

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 38, No. 2 October 2012

www.InterlakenHistory.org



125 Years with the Interlaken Review Monday, October 22, 2012 7:30 p.m.

In July 1887 Thomas Hause began publishing a weekly newspaper in and for the residents of Farmer, New York. Two primary items have not changed in the 125 years since that time, the paper is published weekly and it has local people contributing to the news.

On Monday evening, October 22, 2012 former editor Duane Waid and current reporter, Louis DiPietro will share information about the Interlaken Review, its history, the people who played important roles, and some of the production changes over the years.

Mr. DiPietro has covered stories in the South Seneca area for several years. Following graduation from St. Bonaventure University with a degree in journalism in 2005, he worked previously at the Olean Times Herald in Olean and within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg library system during his five years in in Charlotte, NC.

On display that evening will be artifacts from the Historical Society collection in-

cluding a copy of the first issue printed.

The meeting will be held at the Town of Covert Municipal Building, 8469 South Main Street. The meeting is free and all are welcome to join us. Special refreshments will be served.

For more information please contact the Society at 607-532-9227, or museum@interlakenhistory.org.

Were you at Plowing Day 2012

See page 5 for pictures from the event.

~~If you have pictures, please share them with the society on our Facebook page~~

~~or by email to~~

~~museum@interlakenhistory.org~~

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President's Message

The Paper Trail

How often do we find ourselves looking for a piece of paper, a notice, letter, report or bill? If you are doing research, that piece of paper may be decades or centuries old. At the Historical Society, we have a lot of paper, and usually we can find the piece we need.

Such was the case in July when the first issue of the *Farmer Review* (now *Interlaken Review*) was being celebrated at the current publisher's office in Ithaca. Having the original at that event made the afternoon a bit more memorable. The first issue will also be at our fall meeting when we will hear more about the history and the people of that 125-year-old newspaper. The article written on the 10th anniversary of the Review is included in this issue of our newsletter as well.

Pieces of paper in a scrapbook, family letters, 50-year-old research paper or a transcription of an interview are all items which the Historical Society wishes to preserve for future generations.

When we receive donations of items to the society, we group them into two classes: artifacts and archives. Artifacts are defined as any object made by human beings, especially with a view to subsequent use, or a handmade object, a tool, or the remains of one, a shard of pottery characteristic of an earlier time or cultural stage, especially an object found at an archaeological excavation. Archives are the documents or records

relating to the activities, business dealings, etc., of a person, family, corporation, association, community, or nation.

We have recently received a number of items in both groups. Toys and furniture from a family, books for young school children, scrapbooks and memory albums, research papers, and transcripts. All are used to document life in our community, and to help others who are searching for links to their family.

Over the spring and summer, members of the South Seneca and Romulus school communities met to discuss a possible merger of the two schools. One of the remarks made at the Society board meeting was, "what do we have in our collection that could benefit that group of people?" With that question in mind we looked in our archives and made arrangements to interview people involved in that late 1960s and early 1970s challenge of merging two rival school districts into one.

In this issue of the newsletter we have two articles looking back at that time. One is an interview with Mr. Robert Elliott who was a guidance counselor for many years, first at Interlaken and then with South Seneca. The second article is a reprint of Janet Hubbard's 1976 article about the merger.

We would also like to hear from others about that time.

Before closing this article, a number of thank yous...

to all of the docents who spent time this summer greeting our visitors.

to the many friends of the Interlaken Historical Society who stopped in to visit at one of the museum or at the Trumansburg Fair where we had a display promoting the Country Fair with Local Fare and Plowing Day.

to the planners and participants of the Summer Social held in July

and a major thank you to all the committee members who planned and produced the Plowing Day event on September 22nd. Pictures from the event are shown on page 5 of this newsletter. If you were not able to attend, the day was another wonderful opportunity to gather, learn, visit and enjoy the many aspects of our history and heritage. Planners, participants and visitors all were able to share in so many ways.

Diane Bassette Nelson

New Life Members

Community Action Group, Interlaken
Ruth Wagner, Valois
Peter Zaharis, Interlaken

When paying his dues this summer Lorne Ingram related items from his encounters with others from Sampson. Of a former Sampson trainee whose Naval career was ended by a Japanese suicide pilot attack on his ship. They also meet a gentleman while at a campground who wondered about their NYS license plate. The conversation then centered around the Romulus Army base and ended in a gift for fresh fish for dinner. As he noted: "That's what memories are made of."

