

# Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the  
**Interlaken Historical Society**

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



*Early Gold Rush Building  
From the collection of Jack Wolff*

## **GOLD RUSH DAYS by CHRIS WOLFF**

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

Based on the research and collection of his grandfather, Christopher Wolff of Interlaken will tell stories and show images of the California Gold Rush era.

Jack Wolff and his family lived in Grass Valley, CA., in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the late 1920s. It was a region of long abandoned Gold Rush towns with names such as Humbug and French Corral. He became very interested in local history and collected old waterlogged documents from roofless buildings. They were carefully dried out and studied. He listened to stories from old-timers, took pictures, wrote articles and gave local talks. He discovered the remains of the world's first long distance telephone built in 1878 using Edison designed telephones and largely unknown outside of the region today.

Chris Wolff is an artist and designer who has been creating graphics and signage for wineries and other local businesses since 1985. He is an adjunct professor of illustra-

tion and design at Tompkins Cortland Community College. His wife Mimi is a resource room teacher at South Seneca Middle School. They have two daughters Jamie and Leah.

On April 28th, drawing from this material, Christopher will take you back to those days. Please join us at the Covert Municipal Building, (former Interlaken American Legion) at 7:30 PM on Monday, April 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](mailto:orchardland@zoom-dsl.com) or 532 4213.

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### **President's Message**

With so many fun projects underway, I hardly know where to start. As you can see from the pictures on pages 8 and 9, the Telephone Building is being transformed into a museum thanks to lots of volunteer time and money for materials provided by Lee and Sharon Braden in memory of Lee's parents, Leo and Anna.

The Farmers' Museum will have a new look too, come spring. The shrubs on the west side have been removed and will be replaced with low growing perennials to enhance the appearance of the Cradle Factory. A large horse drawn wagon/bobsled will occupy a corner near the community bulletin board and the split rail fence along Main Street and Railroad Avenue will be replaced.

Coming up are a joint program on the history of the first New York State College of Agriculture at Willard on the evening of July 14<sup>th</sup>, and Plowing Day #2 plus in Interlaken on September 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be more information on these two events in the July newsletter but please save the dates.

The Society is also cosponsoring a square dance at the Interlaken Grange in Covert on April 26 and will be working with Bellwether Hard Cider on a Cayuga Wine Trail program in September.

We are a busy group and I sincerely appreciate the time and talents of so many folks who help in many different ways.

When you read through the newsletter please notice how many items are contributed by our readers. The more contributors we have, the more the Newsletter becomes everyone's Newsletter and that is the ultimate goal.

Please keep them coming. The following is a good example of the results of articles and letters.

*Wanted to tell you how happy I am that you included my address in the write-up in the Newsletter. Since it appeared, I've had the joy of hearing from three of my classmates. Have been out-of-touch with most of them for about 70 years, although those classmates have never been out of my mind. Recalling growing up in Interlaken with woods, pastures, the Lake, ravines and orchards to explore is one of my favorite pastimes! Who could ever forget the Lakes Theater, the ice cream socials, the parades, the fire department band, Wickes' Drug Store, Peterson's store, John Kellogg personally handing you your mail, speaking to Marguarite at the telephone company with one crank of the bell (no lengthy menus of options then.)*

*Thank you so very much. I always look forward to the Newsletter.*

*Victoria Garey  
Northport, NY*

### Women's Land Army Revisited

*The January 2007 issue of Between The Lakes concluded an article about the Women's Land Army in England during WW II. Muriel Allen, author of the article sent a clipping from the January 29, 2008 issue of The Guardian that we would like to share.*

#### **In Praise of Land Girls**

The pay was poor, the work-from digging potatoes to killing rats- extremely hard, the hours long, and the conditions dirty. But the debt Britain owes to the tens of thousands of members of the Women's Land Army and the Women's Timber Corps, who kept the country's farms going during the first and second world wars is incalculable. Until now the "land girls," also known as the forgotten army, have been given no official recognition for their unique contribution to the war effort, without which an embattled country would have faced starvation. It is now belatedly being acknowledged. As of yesterday, surviving land girls, now mostly in their 80s, are being given the chance to apply for a land army badge. However spouses and families of deceased members will regrettably not be eligible-except when death occurred after December 6, 2007, the date when the government made the announcement. This casts a bureaucratic shadow over an otherwise praiseworthy attempt to make up for years of neglect. The decision is the culmination of a campaign for recognition by a diminishing band of survivors who have been exchanging experiences and finding lost friends, partly through the internet, a means of communication that would have been beyond comprehension during the era of the two wars. It is particularly fitting that the internet, a good example of the freedoms for which the wars were fought,

should have played a small role in their long-deserved victory.

