

# Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the  
**Interlaken Historical Society**

Volume 36, No. 1 July 2010

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



*Setting up  
the new  
Indian  
artifact  
exhibit.*

## **IHS July Program**

### ***So Good a Time***

**Diary of Olive Evans Williams**

**Monday July 26, 2010 7:30 p.m.**

**Town of Covert Municipal Building**

The Interlaken Historical Society is pleased to announce the recent publication of *“So Good a Time”: Life in the 1870s as Documented in the Diary of Olive Evans Williams*, the new book written by local author Nancy Saultz Radloff.

Olive Williams began her diary in 1873, when she was 10½ years old. The last entry was written in September, 1878; the title of the book was taken from that final entry.

Olive wrote about life on the farm, school and social events, health and dental care, Westward expansion, travel by train, boat, and buggy, and the difficult economic times faced by her family and their neighbors.

The book, which includes a complete transcription of the diary, presents the historical context of Olive’s account of her life.

Dr. Radloff addresses these issues and connects them to Olive’s words, setting national trends into a personal context. It is the first time Olive’s diary has been available to the public, and many local residents will be pleased to see their ancestors mentioned. For example, Olive’s older half-brother

Ransom and half-sister Stella both married Rappleyes, and one of Olive’s best friends was Jennie Covert.

On Monday evening, July 26<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Radloff will present a program on Olive, her diary, and the process of researching and writing a book based on this source. The event, which starts at 7:30 PM at the Town of Covert Municipal Building, 8469 South Main Street, will include a brief slide show and discussion by the author, who will also sign copies of the book upon request.

All are invited to attend, and refreshments will be served

For more information please contact the Society at [museum@interlakenhistory.org](mailto:museum@interlakenhistory.org) or Diane Bassette Nelson at 607-532-9227.

### **Table of Contents**

July Program	Page 1
President’s Message	Page 2
Society News	Page 3
Cayuga Indian Display	Page 4
Shingle King of Interlaken	Page 5
Flax	Page 6-7
Tompkins King Apples	Page 8
Library News	Page 9
Olde Home Day 2010	Page 10-11

### **President's Message It Takes a Village**

We have often heard the phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child." This phrase first came from Africa, where all of the villagers watched over the children. To paraphrase that comment, it takes a village to create a festival, a historical society, or a feeling of welcome.

For the Historical Society, it takes a *village* and its *history* to sustain what has been created over the years. The Trustees are the guiding spirit behind all that is done, but it also takes many, many people to see that it all happens. It is our volunteers and the members of the many committees that help create the exhibits and special events that we all enjoy.

We kicked off our 2010 summer season with a well-attended Olde Home Day on Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. Many people came into our community that day and enjoyed the result of the hard work of a whole village of people. To count how many people worked to create OHD 2010, you would have to begin in July 2009, when the planning began. It is beyond this article to list all of the people and organizations. Let us just say Thank You! to all of them for the hours and days they put into creating the event. See page 11 for a look back at the day through pictures.

A number of people have also been hard at work putting together our summer exhibits, which will showcase a number of "villages" within our community. The Iroquois were the earliest inhabitants of this

area, and their village has been the scene of several archeological digs. For a glimpse of their village life, now long covered by earth and vegetation, come see the new exhibit on loan from the State University of NY at Buffalo. The trustees have spent many hours, even years, working with a number of people to have this exhibit on loan to us. Special thanks to Dr. Douglas Perrelli and Anthonio Sudina of the Department of Anthropology for loaning the society the items and providing the interpretation.

Another exhibit on display showcases the work of residents who lived and recorded life and times in their village, Farmer Village. The Arch Chadwick prints give us a detailed circa 1900 look at several places within the village as captured through his camera lens. Beginning this summer, we have the opportunity to view this same village from the eyes of Olive Evans Williams, who kept a detailed diary as a young girl in the 1870s. That diary is now at the printers and will be available later this summer.