Donations to the Society

Family memory books from the Chadwick family, Carolyn Young

Photo album of homes, cottages and lake scenes from Phyllis Betzler

Family history information, John Williams family, from Albert & Jane Williams , Ithaca

Auction poster from the 1950s to 1980s, Andy Herrella, Ovid

Quilts, children's furniture, metal toys and a bullet mold, from Jane Kellogg, Interlaken

School materials and 1953 Boy Scout Jamboree items from Steve Folts

Replica of the Interlaken Railroad Depot made by John, a wooden farm fork, a grain cradle, child's wooden sled, a Lovell 323 hand wringer, an army uniform and many household domestic item, from Betty and John Brooks, Southwick, MA

Clothing and books from Jay and Rosemary Fischer

Financial gift from Barbara Bell, Watkins Glen

News of Our Neighbors

OVID'S ANTIQUE ROAD SHOW will be held October 15, 2012, 7:00 p.m., Ovid Historical Society Museum, Main St. Bring items to be appraised at \$ 3.00 each, limit 3 items. Appraiser will be Mr. John Lord of Geneva, knowledgeable and past President of Finger Lakes Antique Club. A 50/50 raffle and refreshments are all part of the evening. For additional information please call 607-869-5222.

Library News

It has been a busy summer at the Interlaken Public Library. One of our biggest events happened during Interlaken Old Home Days in June. To honor our former librarian Pat Moore for her many years

of service we dedicated the story time area of the new children's room as the Pat Moore Story Time Corner with the sign courtesy of Chris Wolff. Pat was instrumental in making the new children's addition become a reality. Joining us to help celebrate this event was Pat's son and daughter-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren many of whom traveled great distances to attend.

On four Tuesdays in July, dinosaurs invaded the library. With funding from the Rosen Foundation, Dinosaur Invasion, a program presented by Johanna Batman of the Museum of the Earth drew 25-27 children and their parents or grandparents weekly. Each week a different topic was discussed, followed by an activity such as making a fossil imprint, investigating the "murder" of a dinosaur CSI style and others. Feedback from all participants proved that this program was a big hit.

Our Summer Reading program started in late July. Coordinator Julie Swank had 18 registered participants. As part of this program, the Cayuga Nature Center visited in early August. Interlaken resident Emily McKittrick the Animal Collections Manager at the Center brought several reptiles, and a



hedgehog to share with the children and their families.

With funding from the Midlakes Early Literacy Library Program, two other programs were also offered.

On July 24, Nate & Kate performed their music and juggling show, and on August 21 singer/guitarist Tom Sieling performed his music show "Howl at the Moon with a Wild Tune." Both shows were big hits with the families that attended.

The front lawn of the library was the venue for two concerts this summer, both sponsored by the Delavan Foundation. On August 21, the local Finger Lakes Community Band performed to a full "lawn". The Community Band showcases the talents of our local musicians. On August 28, Nate & Kate returned to perform during the Farmers Market hours to a smaller but very enthusiastic audience.

Upcoming programs at the library include Sculptured Paper Jewelry class on Sept. 29 and an Acrylic Painting class on October 5. Be sure to stop into the library to see what other classes/programs are scheduled. At the same time you can browse through our newest books, magazines, DVDs and books on CD.

County Fair with Local Fare and Plowing Day 2012

Displays, demonstrations, conversation, speakers, tractors, plows, animals and a wide variety of food. Something for everyone from the youngest to the oldest. Thank you to all who attended, and all who participated. See you again in two years!



Conversation with the Elliotts Regarding the 1968 Merger

Robert was the Director of Guidance in the Interlaken Central School at the time of the 1968 merger which formed the South Seneca Central School District. The guidance counselors were responsible for making sure the students had the programs they needed to support their goals. About 70% of the students went on for further education, some at 4 year colleges and some at 2 year schools like Alfred State. Bob was in a good position to guide students in that he had been a history teacher, a principal and a counselor. It was obvious from the conversation that Bob loved helping students make their program choices. He felt that the guidance counselors were the backbone of the school in that they provided consistency. There seemed to be a rapid turnover of administrators. The counselors also seemed to function in many ways as ombudsmen.

The advantages of the merger made sense to Bob. Physics and Chemistry were taught every other year in Interlaken High School. With the merger, each subject would be taught each year. There would be more languages offered – French and Spanish. In general, there would be more curricular choices. There would also be financial savings.

When the actual event, merging the Ovid Central School and the Interlaken Central School took place, it was something of a surprise to Bob. The Chief School Officer had directed that the high school students

from Ovid would join the Interlaken students in Interlaken for the spring semester of 1971. In December of 1970, Bob read about the directive in the Ithaca Journal, that the Ovid high school students would be present in Interlaken in January of 1971. Suffice it to say, there was a great deal of planning activity before January, but the classes were not integrated until the fall of 1971. They retained their Ovid/Interlaken composition for the spring term.