#### **Donations to the Society**

Marty Brewer – *The Peopling of Tompkins County, Northeast Indian Quarterly*, a sleeve ironing board

Mary Jean Welser – books and diaries of Ernest Hiltbrand, mid 1930s

Diane Bassette Nelson – copies of diaries of Wheeler Amasa Bassett (1873), Henry Geen Bassett (1814), W.H. Bassett (1901); photo of Frank Bassette and Sunoco Station (1948)

Kari Lusk – *Brief History of the Interlaken Reformed Church*

Keith Jay – photo of Raymond Hurlbut with hearse

We are grateful to Carol White for her generous donation in honor of her mother Mary Willers, to Ari Van Tienhoven who observed Mary Schlabach's birthday by sending a gift to the Society and to Walter Kidd who sent a donation in thanks for research help. We appreciate their generosity.

#### **New Members**

Heather Coonradt, Ovid, NY

Jeanne E. Sullivan, Interlaken, NY

#### **New Life Members**

Lewis G. Moore Jr., Romulus, NY

Anne James, Interlaken, NY

## News from the Finger Lakes National Forest Farmstead Archaeological Project

by Bridget Adams-Davis

The Smith Farm Site, located in the Finger Lakes National Forest, contained an interesting feature with associated artifacts. While we were surveying the site, we discovered an unnatural-looking depression behind the house foundation. Several large flagstones indicated some sort of stone pathway leading to the area. We excavated a unit over the depression and discovered a



circle of stones. The ring of stones continued into lower levels, and it became obvious that this feature was an abandoned well that was intentionally filled in. The well did not contain many artifacts, but a few of them have given us important information about when, why, and by whom the well was abandoned.

One such artifact was an ironstone bowl with a maker's mark indicating that it was made by the



Homer Laughlin Company of Ohio. They used this mark from 1877 to 1890, indicating that the well was filled about 1890. The timing is interesting since it coincides with John H. Smith's purchase of the farm in 1892. This implies that John H. Smith filled the well, probably because it was no longer needed.

This makes sense given that the Smith Site had another well. The second well, located to the north of the house, is much larger and has a concrete curb at the surface. Concrete was costly and uncommon until the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, implying that this well was a later addition. In addition, an iron pipe leading toward the house is visible four feet deep, suggesting that they had indoor running water. These wells provide evidence that John H. Smith was repairing and improving structures on the farm. Concrete repair was also visible in the cellar and the house addition.



While this provides important information, there is still a lot more to learn. An artifact that remains a mystery is a small vessel found in the older well. The milk glass container was broken in

four pieces and burned before it was broken. The bottom of the vessel is marked "Perfection Cheese Co." It was easy to put the pieces back together to form a nearly complete

vessel, but we have not been able to find any information about the cheese company. If any one has any information about the



Perfection Cheese Company, we would love to hear from you. Phone 585-395-5706, or [Lwurst@brockport.edu](mailto:Lwurst@brockport.edu) or contact the Interlaken Historical Society.

There will be an open house at LouAnn Wurst's lab in Brockport on April 12 from 11:00 to 2:00 for anyone in our area who is interested in the archaeology of the sites at the Finger Lakes National Forest. Additional information is available at [lwurst@brockport.edu](mailto:lwurst@brockport.edu). In you would like to join others for car pooling please contact Allan Buddle at 607-532-4213.



## News of Our Neighbors

**Interlaken Grange** and the Interlaken Historical Society will be hosting a Round and Square Dance on Saturday, April 26, from 7 to 10 p.m.

If you enjoyed the dance last year we hope you will come again. If you missed a fun evening at the Grange Hall in Covert, please make plans to attend the dance this year.

Our musicians are Tom Quigley and Kathy Selby with called Katy Heine.

### **Lodi Historical Society**

May 26: Memorial Day Observance

June 8: Finger Lakes Chamber Ensemble Summer Concert

July 5: 14th Annual Invitational Art Show

### **Ovid Historical Society**

April 21st: Antique Road Show at the Museum 7203 Main Street. Bring 3 items to be appraised for \$1.00

May 3rd: Craft & Collectible Sale. Questions 607-532-8800 or 607-869-5222.

