

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 33, No. 3 January 2008

www.InterlakenHistory.org



Schaefer Yarn Staff members

Cheryl Schaefer It's All in the Colors

Monday, January 28, 2008 7:30 pm
Town of Covert Municipal Building

It is often at sunrise and sunset when the colors in the fields and extensive gardens surrounding the Kelly's Corners farmhouse which houses Schaefer Yarn are the most exciting. Color is the single most important factor in Cheryl Schaefer's yarn business, confirmed by 27 years in the hand knitting yarn industry.

"My color sense may be innate, but I knew nothing about creating, growing and running a business," says Cheryl, "I just didn't know what I was getting into, so I wasn't afraid."

Come and experience Cheryl's enthusiasm as she describes the fibers such as *Elaine* and *Andrea* and a few of her colors including *Spanky*, *Little Mermaid*, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, *Julia Child* and *Virginia Apgar*.

Grateful for knitters, weavers and crocheters everywhere, she also depends on eight full-time and eight-part time employ-

ees who bring Schaefer Yarn to a growing international market.

Please join us at the Covert Municipal building (the former American Legion building) in Interlaken at 7:30 PM on Monday, January 28, 2008. The program is free, open to the public and refreshments will be served.

For more information contact Allan Buddle at orchardland@zoom-dsl.com or 532-4213.

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President's Message

We want to express our heartfelt condolences to the family of David Powell. Dave, Jean and their five children, now grown with their own families, operated Maple Leaf Farm on Powell Road until their retirement. As a Dairy of Distinction, the home of many John Deere tractors, and active participation in many farm organizations, the Powells are known throughout the area. Dave's neighborliness exemplified the values that make Interlaken such a great place to live and work.

Dave and Jean have both been staunch volunteers at the Interlaken Historical Society. Dave enjoyed greeting visitors at the Farmers' Museum, often keeping the doors open way beyond closing time, hoping one more visitor might come by that he could engage in conversation. He will be missed but his presence will linger on.

Renovations at the Telephone Company Building are moving along. With the building permit in hand, a work party has begun tearing out an old ceiling and insulation, getting ready for new wiring, and new insulation in the ceilings and walls. The goal is to have the new museum open for visitors by Olde Home Day, 2008.

If anyone would like to help with cleaning, painting and eventually moving, please let one of the trustees know or send me an e-mail at orchardland@zoom-dsl.com or phone 532-4213. There is something for everyone to do and a golden opportunity for

us all to visit about the past and the future.

Please join me in welcoming Bill Schaffner and John Hunt to the Society as Trustees. As you can see from their biographies, they come from very different backgrounds offering the diversity that enhances our success. They both have a lot to contribute and are great people to work with.

Gifts to the Interlaken Historical Society
In memory of David Powell
Jayne Thompson Family
John and Anne Knight

On page 4 you will find a list of other donations to the Interlaken Historical Society. **Thank you** to each and every one who has contributed artifacts, financial gifts, time and talent.

Historical Society Wish List

Editor's note: starting with this issue we will be letting you know of a few of the items that will enhance our programs, displays and ability to serve the community. If you have any of these items and would be willing to donate them, or write about them, or if they are paper or pictures and we could take a copy that would assist the Society in serving the community.

Fireproof file cabinet for our expanding photograph collection

Your Memories of Rationing, see page 11 for more information

Pictures of window displays on Main Street or the window painting that was done by the ICS Art Club.

A Note From William Schaffner

Having recently been appointed to the Interlaken Historical Society Board of Trustees, I thought that I should tell you a little bit about myself. Unlike many of you, I am not of local origin. I was born and grew up in Winthrop, MA, the southern-most town on the North Shore (the seacoast north of Boston). In 1955 I moved, along with my parents, to Fillmore, NY, in Allegany County. After living in the greater Boston area for nineteen years, this was my first in-depth experience of rural America, with its dairy farms, field crops, dirt roads, and crank telephones. I got to be friends with a couple of farmers who were about my age and I actually got to drive an old beat up Case tractor when I helped one of them harrow a field that he had recently plowed.