Bob felt the staff handled the change very well and the students did also. Bob and Therese had two children in the high school at that point and things seemed to go remarkably well.

Therese was a teacher in the Interlaken Central School in the elementary grades. She felt the merger was good for curricular reasons. The library was enlarged, and a gym was also part of the construction project. She agreed with Bob that their own children fared well. The transition was a little simpler in the elementary. The schools were merged in the fall of 1971. The children were happy to see new classmates and education went on!

SOUTH SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL

Contributed by Janet Hubbard

Reprinted from Patterson: Between the Lakes

In early 1966, the feasibility of merger was again explored. Proponents of the enlarged district continued to study the proposed merger and stressed a wider choice of curriculum, better college preparation, and teacher specialization, also, lower taxes than if the schools continued as separate districts. State aid was now available at 95% for building and expansion. Meetings of committees were held to continue efforts to merge the three districts. In March 1967, Romulus announced opposition to the merger and withdrew from the plan. Commissioner James E. Allen laid out the district and designated May 1, 1968, as the date of the referendum. The proposition to merge Interlaken and Ovid Central Schools passed by four votes--894 to 890, with 15 ballots void. The close vote was immediately challenged and litigation in the courts continued for 18 months. The controversy was finally settled on January 22, 1970, by the Court of Appeals.

The newly organized school was called South Seneca Central School and Maurice L. Patterson was named District Principal. The first seven-man Board of Education of the new district was elected--Darwin C. Smith, President; Charles J. Wickes, Vice-President; Stanley W. VanVleet; Robert Dickerson; Frederick I. Swick; Robert Akins; and Mrs. Marion H. Schneider.

In the Ovid Building, the secondary prin-

cipal was Donald Lueder; elementary principal, James Vangalio; guidance director, Anthony Kay. In Interlaken, secondary principal was G. Douglas VanBenschoten; elementary principal, I.W. McGonigal; and guidance director, Robert R. Elliott.

Because of the lack of space in the buildings, the Business and Administration Office of the school moved to the former manse of the Lodi Methodist Church, Lodi, N.Y., where it is located at this writing, (April 1976). Grades K-12 continued in each of the locations until January 1971 when, under District Principal Curtis J. Maxson, grades were combined so that all grades 9-12 were housed in Interlaken, 5-8 in Ovid, and K-4 youngsters in both Ovid and Interlaken.

Mr. James McGinnis followed Curtis J. Maxson as District Principal, in August 1972, and resigned a year later. James Vangalio, middle school principal, was acting district principal until Harold E. Weibezahl assumed his duties as chief school officer in December 1973.

An architect had been hired in December 1968, to design a junior-senior high school building, and many sites were explored for the location of the building. After much deliberation and controversy, the selection of the Eino Kannelin site, adjacent to the property of the Ovid School, was chosen. Voters approved the purchase of the site, 412 to 389, on June 26, 1973. Purchase price, including legal fees, etc., was \$13,000.

Now that the site had been acquired, the

bond issue referendum was the next step. Grades 7-12 were to be housed in the new building at Ovid and grades K-6 would continue in the existing buildings. The proposition also included a pool in the high school. On December 17, 1973, despite the fact that some roads were nearly impassable because of a severe snowstorm, there was a heavy turnout of voters who roundly defeated the \$4.65 million new school building and renovation program and the \$350,000 wing and pool. The new school and renovation item lost 656 to 315 and the swimming pool proposition lost 672 to 252.

The Board then asked for input from the community, scheduled public meetings, and sent out questionnaires to determine what type of program was wanted in the school district. The school faculty was also asked to recommend a program that would reflect the educational goals.

After compiling and considering the various recommendations received, and consulting with the school architect, the decision was made to pursue a program that would house all of the youngsters in grades K-4 (elementary school) in an expanded William D. Wheeler Building; the youngsters in grades 5-8 (middle school) in the Interlaken Main Building; and all of the students in grades 9-12 (high school) in the Ovid Building.

Total cost of the project would be \$3,988,583. Cost to the local taxpayers would be \$203,418 (including interest). To this the State would add \$3,785,165 in building aid.

On May 22, 1974, school district residents voted on the building and renovation program and the proposition was passed, with 594 Yes and 330 No votes, a total of 924. ““This is a clear indication that the people of the district want to put things together, want to stop the haggling, want good educational programs,” said District Principal Harold Weibezahl. Board members viewed the new vote as a sign that the district was again working together for better education.

The ground was broken on June 27 in Interlaken, and on July 24 in Ovid, starting the building and renovations program.