Looking for an interesting way to spend your summer? Contact LouAnn Wurst, Instructor about the "Camp in the Finger Lakes" Field Methods in Archaeology offered by SUNY Brockport this summer from July 7th to August 8th. Phone 585-395-5706 or [lwurst@brockport.edu](mailto:lwurst@brockport.edu)

### **Farmer Boy Revisited**

*The January 2008 issue of Between the Lakes reported on the Farmer Boy project in Bobbie Beckhorn's 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at South Seneca. Building on a lesson plan from the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders read each day from the book Farmer Boy written by Laura Ingalls Wilder. The book depicts the life of Almanzo, Laura's husband at age nine in 1868 growing up on a farm in Malone, New York. At the end of the project, Mrs. Beckhorn asked the 4<sup>th</sup> graders to write about the differences between Almanzo's life and theirs. Here are a few quotes from their stories.*

"We all know that it is important to take care of your living things. If you are a farmer you must have lots of responsibility. Did you know that you need to milk your cow every day? No matter what and that's not it, when you milk your cow you need to milk it until it won't milk any more if not your cow can get sick and it won't be able to produce any more milk."

"It is important to grow food so you don't have to waste all your money. You can have fresh crops. It takes a lot of work but you get food and vegetables. You can grow trees like apples, peach and cherry."

"Their farm covered many acres...it had the same animals you would see today too. It had oxen, cows, sheep, hogs, chickens (roasters) and horses. These were the

tools they used. They used hoes, just like us. They used plows like us today. They also used shovels. They had cradles but we don't normally use them."

"We don't have all those open fields where our cow, horses and other animals can run around. We only have a little land to let our dog run around."

"We all have different ways of life. Some people are poor. Some people are rich. Some people are in between. Almanzo's family was poor or rich. They have tons of money in the bank but none at home."

"We have different tools now days. For popcorn, we just put it in a microwave, but they put it in this thing and in a fire to pop it. Also for butter we just get it in a store, they have to put cream in a jar and shake it till it's butter. For us we just go to the store and buy shoes like how we get butter but for them they have a person come once a year and make shoes and boots for them."

"What you have never read the *Farmer Boy*. Well it is a good book. It is about a little boy named Almanzo. He lived on a farm. He had a big brother and two big sisters. He had to go to school and help dad around the farm. He helps cut ice, shere sheep, cut wood and a lot of things like that. As you can see it is not easy pesy lemon scwesey."

## Library News

by Pat Moore

March was Women's History Month; the library had books on display, they are still available for you to see and enjoy.

The activity at the library has been slow this winter with all the bad weather; we even were closed a few times. The weather was also in a factor in canceling Pre-K a few times. Spring is just around the corner so we hope to get back on track and see an increase in circulation.

We recently donated about 150 books to Five Point Prison. These were mostly donated items that duplicated books we own. This was a great way to share. We received a nice "thank you" from the librarian, Melinda Appleby. When folks give us books I go through them, keeping some and putting the rest in our annual June book sale. If there are children's books in good shape I use them for gifts during the Summer Reading Program. As you can see, donations are appreciated and put to good use.

The Summer Reading Program is in July and this year the theme is *Catch the Reading Bug*...there will be more information about this in the next newsletter.

Our building project is back on track after many delays. You will be seeing things happening very soon. We have a new shelf for the children's section. It was made by Andy Wengerd. It is very nice and will soon be full of books.

We do have new books for your reading and listening enjoyment, please stop in. If

you are interested in being a volunteer please call me at 532-4341; we can always use more folks. If anyone would like old magazines please do come in and you can have them for free – a much better way to recycle them.

Now for some information on a booklet we have in the library called "A Lifetime Facing Change, Rural and Not So Rural" by John N. Knight with "A Lifetime in Poetry" by Anne R. Knight. I have known these two local people for a long time. Anne was my art teacher in high school. My father worked for Arthur Knight, John's father, in the 1940s when we lived in the Coalgate house. I even had a sister born there. It surely was interesting to read and very enjoyable. Local history is so very memorable. I hope others will enjoy it also.