On behalf of the Trustees, a very special thank you to Joe Baldwin for his gift to the society of a collection of bottles created for Dr. John Hill of Farmer. These bottles are on display in one of several new display cases and present an interesting look at an earlier time.

Camp Barton, our local Boy Scout camp, is another historic part of our community. We honor them, and the 100 years of Boy Scouts in America, with an exhibit this summer.

Whether you are new to Interlaken or a long-time resident, please plan to visit the museums. We will be open Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm in July and August. If you have family and friends coming to visit, we will be happy to arrange a special time to share our museums. Just call 607-532-8899 or 532-9227.

It does indeed take many people to create all of the villages around us.

*Diane Bassette Nelson*

**New Life Members:**

Betty McKnight, Trumansburg

**Donations to the Society**

Joe Baldwin, Trumansburg, NY - Collection of Dr. John Hill Medicine Bottles

David Schlabach, Medina NY

Tompkins County King apple tree

Ulysses Historical Society

Historical books

**Dues are now due.**

Individual or families at only \$10 per year

or

Consider a life membership at \$100

Please see the insert for details

**OLD FASHIONED FAMILY SOCIAL**

**Sunday August 1st, 2010**

**4:00 — 6:30 p.m.**

**The Community is Invited!**

The trustees of the Interlaken Historical Society would like to invite you to join us on Sunday, August 1st, between 4:00 and 6:30 p.m. for our fourth Old Fashioned Social dish-to-pass get-together on the lawn of the Interlaken Public Library.

We, and other community organizations, will supply grilled hot dogs with rolls and fixings, lemonade and ice tea, as well as ice cream for dessert. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service.

If you haven't seen the new museum or visited the Farmers' Museum in a while both will be open, so plan to stop by.

Please drop by to eat, relax, and visit. In case of rain we will gather at the Interlaken Baptist Church.

For more information please contact the Society at [museum@interlakenhistory.org](mailto:museum@interlakenhistory.org) or Diane Bassette Nelson at 607-532-9227.

We welcome the residents of Conifer Village, our newest village, to our community. As part of the welcoming basket this issue of the Interlaken Historical Society newsletter is presented with our compliments and the hope that you will visit us and attend our programs.

### **New But Very Old**

The display of artifacts from a Cayuga Indian village in the Town of Covert, Seneca County, is a very new exhibit at the Society. It was installed just in time for Olde Home Day. So in that sense, it is very new. But in the true sense, it is very old. The village is estimated to have been inhabited by men, women and children of the Cayuga Tribe in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. This site, the Klinko site, is thought to be the earliest Cayuga site of four on the West side of Cayuga Lake. The Cayugas were known as the “great hunters” and also relied on the “three sisters” – maize, beans and squash. It is one of the last prehistoric sites. There was no evidence of European contact. Two longhouses were excavated and many artifacts were recovered. Expect to see examples of projectile points, pottery, segments of pipes and small stone tools.

The most common question asked is ...“How did anyone know about this site?” Apparently, the area had a reputation of being an Indian Hill, a place to look for arrowheads. In the 1940s, two student archaeologists from Cornell University came to investigate and actually did a “dig.” The artifacts they found were given to the DeWitt Historical Society and now reside at the History Center in Ithaca. One of these students, Marian E. White, became a professor at the State University of Buffalo. She conducted two summer session “digs” in the early 1970s, bringing her classes to excavate the site. Thousands of artifacts were collected and stored at SUNY Buffalo. Sadly, Dr.

White died shortly after these digs, and work on the site ceased.

Explorations were begun about 5 years ago to bring this local history “home.” Through the cooperation of the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Buffalo, that has happened. We now have a five year renewable loan. They have also provided us with interpretation of the exhibit at our museum. Several archaeologists as well as graduate students have visited the site and have shown considerable interest. Perhaps, further excavations might be planned, or some of the analysis that Dr. White had intended to do might be accomplished. It is hoped that both the History Center in Ithaca and SUNY Buffalo will tend these collections of our heritage with the utmost care.