I met my wife Mimi in Fillmore where she started as a new teacher following graduation from Geneseo in 1958. We were married in 1959, but left Fillmore in 1961 when we moved to Glastonbury, CT. Mimi was expecting our older son Don, so we moved in with her folks while I completed my undergraduate education at the University of Hartford where I earned a BS in Life Science in 1964. Our younger son David was born shortly before we left Glastonbury for Ithaca, NY, where I began my graduate studies at Cornell University. I was a graduate student at Cornell from 1964 through 1970, earning an MS ('66) and a PhD ('71) in biological oceanography.

We hadn't planned to stay in Ithaca, but the academic job market was depressed, so I ended up accepting a position as a Research Associate in the Dept. of Natural Resources at Cornell. I became a small part of a rather large interdisciplinary study, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, that was set up to examine the effects of agriculture on lake water quality, and involved researchers from the departments of Natural Resources, Agronomy, Ag. Engineering, Ag. Economics and Rural Sociology. The group quickly learned that you couldn't just look at agriculture if you planned to manage nutrient inputs to a lake, (which was our primary concern).

The whole drainage basin had to be considered - its bedrock geology, land use patterns, precipitation, lake size, and the total population, including where the people lived and how they disposed of their waste. It was at this point that I began to think about regional history, and how local conditions in a drainage basin affected a lake. I then moved on to a lake liming study in the Adirondacks. From there I went to the Cornell Experimental Ponds where we used controlled experiments to isolate factors affecting lake productivity. By the time I retired from Cornell, I had been involved with studies on at least 22 New York lakes, a couple of ponds in Rhode Island, several estuaries on Long Island, and Narragansett Bay. You might say that over the years I have at least gotten my feet wet during my stay at Cornell.

To get to the point - what led Mimi and me to the Interlaken Historical Society and my recent appointment as a new trustee? We decided that when Mimi retired from teaching in Ithaca in 1999 we didn't want to continue living just down the road from Northeast School where she had taught for 32 years. I was keen on the State of Maine where my mother's family had lived, but Mimi didn't want to move down east where we would be father away from our two sons and their families. So we compromised and bought a home halfway up the west side of Cayuga Lake on County Road 153. We purchased the house in 1998, and moved in permanently in 1999 after Mimi retired from 35 years of teaching.

The house was built circa 1847-48, and we have a more-or-less complete record of the ownership. But what really piqued our interest was the fact that the house was purchased by a man named Rickard in 1901. It was here that he established his business where he manufactured a variety of wood products ranging from baseball bats to poultry cages. A picture of the house as it originally looked can be found on pg. 9 in *Between The Lakes* (2005), Vol. 31, No. 2. There is also information about Charles D. Rickard as told by his two daughters.

You might say that this was our initial introduction to local history, but I think it was Sally Hubbard who got us interested in joining the IHS. We became life members, and gradually have become more and more

involved with the Society, which brings us up to the present.

I hope that I will be of use to the Society during my tenure as a trustee, but as you may have gathered, I've spent a good part of my life looking at the landscape from the middle of a body of water rather than with my feet on solid ground.

Donations to the Society

Special thanks for these recent donations:

Webb Rankin – clothes washing plunger and ironing mangle

Rose Williammee Smith – Interlaken Community Chest documents

Diane Bassette Nelson – IHS Class of 1942 collage

Phyllis Betzler – Boorum Family narrative

Phyllis Pearsall – pen from Daily Bros.

Bob Dickerson—photos of Masonic Lodge members and Interlaken Post Office crew

Victoria Mott Garey – framed photograph of J.K.Wheeler and O.G. Wheeler and a ten dollar bill issued by the Wheeler Bank in Interlaken. Please see Victoria's article on page 5.

We are also grateful to Victoria Mott Garey, Barbara Bell, Lorne Ingram, Doris and Bob Jennings, Wendy Arundale and Alan Emery for their generous financial donations.