*a*  
LIFETIME  
*Facing Change*  
RURAL  
*and*  
NOT SO RURAL  
*by*  
JOHN N. KNIGHT

## Renovating the Telephone Company Building

A dedicated group of volunteers have been working on the remodeling of the Trumansburg Telephone Company Building. Below are a few pictures, both before work began, and work in progress.



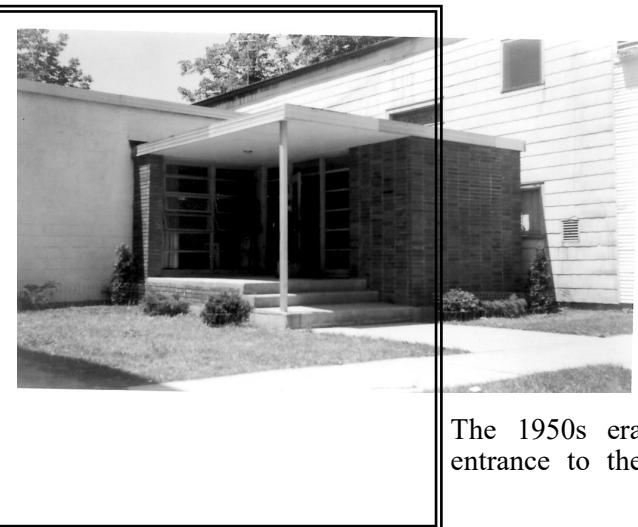
Looking at the same corner as the “before” picture below. Framing has been completed, rough wiring and heat pipes in place. Next comes insulation, and then sheet rock and painting.



Before with built-in phone booths, too small to be used for exhibit space. Also note the wet ceiling tiles on the floor and water stained wall panels with no space for insulation.

*Plan to visit the Museum  
Olde H  
Interlake  
Satura*





The 1950s era  
entrance to the

*Museum when you are in town for  
the Home Day and the  
Taken Alumni Reunion  
Saturday, June 14th.*



Looking at the entrance door on the left and  
toward the doorway to office, workspace and  
archival storage in the back.

The window inside the  
window will provide access  
to create exhibits that  
can be observed at any  
time. It will have track  
lighting for night viewing.  
Window treatments will  
let natural light into the  
main exhibit room and at  
the same time provide a  
backdrop for the window  
exhibits.



## Living During World War II Rationing

by Virginia Baldwin

Living in Interlaken has always been a pleasant experience. I grew up in this village between the two lakes, Cayuga and Seneca. I started school in September 1930 in the brick two story school house on North Main Street. In January of 1935 we moved into what is now the Elementary School. I graduated from high school in 1942.

It was a memorable Sunday afternoon, our time, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7<sup>th</sup> of 1941. We had just been studying Pearl Harbor in our American History class. I was familiar with that part of the world. George Hawley was a good teacher. From that day on our lives were changed and never to be the same.

President Roosevelt declared war on Japan during the following week and now we were fighting on two fronts, one in Europe against Germany and now Japan. With our country fighting for its very existence, drastic measures on the home front had to be taken and it involved every family. Rationing soon became a part of our lives. We were issued ration books for sugar, eggs, cheese and butter. Coffee was in short supply and consequently rationed. We also had a book for meat. We were allotted a certain amount

to last for a week, some for longer. We learned to do without or to improvise. My mother was good at filling in with bread and using leftovers for casseroles you wouldn't believe. Left over cake was served several different ways. New items came in to substitute for rationed items. Margarine was one of them to substitute for butter. How many remember the little red button enclosed in the pound bag of oleo margarine to color it and make it look like butter? We split the button open so the coloring would spill out and we kneaded it in the colorless margarine. It took a little getting used to but most of us did.

In those days we didn't have supermarkets. We had several grocery stores and two or three meat markets in our village. We took our ration books with us when we went to the market for our groceries and the grocer would tear out the coupons as we bought what we needed of the rationed items. Sometimes there wasn't enough to go around as some of the items were in short supply. Eggs were not always available. Powdered eggs came on the market. I don't

remember what they tasted like. I think they were mostly used for cooking and baking. One packet was equal to twelve eggs.

Gasoline

**Certificate of Rationing**

*This is to Certify* that pursuant to the Rationing Orders and Regulations administered by the OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION, an agency of the United States Government,

(Name, Address, and Description of person to whom the book is issued:)

.....  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle name)

.....  
(Street No. or P. O. Box No.) (Street or R. F. D.)

.....  
(City or town) (County) (State)

Local: .....