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the funding of the Delavan Foundation to accomplish this Cayuga Indian exhibit. In addition, a special thank you to Edith and Nelson Delavan for the loan of a magnificent collection of Indian artifacts from the Towns of Varick and Fayette.

Please plan on coming to the museum to visit and learn about 15<sup>th</sup> century life in the Finger Lakes!

### The Shingle King of Interlaken

In the early days, when our part of the country was being settled almost everything was made from wood. There was seemingly an endless supply and the settlers were expert at knowing which species to use for which purpose when constructing their buildings, making tools for farm work and items to make some of the household tasks easier.

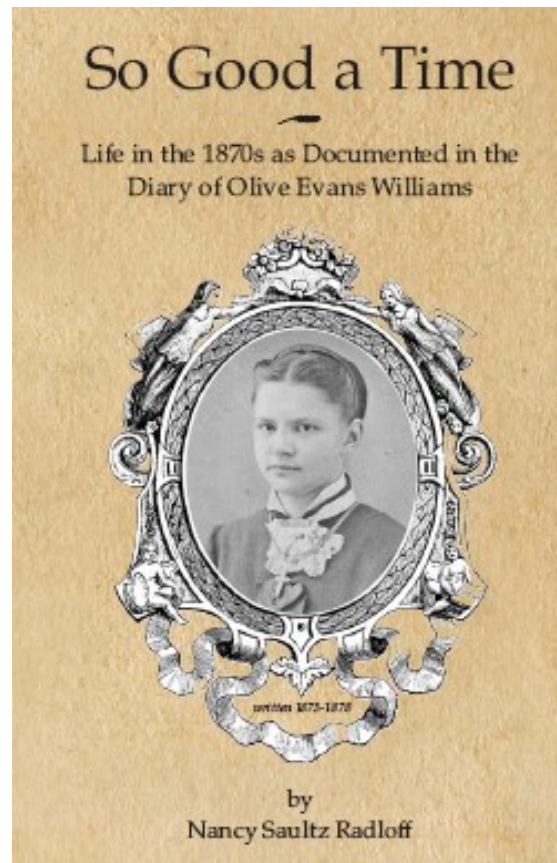
At the Farmers' Museum, we have in the woodworking shop a collection of the tools that were used then. We also are very fortunate to have a volunteer who has devoted years to the craft, patiently demonstrating to young and old and everyone in between, how things were made of wood.

The photo below shows Howard Barrows in the woodworking shop helping a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student learn how to use a hand plane. The other photo is of a spike tooth harrow, made in the shop by Howard using the old tools there, including the shaving horse and drawshave. As a result of his work with the South Seneca 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Classes, who read *Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder each year, Howard has been dubbed the "Shingle King of Interlaken."



### So Good A Time

Order your copy of this new book that looks at life in Farmer Village. The pre-publication price is \$9.95, a \$3.00 savings. After August 1st, \$12.95. Wonderful summertime reading. Shipping in late July.



When you visit the museums this summer notice the planter box at the Telephone Company Building, the flowers were taken from an entry in Olive's diary .

A special thank you to all the volunteers who tend the museum gardens, and the Village Memorial Garden.

### Flax, *Linum usitatissimum*

(botanical name means most useful)

Many are familiar with wool and how it is spun into yarn, dyed and used in a variety of ways, but there seems to be little common knowledge about the universal use of flax by our pioneer families. "When the homespun age was in flower, flax could be found on nearly every well-ordered farm."<sup>1</sup> Although the flax fiber was used at home the flax seed was a small commercial crop. It was sold as seed for replanting and for pressing for linseed oil used in paints. The oil cake resulting from pressing of the seed was a high protein cattle feed. According to the 1850 Agricultural Census, 98 bushels of flax seed were produced in the Town of Covert, and 1,486 bushels in Seneca County. There were two oil mills recorded in the census that year in the county, and there is reference to a flax mill at Tracy's Landing (now Kidders) at about that same time.<sup>2</sup>

A small plot of flax has been planted at the Farmers' Museum so visitors can observe it growing and maturing through the summer. When the plants are a few inches high the patch must be hand weeded. Children often did the weeding because they would not trample the plants too heavily. The flax will bloom at 50 to 60 days, the blue flowers opening when the sun strikes them and closing by mid-day. There will be a flush of bloom for a few days, then sporadic blooming the rest of the period. The plant is an annual growing 30 to 40 inches tall. It has a central woody core or cylinder, more or less pithy, but hollow when dry. Between the woody center and the thin outer bark of the flax straw, running in symmetrical layers all the way from root to blossom, clings the tough flax fiber.