Several gifts were received as tributes to individuals:

Ari Tienhoven to honor Mary Schlabach who contributes so much to the Society
Muriel Huttenbach in memory of Louise Akins

O.G. & James Wheeler

James Knight Wheeler, J. K. or Jim to everyone, was born and reared on West Avenue in Interlaken. At the age of 20 he married Flora Stone of Trumansburg and went to work at the Bank of Trumansburg for his uncle, Levi J. Wheeler.

Two children, Oscar and Daisy, were born, growing up in Trumansburg. At the age of 18, Oscar stepped on a rusty rake in the yard and developed lockjaw, dying of starvation. This was before the availability of the tetanus vaccine. The shadow of this loss never quite lifted from the family.

Following the retirement of his father, O. G. Wheeler, in 1909, Jim returned to the Banking House of O. G. & D. C. Wheeler in Interlaken. In 1927 the bank became the Wheeler National Bank, automatically making it a member of the Federal Reserve System.¹

Around 1928, Jim and Flora moved from Covert (and part-time quarters over the bank in the colder months) into a house across from his boyhood home on West Avenue. Joining them were Daisy W. Mott, and her young daughter, Victoria and Irene Bond



James K. and Oscar G. Wheeler in front of the Bank, circa 1917.

(later Mrs. Walter Emmons).

Shortly afterward the stock market crashed followed by the Great Depression. Interlaken was not spared. It was a difficult time for the banks as well. In 1933 a national Bank Holiday was declared with every bank in the country closing to prevent a “run” on the banks. Fortunately, the Wheeler National Bank re-opened after the Bank Holiday, one of the first in Seneca County to do so.²

Jim and Flora died a few years later in 1935 and 1939.

Footnotes

1. Patterson, Maurice, *Between the Lakes*, p. 196
2. *Ibid*; p. 198

This historical information was provided by Victoria Garey, James Knight Wheeler’s granddaughter. Along with her donation, Victoria sent a note also relaying her “wonderful memories of Interlaken in the thirties.” If anyone would like to send her a note, her address is 130 Seaview Terrace, Northport, N.Y. 11768.

New Life Members

Peggy and Gordon Powell, Interlaken, NY
Elizabeth Bassette, Interlaken, NY
Janie Nusser, Interlaken, NY
Frank Bassett, Russell, NY
Howard Barrows, Interlaken, NY

New Members

Doris and Bob Jennings, Interlaken, NY
Yvonne Parkes, Trumansburg, NY
Lucas Vineyards, Interlaken, NY
Richard Green, South Bend, IN

John Hunt

John Hunt is a lifelong resident of Interlaken. He graduated from Interlaken Central School and SUNY Morrisville with an A.A.S. in Animal Husbandry. Upon graduation from college, John returned to Interlaken to work on the dairy farm that had been owned by his grandparents and parents, Howard & Sara Hunt.

John and his wife Grace took over the farm in the early 1980's until they sold it in 1994. John now works for Griffith Energy.

John & Grace have two children: Kim, 24, who is in her second year of teaching for the Waterloo Central School District and Eric, 20, who is a junior at Cornell University majoring in Mechanical Engineering. The whole family are members of Seneca Community Church in Romulus.

John & Grace still own Brook Farm, which includes one of the few Wells barns still in good condition. The barn has been host to a barn tour and a day of plows and plowing put on by the Interlaken Historical Society.

John loves this unique part of the Finger Lakes and is looking forward to serving as a trustee with the Interlaken Historical Society.

Interlaken Historical Society on the web

Over _____ people visited the Interlaken Historical Society website during 2007. Were you one of them?

Check out what's new, and enjoy pictures of past events.

www.InterlakenHistory.org

News of Our Neighbors

Lodi, Sunday, March 16 at 4 pm at the historical building the Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble will perform Beethoven's Piano Quartet in E-Flat, Op. 16 and Mendelssohn's String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 13.

