involved in all aspects of the sheep industry all their lives. They have helped design and create the exhibit. Phebe Case's walking spinning wheel and weasel (yarn winder) are displayed along with a photo collection and an original artist's rendering of the process from "sheep to shawl" by Anne Knight.

Please come see the exhibit, hear where "pop goes the weasel" came from and learn how important sheep were to our families.

After your visit to the Farmers' Museum, come across the street to the second floor of the library. You can see

all of the pictures received for the Historical Society "In Honor of Those Who Serve" display (over 60 photographs had been received by Olde Home Day). Going along with the Honor Roll we have brought back uniforms from World War I and World War II. You can also see the 1894 Roll of Honor that inspired this year's display, the ink sketch of a Civil War and World War I veteran, and get the feel for floating under the canopy of a white silk parachute.

Among the ongoing exhibits are the Hat Shop from last summer, our collection of fire arms, and photographs from the Hamlet of Covert. You can also browse through scrapbooks from World War II and the Wheeler Bassett ledgers given to the Society last summer.

We will have some of the Indian artifacts on display during the early part of the summer for our yearly visits by Scouts from Camp Barton. If you have an interest in some special area of the collection, please let us know so we can arrange a time for your group to visit.



The calf-path

By Samuel Foss

One day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home, as good
calves should.

But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail, as all calves do.
Since then 200 years have fled,
And I infer, the calf is dead.
But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.
The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that
way;

And then a wise bellwether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a trail was
made.

And many men wound in and out
And dodged and turned and bent about,
And uttered words of righteous wrath,
Because 'twas such a crooked path;
But still they followed-do not laugh-
The first migrations of that calf.
And through this winding wood-way
stalked

Because he wobbled when he walked.
This forest path became a lane,
That bent and turned and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse, with his load,
Toiled on beneath the burning sun.
And traveled some three miles in one.
And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.
The years passed on in swiftness fleet,
The road became a village street,
And this before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare,
And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis.
And men two centuries and a half



Tread in the footsteps of that calf.
Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zigzag calf about;
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.
They followed still his crooked way,
And lost 100 years a day;
For this such reverence is lent
To well establish precedent.
A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach.

For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf paths of the mind.
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.
They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.

Editors note- This little poem was clipped from the Country Journal by the Howard Hunt family and included with several other items given to the Historical Society by their son Gary. It appears to demonstrate the ability of our ancestors to relate an everyday observation to an abstract concept that governs our lives.



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 first part appeared in the April, 2006 newsletter.

Dairy Farming and Interlaken December 8, 2005

Contributed by Eric Hunt

The Historical Society also stages a large activity each year that has included tours of local barns, a day of plows and plowing, and an event at the old grange hall. The importance of these events for social interaction is illustrated by the tour at the Usher-Hunt barn, where many current and former farmers met up and struck up conversations with each other. Non-farmer community members also had the chance to see a historical barn and learn a little about the history of agriculture in the area. Alan Buddle brought his draft horses to the barn and many people had an opportunity to pet the horses and see how the tack was put on them. Through these types of events the community can learn about the importance of agriculture and dairy farming in the Interlaken area. Alan Buddle believes the historical society has done a good job so far in organizing these events for the benefit of the community.

The churches in Interlaken also serve as community groups that provide a chance to socialize. The four churches in the village of Interlaken include the Bap-

tist, Reformed, Catholic, and Jehovah's Witnesses, and many more are located in the surrounding area. They all serve in connecting people within the community. Through church activities parishioners forge ties with people that they would rarely see outside of their place of worship. Church events also provide more opportunities to spend time with people known through school. Communal meals, such as potluck dinners, are a prime example of time for people to socialize. Though church meals have served social purposes for many years, especially for farmers, they are now even more important in connecting people from the community.

Dairy farming has been the way of life for many individuals in the community and consequently, as the number of farms in Interlaken has decreased, Interlaken has lost some of its identity. Farming is characterized by the respectable values of hard work, patience, independence, interdependence, family cohesion, and stability. As the number of farms has decreased, these values are practiced by fewer people. John Gray makes the same



argument that a place makes the community and in Interlaken this place is the farm.

Hard work not only applies to the physical labor of chores and fieldwork but also to any other task that a farmer would undertake. As described by Fitchen, employers described former farmers as very hard working in everything they did. Former dairy farmers have taken up jobs as truck drivers, work with a machinery dealer or a feed company, or have remained in agriculture as a crop farmer. A community consisting of hard workers is strong, as each person recognizes the efforts of the other individuals and works to maintain the community.

Patience is another characteristic of farmers who wait for crops, rain, and their cows. Many mothers have declared, "Patience is a virtue", and any farmer without patience does not make a good farmer. Fitchen explains that rural residents feel that rural living is a slower way of life and this can be contributed to patience. This is due in part to patience to take things as they come, for example not having road rage when you get caught behind a combine that takes up the whole road lane.