Stamps must not be detached except in the presence of the retailer, his or her agent, or the War Relocation Authority.

WAR RATION STAMP  
20

POUND IS .....  
has been .....  
1942, 1 .....  
behalf .....  
Local: .....

was rationed. Our fighting men needed that for our planes, tanks, etc. Also the oil came from the same area that it does today. Those waters were not safe to travel on. Each family determined their need for gasoline and was given a book to match their need. I believe the "A" book was given those who needed gas for pleasure driving or "Sunday" driving. The "B" book was issued to those who needed to drive to work. The farmers and those who drove heavy equipment and trucks used the "C" books.

If you needed tires for your car, that was an ordeal.

I believe you had to go to the rationing board to show the need for them. You were issued a card to take to your dealer or wherever you purchased them. Rubber was needed for the war effort. After that they began to recycle rubber to use it in making new tires. I'm not sure of the quality but it sure helped when you needed a tire.

Our government encouraged everyone who could to have a garden. These gardens were called "Victory Gardens". I believe as many as could cooperated in this endeavor. Some had small plots and others larger. My parents always had a garden every summer. Mom did a lot of canning. Our "cellar" was well

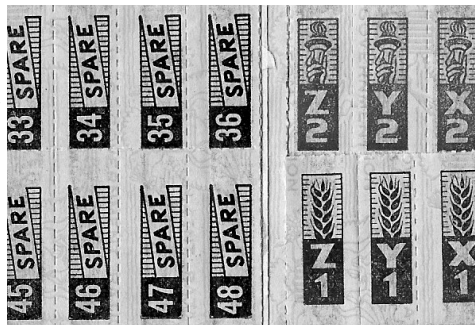
stocked with fruits and vegetables come fall.

I read that chocolate was rationed too. The weekly allotment was 9 grams. That I don't remember. A friend also told me that shoes were rationed. I do remember standing in line for a pair of nylon stockings. We were willing to stand in line for an hour or two to get one pair. I was in Elmira for that since I was in Nurses' Training at the time.

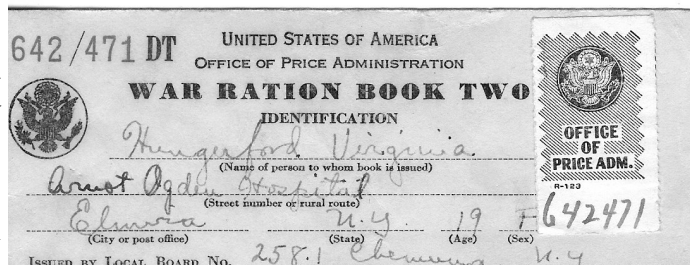
We took very good care of those stockings, believe me.

Some people saved their table scraps for a farmer who might be willing to pick them up once a week to give to his pigs.

Well some of the readers might have more memories to add to this. Perhaps they would share them with us.



*The Ration Books and stamps shown here are from the Historical Society Collections. They were given by Virginia in 1992. Other Ration books, stamps and documents along with newspaper articles and other 1940s home front items will be on display at the Historical Society Museum this summer. Plan to stop in during Olde Home Day June 14th or weekends in July and August. In addition, we would also be happy to show you around by appointment.*



## Looking Back

Reprinted from the *Interlaken Review* May \_\_ 1918

### Cyclone Hits Interlaken

Barns Blown Down—Young Orchards Nearly Ruined—Trees Uprooted—Crops Practically Ruined—Window Lights are Broken—Thousands of Dollars Damage Done in a few minutes by Hail Stones

About, six o'clock last Saturday evening this section was visited for the first time (and we hope the last) by a genuine western cyclone. At about that hour two storms seemed to meet over near Seneca Lake and came straight across the lake country, traveling a little south of east. A deluge of rain was followed by hail stones of great size, some measuring two or three inches across. These were sent whirling through the air like buzz saws, cutting off the leaves and limbs, going thru window glass like pieces of stone, or bullets. The first of the damage by hail seems to have struck what is called the Bonner place, south of Ovid, and extended to Chas. Whiteford's, knocking out window glass and destroying young fruit trees. This seemed to take a line across to Minor Brokaw's place, where over 100 panes of glass were broken in his house, and his fine, young orchard practically ruined. Just east of his place the storm seemed to form into a cyclone or twister, going in a whirling movement, ever traveling east by south.