Trumansburg Our January 15, 2008, 7:30 program will be on Historic Water Powered Mills presented by Walter J. Hollien, Preservation Architect and a restoration contractor active in the restoration of historic water, wind and tide powered mills. Mr. Hollien is a resident of Schuyler County.

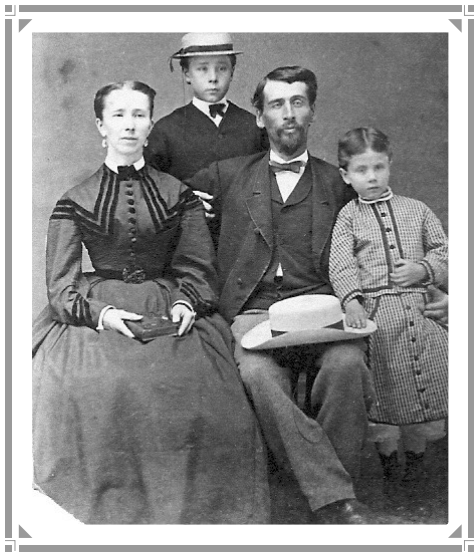
Cousin Hunting

Do you know this lady? This picture was recently given to the Historical Society and we are wondering who the lady might be. The 4 by 6 inch print was done by A.W. Porter of Farmer, Seneca County and given to the Historical Society by Mrs. Betty Egan.



Young Minds at Work Our Summer Interns

The Society is grateful for all that was accomplished last summer by two young women from Interlaken. Samantha VanCuren, working for the Seneca County Workforce Development, and Jamie Finch, our dedicated volunteer, spent twenty-six hours each week in our cramped, stuffy office space over the Library. These young ladies scanned each photograph in our file and checked the information in our data base for accuracy and completeness. When one considers that the Society owns over two thousand photographs, that is an enormous feat! Although Sam and Jamie were given detailed instructions from Diane Bassette Nelson, their skill and ease with the computer and scanner were just amazing! Truly young minds at work. A heartfelt thanks to Sam and Jamie who demonstrated a fine work ethic and accomplished a great deal for the Society.



Library News

by Pat Moore

Winter is here! What better time to check out a book or two. I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season.

Something new for library patrons is 'Audio Book Downloads' from your home computers. We have bookmarks for you here at the library with information on the program. You do have to have a library card to do this, but that is easily taken care of; please stop in to see us.

We had Bears in the library for our November Pre-K classes. What fun we all had. We made a bear to hang on the tree. If you would like the pattern for yourself or children please let me know.

Welcome back Mrs. Carroll. She is doing very well after her knee surgery and we are happy to see her again.

Thank you to each of our volunteers who assist at the Library. Without you we would not be open as many hours, have the programs we offer, or be able to plan for our expansion.

The 2008 Interlaken Historical Society Calendar

with over 100 pictures old and not so old is still available. You may not remember this family but check out the music and reunion pages. Many familiar faces await you. See the insert to order by mail. The calendar will also be available at local businesses. The price remains \$5.00

Thank you, volunteers of the Interlaken Historical Society



Our “Thank You” to our Volunteers

Michelle and Kevin Mannella graciously offered their bed and breakfast, the Hayward House, for our celebration. In addition to the treats and fun of meeting friends, we were invited to explore the “in progress” B&B cellar to attic.

Above: gathering in the kitchen to visit and sample.

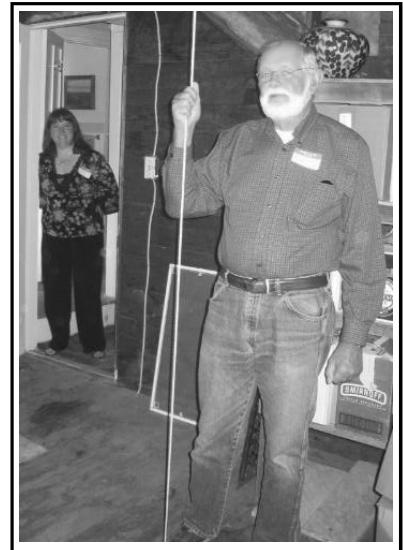
Above right: our hosts with co-chairs Sharon Braden and Ann Buddle.