Independence and interdependence are closely related. A farmer is not completely independent, but overall he must take care of all the issues that come up on his individual farm. However, if a farmer

experiences a difficulty many other community members are there to help out. In a close-knit community where everyone helps everyone, someone in need will be taken care of because of the community bonds. Now, since the community consists of smaller groups less closely linked, there are fewer people to call on in times of trouble.

Family cohesion is another very important quality on a farm. Smaller dairies have always been a family operation. Dave Powell spoke of how his wife took care of the cows and he focused more on the fieldwork. He also expressed that without his wife their farm would not have been able to operate. Strong families in a community greatly increase productivity and act as a smaller community

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Antique John Deer Tractors driven by Gordon Powell and Allen Herrala from the Olde Home Day Parade.

where family members are the first to



help each other out. In Interlaken, long time residents have much of their immediate family living in the area. However, many newer residents are the only ones living in the area, and instead of relying on family they must consequently depend on other people first. The value of a strong and large family means that you will have many connections within the community. Overall, these family bonds help to strengthen a community.

Stability is no longer such a sure



thing in the changing times. In Interlaken's past, people were much more certain that they would be farming today, tomorrow, and into the future; changes occurred but not drastically. Due to this certainty, people could feel a sense of stability over the lack of possible drastic change in their lives. A community could always depend on the dairy farm to be there with cows in the pasture and tractors in the field. With the disappearance of the farms that feeling of stability was undermined, as if something that enduring could change, then what would remain as a constant in life?

Dairy farming has always stood for

the values of hard work, patience, interdependence, independence, family cohesion, and stability. With dairy farming no longer existing as the central part of community life these values are weaker in the remaining community.

The Amish are an interesting contradiction to the trends in the rest of the area. Many Amish have moved in to the area, bought up old dairy farms, and have flourished. Their dairy farms have no more than 30 cows, and horses still provide most labor power. The Amish truly embody the characteristics described above when they all come out to assist someone when they need help, as exemplified by barn raisings. The Amish rigorously follow their religion and work harder than anyone around, and consequently their community is very strong. The Amish are an example that dairy farms can still be small and an excess of material possessions is not needed.

As the Interlaken community has moved from one large community centralized around dairy farming to many smaller and often unrelated communities, the opportunity for conflict arises. Because members are no longer exposed to dairy practices, they do not understand farming and hold the same values as farmers. The conflicts that have arisen because of the lack of understanding had rarely been encountered in the past by the remaining dairy farmers. Such problems

include neighbors complaining about the smell of manure, tickets being issued for getting manure on the road, and people getting mad about slow-moving vehicles Hilchey and Leonard outlined the importance of neighbors understanding the dairy practice whether through farm tours, regular communication with farmers, or helping with farm work. When a farmer and his neighbors understand each other it facilitates understanding about many issues and keeps knowledge of dairy farming available to the community.

Interlaken has become a community with many separate groups. Where once many people were connected together by dairy farming, groups such as the school, church, and the Historical Society now connect the people. Dairy farming in Interlaken has followed the trend of having larger herds for more efficiency, resulting in only a handful of farms remaining in the Interlaken area. Dairy farming now exists as a visual sign of the past of Interlaken. It stands for the values that are associated with farming that people rarely experience anymore. The groups that are now connecting people, although separated, do a good job bringing together people of different backgrounds. People who might have never been exposed to dairy farming make friends through school and end up spending plenty of time around the farm. This helps with

understanding and knowing more people in the community. If everyone were to know everyone Interlaken would be a much closer community, such as what has existed in the past. When the community is well connected everyone helps each other out and conflicts rarely occur. Unfortunately, these separate groups do not fully understand each other, as exemplified by conflicts over farm smells. The decline of dairy farming has caused Interlaken to evolve as a community, but efforts are continually made to maintain strong neighborly relations.



Two family farms in the Interlaken area. Above far left: Persoon Farm (formerly Hunt Farm) on Route 96 North of Interlaken. Directly above and below: Lou Arthur Stillwell family dairy barn, and cows in the field.





The Interlaken Historical Society float for the Olde Home Day parade featured large scale pictures of the days of yore in the Hamlet of Covert. See these and more pictures on August 5th at the Hamlet of Covert Tour. More details begin on page 1. And more pictures from Olde Home Day are on pages 8 & 9.

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Mark your calendar

July 1st Send in 2006-07 dues. If there is a red dot on your address label your dues are still due. If you have sent in your dues, Thank you, your support is appreciated.

July 24th: NO PROGRAM this month, see you at the Hamlet of Covert Tour.

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

The Historical Society

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