Harvesting took place about 30 days af-

ter full blooming by pulling the plants, roots and all, so as not to waste any of the fiber that would result from cutting with a sickle or scythe. Cutting would also tangle the straw and make it more difficult to process. An exhibit has been created at the Farmers Museum to describe and illustrate the many interesting processes that flax passes through on its way from harvest to cloth. After drying in the field the flax was gathered into *sheaves*, bound with a few stray stalks and set up to cure. When thoroughly dry the seed balls were removed by drawing the heads through the teeth of a flat iron comb.

Next was *retting*, a rotting process accomplished by placing the sheaves of flax in water- a pond, trough or even on the ground where dew would settle on them. After 3 or 4 days in the water the flax was removed and spread to dry being careful to not let it mildew or mold, then stored away until there was time for further processing.

When that time came a *sheave* was opened up and a good handful was separated and passed first through the *beeter* at the end of the *flax-brake* where it was *beetled* or pounded to loosen the fibers from the core. Next it was passed back and forth



through the *flax-brake* proper, first by one end of the bundle and then by the other, in a process called *braking*. The inter-meshing wooden blades of the *flax-brake* crushed the inner core, now called *shive*, letting most of it fall to the floor beneath while the strong fibers surrounding it were only bent in the process.

This handful of flax next passed to the *scutching* or *swingling board* where a wooden *scutching knife* was used to scrape off the pieces of core still clinging to the fibers however they were still stuck together in narrow ribbons. Next by drawing the fibers through the *hetchels* or *heckles*, which were sharp iron teeth set in boards, they were combed out leaving in the *hetchels* the short tangled fibers called *tow*. The *tow* was saved and used for making yarn to be woven into coarse cloth for sacking and covers for husk and straw ticks for the beds. It was also spun into larger yarns for making rope and string. Interlaken Beekeeper Duane Waid uses *tow* in his smoker. He says he lights it in the morning and it smolders all day.

About a quarter of the original *sheave* of flax was left after processing. These fine fibers known as line flax were twisted up and stored ready for the spinster who shook them out and wound them on the distaff of her *flax wheel* where she converted them into yarn or thread. When the spool of the *flax wheel* was full, the yarn was wound off on a *swift* sometimes called a *weasel*, which measured it in *skeins*. When a sufficient number of turns of the *weasel* were made to measure out a *skein*, a wooden peg would pass over a wooden reed and there would be heard a POP, hence, "pop goes the *weasel*."

These *skeins* of yarn were washed and sometimes bleached then woven into cloth.

Cloth was woven on the *loom* from which were made sheets, shirts, petticoats, dresses and many other items for household use and for clothing.

*The Golden Age of Homespun*, Jared van Wagenen, Jr., New York State Historical Association, 1953, pg. 85.

*Sheldrake, Kidders and Wyer's Point, The History of a Community*, Naomi Brewer and David Robinson, 2010, pg. 48.