Above: Michelle Mannella showing off one of the re-decorated rooms.



Left: Catching up on news and views.



Right: Checking out the attic, and special engineering features of the house.

Water, Water Everywhere. . .

by Barb Stewart, Water Commission

For those folks who have not lived in the Finger Lakes, it is hard to imagine that any communities so close to the beautiful lakes could have water problems. Unfortunately that is just the case. The village of Interlaken is not unique in its quest for a clean and abundant water supply. Perhaps a little walk back in time is in order.

Recently the IHS president, Allan Budde, received a note from Bob Dickerson. I will share some of his remembrances. Bob states that his dad was on the Village Board and in charge of the Water Department, when the village ran out of water in the mid to late 50s.

At that time the sole source of water for the village came from springs west of Interlaken. Good old Yankee ingenuity came into play. A temporary solution utilized a water line not being used. A water line that ran behind the old Canning factory was connected to springs about a mile west of Interlaken.

Bob and now deceased Bill Holman took a day off from work at the Post Office to work on the problem. It didn't hurt that Bill had worked as a plumber. They tapped into a line along the railroad tracks, fed the water thru a temporary line into the then empty old Milk Plant (currently Pine Tree Bird Seed Co.). From there they pumped into the village lines. It was a wet and rainy day, they were young guys and the weather did not stop them!! Thanks Bob for sharing some fine memories.

It was in 1933 that the first village wa- 9

ter system was started. One of the earliest records of a water shortage was in 1936. There had been proposals to obtain water from Cayuga Lake. In 1952 the idea was rejected as being too costly to the village; the price tag was some \$170,450 dollars. In hind sight, this might have been a very good idea.

It is very difficult for a small village to justify loans or bonds for such amounts to its tax payers. Thru the next several decades, attempts were made to drill wells, use ponds and numerous spring sites. There were a number of water shortages. Many plans to reduce the problems were suggested but many were abandoned due to lack of money or means of getting funding. By 1985 the village experienced its 13th water shortage. Thirteen must have been the charm.

In 1985 the village was able to receive a HUD Federal grant for \$400,000. This took a lot of hard work by professional people and the village board at that time. I remember Roger Coonradt coming to our door asking us to fill out a questionnaire to help the village achieve this goal.

At this point I want to thank Roger for the work he has done on the 2 previous articles that have appeared in the IHS newsletter. Roger was the village water commissioner during this water project. I followed in his footsteps, I am the current water commissioner.

Continued on page 10

The total project cost was \$800,000.

\$400,000 coming from the HUD grant and the additional \$400,000 from local monies. By the spring of 1988, the project was well under way. The shore well had been drilled and the lines laid for transmission. A pump house had to be built, housing the chlorination equipment.

Along with the very visible activity, behind the scene were the completion of hydrogeologic studies, purchase of land and easements, surveying, design, engineering and the final project inspection. This was a big step for the village and one all were proud of.

In 1992, Roger gave us another update of the water system. Once the system was up and running and proved itself, the village decided to allow those residents along the Cemetery Road to hook into the system.

The added revenue would help to defray the cost of the system. The village had a backup system consisting of some wells west of the village; they could be used in case of an emergency. (Or in the case of renovations to the water tower in the early 90s). In 1992 Capital Reserve monies were used to paint, treat and repair leaks to the water storage tank.

In more recent years the Capital Reserve fund has been used to replace the 2 pumps that bring the water from the well to the water tower. Our once "state of the art" water system is now almost 20 years old. Everything wears out and by replacing the pumps, we were able to save on the ever increasing

electric costs.

The bond for the water project will be paid off over the next 2 years. Unfortunately, the system needs some renovations to keep it productive and taking care of village needs. The search for the funding for these renovations is on going. It is much harder to find monies these days, but the village board will continue to do its best to ensure quality water for all its residents.