The large barn on the Scott farm, owned by L. C. Bradley and occupied by Dana Hayward, was totally demolished and pieces were strewn over the fields. Mr. Hayward heard the big chimney come tumbling through the roof and grabbing two children ran to the kitchen in south west corner, for safety. He had no sooner got in that room when the cyclone struck the house, tore off the wood shed and part of the south side of

the house. With his wife and children, he then ducked for the cellar and staid until it was safe to come out. The roof on the south side of the main house was entirely gone, and the west half of the north side was scattered over the fields. Looking to the south-east you could see where the cyclone had cut a pathway thru the woods on the Van-Nostrand farm, also owned by Mr. Bradley. Twenty-five large trees were uprooted and thrown in every' direction and it looked from a distance as if a gang had been at work cutting trees to build a railroad through there. It passed a little to the east of the VanNostrand buildings, moving the barn on the Diadema Smith place and totally destroying the next barn east.

It seemed to have a fine time with the Lodi-Interlaken road, where it knocked down 50 telephone poles in the two miles from Interlaken westward. Both the Home and Bell lines were put out of commission, and some of the poles rolled over and over. Large trees were uprooted and some twisted off like pipe stems. All the telephone lines were out of commission until Sunday. Both companies had a large gang of men at work on Sunday and finished up Monday afternoon.

Here in the village the main damage was by hail. Scarcely a house escaped without a broken window. Especially severe was this loss in all houses, not protected by trees on the west side. The roof on Fowler Bloomer & Co. garage was ruined and a new one had to be put on Monday. Everything was flooded and considerable damage was done to early gardens. Hail has probably ruined the cherry and apple crop in the narrow strip' I covered. The heaviest of the wind storm seems to have skipped over Interlaken and come to earth one mile east, where the large

barn on Brad Kern's farm was completely demolished. Four cows buried in the ruins were rescued not much damaged. The horses were in another barn, unharmed.

At Bert Slaght's an apple tree was twisted off and carried over into an adjoining field, never touching the fence. The storm seems to cover a strip about half a mile wide. Outside of that belt there was some hail and wind but not of serious consequence.

We understand Thomas Freestone's orchard was ruined by hail.

L. C. Bradley estimates his loss as about \$5,000. Aside from the great damage to house, barn totally demolished, he will lose 70 acres of spring wheat.

Considerable damage was done on Mrs. Fannie Bradley's place, next one north, also at B.E. Smalley's, a little east. In fact everybody got a touch for some damages.

Here in Interlaken scarcely a house escaped without loss of more or less glass.

Nobody was hurt but several had some very close calls.

Minor Brokaw's young orchard was almost totally ruined. He estimates his loss in orchard and farm at least \$5,000.

Lyman Harris' greenhouse on West Avenue was wrecked by the hail.

The total loss can scarcely be estimated, so many involved and at various amounts. It is safe to say that \$50,000 would not cover the damaged caused by the storm in fifteen minutes.

## Remembering The 1918 Storm

by Marian Kellogg

I remember the storm of 1918. Our parents were attending an auction. When Mother noticed the sky was filled with angry looking storm clouds, they were concerned and hurried home. Dad dropped Mother off at the house and she sent my older sister to the barn with his raincoat.

During the storm Mother stood just inside the front door with one arm around me. We could hear hail ripping all of the windows out of one end of the house and punching holes in the roof. Every room on that end of the house was damaged and soaking wet. In the other end of the house one big hailstone came through the kitchen window, hurtled across the room and bounced off the baseboard, leaving a dent.

In the barn, Dad was standing with one arm around Mildred and his hand on the door just in case. He was really suffering because he had turned the team into the orchard before they left and there was no way he could get to them.

After the storm, though he dreaded what he might find, Dad went out to locate the team. There they were, standing peacefully under the biggest apple tree. There was a clear circle around that tree where there were no hailstones.

The next day we all walked up the road to view the destruction. It was very muddy. I remember looking down and seeing mud splashed almost halfway up my rubber boots. Bert Smalley's bull calf had been lifted over the fence and set down in the next field unharmed. Further up the road, the side of a barn had been torn off but horses were calmly looking out of the gap while munching hay. When we reached Hayward's house, I was rather intrigued by the

fact there was a big gap between the kitchen and the rest of the house.

The thing that has always impressed me most about that storm is that, even with all the property damage, no animals or humans were seriously injured.