### **A Thank you to Allan Buddle**

*Earlier this spring Allan Buddle announced that he would not seek another term as a Trustee for the Interlaken Historical Society. After 4 terms he wants to spend more time on the projects of the society. The society has appreciated many of Allan's projects over the years; a few of those projects ~~have been the new museum, the plowing days, and hosting the visits by the 4th grade students.~~ Thank you, Allan, for all you have done, and all we know you will continue to do.*

## Tompkins County King Apple

By Mary Jean Welsler and Marty Schlabach

A fruit tree with local historical connections was recently planted at the Interlaken Historical Society Farmers Museum. The King Apple of Tompkins County was first recognized at the American Pomological Society meeting in 1856 in Rochester, NY, though the tree was available from Ellwanger and Barry Nursery of Rochester NY, as early as 1844. But, its origins date even earlier. *Apples of New York*, 1905, states, "The variety appears to have originated near Washington, Warren County, NJ. It is said to have been brought from that locality to Tompkins County, NY, by Jacob Wycoff in 1804 by whom it was named King. The Congress of Fruit Growers at Rochester added Tompkins County to its name to distinguish it from other King apples." It is now commonly called Tompkins King.

The tree was described as vigorous, spreading and an abundant bearer annually of large, uniform fruit, round in shape, with red-orange stripes on yellow ground color. The flesh is yellow, aromatic, crisp and juicy, and under good conditions, will keep until May.

James M. Mattison of Jacksonville propagated the apple and played a significant role in its wider distribution in this area. Jacksonville Nursery was founded in 1845 by James Monroe Mattison. In 1865, then owned by the founder's son, J. Monroe Mattison, the nursery's stock included



10,000 apples, plus other fruit trees, grapevines and ornamental shrubs. In the early 20th century, H. D. Cole of Interlaken reported that he had an "orchard of Tompkins King top-grafted about seventy years ago upon trees which were planted about one hundred years ago. These trees are still bearing good crops." Though not as widely grown as in the 19th century, some area orchards still grow the Tompkins King apple.

The Farmers Museum tree was planted on May 15 by John Hunt, Harold Stewart and Allan Buddle. The tree was donated by David Schlabach Nursery, Medina, NY, which has a wide selection of heirloom apple varieties available each spring.

### References:

- S. A. Beach, *The Apples of New York*, Albany, J. B. Lyon Company, 1905, p345-349.
- Barbara Bell, "Glance Backward: Jacksonville Nursery Once Raised 'King' Apple Trees," *Ithaca Journal*, October 23, 1971.
- "King Apple of Tompkins County," *Moore's Rural New Yorker*, vol. X, No. 9, Feb 26, 1859, p70.
- James M. Mattison, "Origin of the King Apple," *Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*, May 1860, vol.15, p213.
- W. H. Ragan, *Nomenclature of the Apple: A Catalogue of the Known Varieties Referred to in American Publications from 1804 to 1904*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905.



### Library News Happy Summer!

The library is ready for summer reading, "Make a Splash! Read at the Library." Story times are Thursday mornings in July at 10 a.m., please join us. There will be stories, crafts and fun. Families are welcome too.

Plan to be at the library on August 5th from 10 to noon. Mr. Beau the Clown will be here with magic tricks, puppets, balloons and more. Come in for the fun!

We were saddened to learn of Jean Saxton's passing. She donated "Books on Tapes" for many years. We send condolences to her daughter Ruth, and family.

Our book sale went well. Due to the weather we had the sale inside this year. Thank you to all who donated or bought books, tapes etc. A special thank you to my son and wife for helping with set up and take down. Also thank yous to Connie Kindig and Diane Tunison for help on Olde Home Day.

We would like to welcome Holly Covert, Kate Hunt and Mimi Schaffner our new board members. They are already planning programs for the fall. Watch for announcements!

The new literacy program has four libraries working together, Ovid, Lodi, Hector and Interlaken. Their goal is to be able to help everyone at our libraries. Watch for flyers about upcoming programs.

Librarian's pick for summer reading: if you like the Civil War era, we have a new book called *SweetSmoke* by David Fuller. It is about a slave named Cassius, great story, sad, happy and enlightening,

Mark Your Calendar now and plan to be at the Brook Farm on Saturday September 25th.