The board is fortunate to have Ray Langlois and Wes Ahouse on staff to watch over the water and sewer systems and to care for the village in general. The IHS has benefited greatly from their interest in the Grain Cradle Factory and the Hinman Public Library.

- 1933 Water System started
- 1934 Board borrows \$60,000 for improvements
- 1936 Board borrows \$15,000 for improvements.
First water shortage. School closed
Mason-Harris Springs infiltration gallery areas obtained
- 1944 First recommended to tap into Cayuga Lake
- 1948 Second water shortage
- 1949 Sheffield Well hooked up
- 1951 Third water shortage - school closed.
Mason Spring area closed
- 1952 Proposal to tap Cayuga Lake with Trumansburg for \$78,000. Rejected by Trumansburg
- 1952 Proposal to tap Cayuga Lake for \$170,450
Rejected by Interlaken due to high cost
- 1953 Pond dug at Mason-Harris Springs
- 1954 Pond closed
- 1955 Halstead Fields leased

Continued page 11

- 1959 Halstead Fields purchased for \$55,000
Fourth water shortage.
- 1960 Unsuccessful drilling of new well at Goodman Hotel.
- 1962 Fifth water shortage
- 1963 Halstead line and building installed for \$25,000. Tank trailer purchased
- 1964 Sixth water shortage
- 1966 Seventh water shortage
- 1967 Purchase of Wilson Well investigated
- 1969 Eighth water shortage
- 1971 System tie-in to lake investigated.
- 1972 Wells drilled at VanArsdale and Halstead Springs without success
- 1973 Ninth water shortage
- 1974 Water study completed, with recommendations to increase ground water sources and go to Cayuga Lake
- 1976 Tenth water shortage
- 1980 Eleventh water shortage. Complete system depletion. Water trucked in. Wilson Well used with permission of owner. Parrott & Wolff geologic survey complete
- 1981 Gowdy & Hunt Water Supply Study complete with recommendations to drill test wells at Mason area and Halstead Fields and to purchase Wilson Well Test wells dug with no success at Mason and Halstead. Wilson Well purchased for \$60,000
Two wells at Mason area pumped dry
Leaks in system cut from 33% to 7% by Village Repair Program
- 1983 Production from Wilson Well begins to decline. FmHA joint water project with Lodi and Covert rejected by FmHA due to lack of funds
Harris Springs closed
- 1984 Twelfth water shortage. O'Brien & Gere Water System Study complete with recommendation to develop new source at Cayuga Lake.
- 1985 Thirteenth water shortage. Complete system depletion barely avoided. HUD grant

for \$400,000 received.

Planning for our summer exhibit

One of the exhibits planned for Summer 2008 will be a display of artifacts and written material about rationing during World War II. We have a number of newspaper ~~articles from the Interlaken Review~~ telling about which stamps to use, how much gasoline or meat could be purchased, and even one article reminding members to bring sugar to the upcoming meeting.

What we need are your memories of rationing, how your family made do, and if you still have them, recipes using substitutions.

Please send items to Interlaken Historical Society at PO Box 270, Interlaken NY 14847-0270 or email them to newsletter@interlakenhistory.org.

O.G. & D.C. Wheeler coin bank



Looking Back

by Lee Braden

It was 1947 when Leo and Anna Braden purchased the Red & White grocery store and moved with their children, daughter, Florence and son, Lee, from Waterloo, NY. At that time, the Red & White was one of four grocery stores in Interlaken, and was located between Wickes' Rexall and Crane's Grainery. We lived above the grocery store; it was a short commute!

Owning the store was a great way to meet some wonderful people of the Village. Looking back, I remember the "huge" grocery store, all of 1000 square feet. At the time, it seemed like we sold everything anyone would want, but when I enter into Wegmans or Wal-Mart, I realize that just a "few" things were missing.