Editor's note: One day last fall Marian asked the Town of Covert Historian if there was some way to find out when a tornado occurred during the 1915-1918 time frame. Looking in Wheeler Bassett's Diaries and the *Interlaken Review Index* we were able to document the date of the Tornado.

Marian Kellogg was 6 years old at the time of the 1918 storm; her sister Mildred was 12. They and their parents, Allen and Inez Whitley, lived on the J. B . Whiting farm on Munson Road.

#### **From the Collections**

Are you trying to find where a person lived in Seneca County? Three volumes may be of help to you. The Seneca County Directory of 1867-68 lists residents in the County; the *Business Directory of Seneca Co. 1894-1895* includes information on crops and where residents lived with their town; and the 1914 *American Agriculturist Farm Directory of Yates, Schuyler, Tompkins, and Seneca Counties* contains similar information. Both the 1894 and 1914 volumes have a map to correspond to the road data shown in the volume.

*The following was written by Maurice L. (Pat) Patterson, President of the Interlaken Historical Society for over 20 years and then President Emeritus until his death in 2005. Born in 1910, he graduated from high school in 1927 and left home to work at General Electric in Schenectady for two years before matriculating at Alfred University. In about 2002 he wrote this account of hitch-hiking home to the Catskills to surprise his mother in 1929.*

#### **Mothers' Day 1929**

I knew my mother would be surprised to see me on Mothers' Day since I had been home not long before with the Kengetter boys who lived in nearby Rio and worked in the machine shop at G.E. On the Friday before Mothers' Day, I took my satchel packed with clothes to work and left work at noon. I had the boss's secretary sign a pass so I could carry my satchel out of the factory gate. She also punched my time-out before she left work that night.

On my way to the trolley station, I passed my old Italian friend who I greeted each morning and always told him his flowers in his florist shop looked awful.

"Wat's a matter, seeek?"

"No, I'm going home to visit my mother for Mothers' Day." "Tak'a her some roses. I give you a good price."

He gave me six roses for \$3.00, his cost from the supplier. He wrapped wet cotton around the stems, wrapped them again with plastic and put them in a florist box. At the trolley station I took the trolley to Albany. The Albany-Newburgh

bus had left, so I hitch-hiked. A young fellow picked me up in a truck, and said, "Where you going?"

"I'm going to Otisville, near Middletown to see my mother on Mothers' Day."

"What you got in the box?" "Six roses for my mother."

We visited for a while and he pulled into a truck stop for coffee at Kingston. As soon as we got in the coffee shop, he yelled, "Anyone here going to [route] 209? A young fellow here has six roses for his mother for Mothers Day and needs a ride to Otisville." Two drivers spoke up, and I selected the driver going to Port Jervis. He let me off at Cuddebackville, and another salesman picked me up and took me to Otisville. When he found I had six roses for my mother, he insisted on taking me to our house. It's about 135 miles from Schenectady to Otisville, and I arrived before 5 p.m. When I gave the flowers to Mom she was speechless. Then she started to cry. (No one had ever given her flowers from a florist before.)

When she opened the box, the buds were in full bloom. In fact, she insisted on taking them to church Sunday, and the minister announced, "The flowers this morning were donated by Laura Patterson given to her by her son." The minister put the flowers on the flower stand and put the flowers that the flower committee had placed there on the piano.

By that time [my brother] Lin had a

car so Pop gave him a dollar for gas to take me to Newburg on Sunday afternoon to take the train to Albany. Weekends are the worst time to hitch-hike. At Albany I took the trolley to Schenectady. On Monday after work, I stopped in the flower shop to tell the owner how his flowers had got me home so quickly.

"Hey, Angella, come out and hear about my roses." Angella was a stout Italian lady, and I told her the story including how my mother took them to church.

What church?" "Presbyterian."

"It should have been Mass."

Then she leaned over and kissed me on the cheek.

*I will scan a "card" from a scrapbook for here.*



Downtown Downieville, CA. Join us on Monday, April 28th when Chris Wolff recalls the days of the California Gold Rush.

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**Mark your calendar**

April 28: Program at Covert Municipal Building,

June 1st: Newsletter items due to editors.

June 14: Interlaken Olde Home Day, Main Street, and Interlaken Alumni Association Reunion.

July 14th: Joint program on the NYS Agriculture College at Ovid.