OLD FASHIONED FAIR



& PLOWING DAY 2010

Saturday, September 25, 2010  
at Brook Farm  
Main Street, Interlaken, New York  
10 AM TO 4 PM



#### Featuring:

Presentation by Rich Hoven  
on early Post and Beam construction

Period crafts and skills, including  
spinners, quilters, a blacksmith, wheelright,  
shingle maker, printer, beekeeper and candlemaker

Children's games

Heritage vegetable and animal exhibits

Parade

Plowing!

Food and more...

Register for a chance to win one of 6 baskets filled with products from our local farms and businesses

No Admission Fee, Donations Accepted

For more information, visit The Interlaken Historical Society Website at [www.interlakenhistory.org](http://www.interlakenhistory.org) or contact Allan or Ann Buddle, [orchardland@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:orchardland@zoom-dsl.com), 607 532 4213

## Olde Home Day 2010

One of the new items for Olde Home Day 2010 was a community photography contest. There were 25 entries in four categories, and the winners were:

### Our Beautiful Community

4th to 8th grade

- 1st Grace Webster
- 2nd Amanda Nichols
- 3rd Sara Smith

9th to 12th Grade

Laurel Pell

Adult

- 1st Colleen Redditt
- 2nd Ann Mott
- 3rd Karen Haas

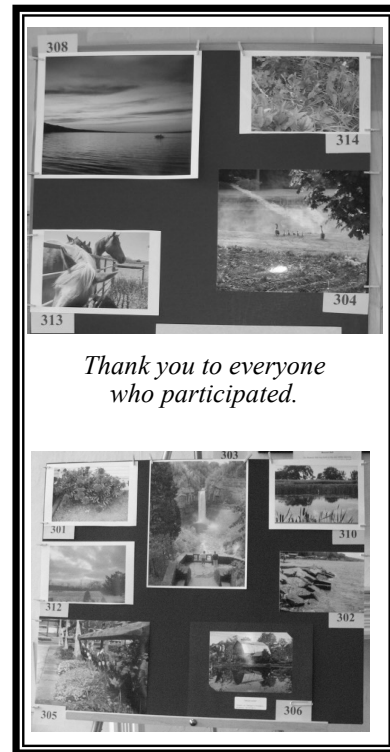
### People Making A Difference

Adult

- 1st Nicole Nelson
- 2nd Diane Bassette Nelson
- 3rd Karen Haas

A special thank you to South Seneca Chapter Order of the Eastern Star, Farmerville Union Lodge Free and Accepted Masons, and the Interlaken Community Action Group for sponsoring the contest and to all who entered.

Categories for the 2011 Photography contest will be announced this fall.





This special dog has a great view of the crowd

Pritchard Automotive brought their Wheego electric automobile for the parade.



Young and old found something special at Olde Home Day 2010.

Over the years many people have been honored with the title of citizen of the year. This year's honoree was Diane Bassette Nelson.



A new addition to the Olde Home Day parade was this wooden train from Cayuga Creamery .





*Plan to visit the museums on Saturdays in July and August from 10 am to 2 pm. Arch Chadwick prints and the Civil War display are only two of the new displays this year. We are also open by appointment, 6 07-532-8899 or 532-9227, or [diane@interlakenhistory.org](mailto:diane@interlakenhistory.org)*

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

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

**Mark your calendar**

July 26 Summer Program, *So Good a Time*, join us as Nancy Radloff talks about Olive Williams and her Diary. You can pick up your copy of Nancy's book at the program.

August 1, Fourth Annual Community Social 4:00 p.m., last date to save \$3.00 on *So Good a Time*. Join us for a very good time.

September 25 Country Fair and Plowing Day

October 25 Beekeeping with Duane Waid

**The Historical Society**

**Board of Trustees**

Diane Bassette Nelson, President

Bill Schaffner, Vice President

Ann Buddle, Secretary

Karen King, Treasurer

Trustees

John Hunt

Nancy Radloff

Philip Stannard

Harold Stewart

Mary Jean Welser

**Newsletter Editors & Staff**

Diane Bassette Nelson

Bill Schaffner

Peggy Kopsa

Nancy Radloff

Mimi Schaffner

Barb Stewart