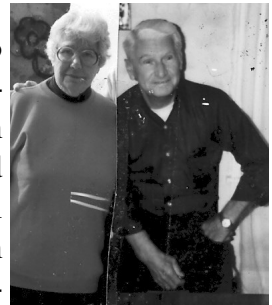
About four years later, they had heard that Howard Peterson was interested in selling his dry goods store; however, he changed his mind. Leo and Anna had sold the Red & White, anticipating the possible purchase from Mr. Peterson. The Braden family wanted to remain in Interlaken. Fortunately, a clothing store in Trumansburg became available for purchase. As we lived midway between T-burg and Interlaken, buying the store allowed us to stay where we were.

Two years later, Peterson decided to sell and Braden's Department Store, Interlaken, NY, became a reality. I believe this was around 1954.

Interlaken was a very busy and entertaining place during the 50s and 60s. I remember parades, the carnivals, Christmas lights and decorations in the town, big snowstorms, school skating parties, movies, donkey basketball, the minstrels, and much more.

In addition to being merchants, Leo was a school bus driver for many years, a Mason, served as Justice of the Peace, and did a few terms as town assessor. Anna was a member of Eastern Star and Green Thumb Garden Club, a bank teller at Wheeler Bank, worked for a time at the canning factory, and was Membership Secretary for the Interlaken Historical Society.

Both Anna and Leo were long-time members of the Interlaken Reformed Church and Interlaken Historical Society. Leo even helped start up the original Little League baseball program here in Interlaken.



This article would not be complete without mentioning the Braden Cherry Orchards, which were located on the property adjacent to the current residence. It was a U-Pick cherry business. Around the 4th of July the cherries would ripen and the crowds would make their way to our orchard. There were customers as far away as New York City and Scranton, Pennsylvania who would bring their picnic lunches and buckets for picking their cherries. What a great experience for

all of us! Leo and Anna told of several customers leaving with well over 100 pounds of cherries!

Leo and Anna lived the better part of their lives in this small village. Interlaken was very good to them, and, I believe, they, too, were good for Interlaken.

Remembering the Canning Factory

by Bob Dickerson

The Canning Factory in Interlaken, I believe known as Halstead Canning Factory, was a major part of the community in the early part of the nineteen hundreds. I believe it was affiliated and owned by a Cortland, NY canning company.

Many people, including myself, worked there at one time in their life. I worked one summer in the Cook Room. To work in that part of the factory you had to be sixteen, and it paid twenty-five cents an hour instead of the fifteen offered by most jobs. I was fourteen at the time, but changed my birth certificate to show I was sixteen (this never caught up with me until I applied for Social Security at age of sixty-two). The person at the SS office said “you are not 62, you are 64.”

Farmers all over the area brought in their produce: peas, corn and beans to be sold and processed into can goods. You would always see wagons coming down Orchard and Clinton Streets in the summer loaded with the crops. As children we would hide along the street and run out as the wagons went by to grab some pea vines

off the wagon, and then go back in the yard to eat the raw peas, a favorite of mine.

An aunt of mine, Carrie Wixom, worked there every summer on the line, a conveyor belt, where they sat and sorted the produce for any bad items as they went by. My first day at the factory, probably in the summer of 1941, I was told to take the large buckets at the end of the conveyor to the next stage. It was a very heavy and tiring job and another reason for wanting the Cook Room job. We sometimes worked 18 hours a day when the crops were at their peak. I do not believe, or remember overtime pay in those days.

Ernest Chambers was the superintendent and Charlie Horton was the boss at that time, both real good men to work for. Also Clarence Pell had a boss's job of some kind. All in all it created money for the community in a time of depression in the country.

Also I must mention behind the factory were a string of buildings where migrant laborers, mostly Italian, lived and worked in the fields and helped unload the wagons as they came in to the yard.

This may have been written about before, but was thinking of those times as I hit my eightieth birthday this fall. It is so sad to see that complex going down badly in recent years, after having been closed for many years.

(Bob was a former rural mail carrier, village trustee and school board member for many years in the wonderful village of Interlaken.)

Farmer Boy

Several years ago under the leadership of Edith Delavan, an organization was created within Seneca County to promote collaboration among those with an interest in cultural, historical and environmental affairs. (COMET)

At a COMET meeting last spring an idea was hatched to develop a program on agricultural and rural life history that might be integrated into the schools in the county in some way using the COMET partner organizations as a resource for the teachers in all the disciplines. It was felt that having real life examples from the surrounding community would enhance learning and at the same time focus the energies of the COMET member organizations.

A committee of COMET with representatives from the Interlaken Historical Society, the Finger Lakes National Forest, the Seneca County Historian and the Seneca Falls Historical Society met to search for an appropriate program and a willing teacher to pilot it.

We soon discovered a series of lesson plans developed professionally at the Farmers Museum in Cooperstown. Meeting state education standards, the plans were created to be used with the book *Farmer Boy* written by Laura Ingalls Wilder, also author of *Little House on the Prairie*. *Farmer Boy* is the story of Almanzo Wilder, Laura's husband when he was nine years old in Malone, New York in 1868.

In the South Seneca Central School Dis-

trict 4th grade teacher Bobbie Beckhorn with the full support of Margaret Couture, the Elementary Principal, offered to pilot the project.

Mrs. Beckhorn's 4th grade class is reading a chapter each day and whenever possible, the kids are experiencing some aspect of what they have read by using artifacts from the Interlaken Historical Society, from visits by local folks with special skills such as Howard Barrows making cedar shingles on the shaving horse, Kari Lusk carding wool from her own sheep and using the drop spindle, Mimi Wolff making moccasins, and Mrs. Beckhorn churning butter and making candles.

Howard Barrows making cedar shingles on the shaving horse with Mrs. Beckhorn's 4th graders



Mrs Beckhorn's 4th graders dyeing yarn made from the wool of one of Kari Lusk's sheep



LeConte and Ruth Myer visited the class to share their stories from a lifetime of farming and community activities. Mrs. Myer commented that even she heard a story that she never heard before. Mrs. Meyer is also the author of a book about her life growing up on the family farm during the depression.

In order to make the program work, each child needed to have a copy of the book *Farmer Boy*. Through interlibrary loan, Mrs. McCheyne, the school librarian, was able to come up with one for each student. The books, lesson plans, support materials, assessment tools, etc. will need to be kept in a secure place so the program can be used again in other classes. Through the generosity of the Delavan Foundation, the Interlaken Historical Society has been able to commission construction of a wooden box with original art depicting activities related to wheat and apple culture and sheep husbandry. Illustrations were selected from several 1850s publications. The box was created by Jack Katz, with art work by Christopher Wolff. The box itself provides historical information for the 4th graders.

As word of the project has spread, two organizations have come forward with money to buy copies of *Farmer Boy* to be placed in the kit. The Seneca County Pomona Grange and the Farmerville Union F&A Masons at Interlaken have each donated one hundred dollars toward the purchase of enough *Farmer Boy* books for one class.

Teaching Kit Box created by Jack Katz.



*Artwork by Christopher Wolff.
Financial support by the Delavan Foundation*

This pilot project has truly been a partnership and an experience that many of us will not soon forget. Special thanks to Bobbie Beckhorn for the knowledge that she brought to the project and for her enthusiasm and dedication to her students.



The Historical Society participated in the Trumansburg Winter Festival parade in early December. Our Cutter was decorated with lights and packages.



*Do you remember picking cherries at the
Braden Cherry Farm?
See page 12 for this and other memories
about Anna & Leo Braden.*

The Historical Society

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Mark your calendar

January 28: Program at Covert Municipal Building, Cheryl Schaefer, "It's All in the Colors."

The 2008 Calendars will be available

March 1st: Newsletter items due to editors. Please share your memories of rationing during WWII. See page 11.

April 28, 2008 Interlaken Historical Society Program