In September 1976, plans call for all K-4 youngsters to occupy the Wm. D. Wheeler Building. In January 1977 the program should be completed. When the program is finished, the middle school (5-8) will be located in the Main Building in Interlaken and the high school (9-12) will be in the Ovid Building.

The Farmer Review: The First 10 Years

Editor T.P.Hause reflecting on the first ten years of The Farmer Review, and changes within the village. Farmer, Seneca County, NY Saturday July 24, 1897

Continued from the July 2012 issue

OTHER CHANGES

Of the doctors, Dr. A. R. Hill is the only one then in practice, and he has spent part of the time in practice at Grand Rapids, Mich. Martin Gambee and "Dol" Goodman (Sheldrake) are the only hotel keepers in business around here ten years ago – many others are dead, W. D. Trusdell, Joshua Hinkley, N. N. Hayt, Elijah Miller, ex-sheriff Cole, John Woods and others having joined the "silent majority."

DEATHS

Speaking of the above brings to mind many people prominent in Farmer ten years-ago, who have been called to their last home. We could not give a complete list and will not attempt it, but will mention a few: Joseph Foote, Wm. Ditmars, Benj. Dumont, Mrs. George R. Brokaw, son and daughter; "Uncle" Peter Covert, as every body called him, John C. Williams, Sebring F. Smalley and wife, John Bainbridge and wife, Rev. A. M. Mann, D. D., Cornelius Peterson, Samuel Burr, Jacob D. Wintersteen, John Wintersteen, James VanDusen and wife, Mrs. Aletta Coryell, Theodore Anderson and daughter, Mrs. Price, Miss Hageman, Alvah Cole, Ann Chandler, Dr. W. W. Wheeler, Dr. C. C. Wheeler, Mrs. VanLiew, Mr. Williamson, Delos P. Collver, Michael McCarthy, Mrs. D. A. Symonds, Miss Mary King, W. D. Trusdell, Mrs. I. H. Stout, Mrs. D. C. Wheeler, Joshua W. Rappleye and wife, J. Peatt Rappleye, James. M. Rappleye, Ansel Rappleye, Mrs. An-

drew Miller, Mrs. O. G. Wheeler, B. E. Bassette, James M. Goodwin, James and Peter Lacey, Mrs. Kinnan, Mrs. Alton Boorum, Geo. W. Eyllenberg, G. Benjamin, Miss Jennie Obert, Miss Rebecca Covert, Mrs. A. R. Hill, Wm. Rappleye and wife, Mrs. J. C. Hall, Jared Bassette, Patrick Woods and wife, John Stout, John King, Sr., Mrs. Burdg Stout and others whose names we do not recall.

CHURCHES

Rev. J. W. Jacks of Romulus, Revs. Chas, MacNish and T. J. O'Connell of Ovid, Rev. H. A. Porter of Lodi, and Rev. M. T. Madden of Trumansburg are the only pastors remaining between the lakes who were settled pastors when the REVIEW was first issued. We believe all other churches have changed during: the past ten years. The Farmer Baptist church and the Reformed church have each changed twice. Considerable improvements have been made in each church, particularly the latter, which has had quite an addition in the way of church parlors. The Universalist society disbanded and sold their building to Geo, C. Torbert who has moved it away and converted it into a bean elevator, and its site is occupied by the handsome house now building for A. V. Minor.

NEW BUILDINGS

Three new houses have been built on Knight street, one on Seneca, two Mechanic, four on Cayuga, eight on Main, five on Lodi. LeRoy, Clinton, and Lake View streets have been laid out in this time and two new houses built on LeRoy, one on Lake View and six on Clinton. Among the new buildings put up within the ten years are the Masonic block, the block put up by P. Mathews and now occupied by Hiram Bloomer, the engine house and Thomas Harmon, the store occupied by the "old harness man" Mosher, Torbert's store, Doolittle's store,

the REVIEW office, and building next to it, also Dennis' carriage shop, Harris Hall's double store, Wiggin's store, the present Gambee house and barns, creamery, canning factory, milk depot, Grove's mill, Riley's blacksmith shop, Fry & Ellison's shop, Chadwick's photograph gallery, several additions to Ryno & Longstreet's factory, a third story added to Covert's Saddlery Works; Clarkson's and Leet's shops. Old Farmer hall has been practically rebuilt into the modern Boyer opera house. Holton's cold storage buildings nearly doubled, A. V. Minor nearly rebuilt the store he now occupies. And there are others, to say nothing of new barns and the houses rebuilt, painted and so fixed up as to be unrecognizable to one who saw them ten years ago.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

Under this head we cannot say so much, as there is no head to direct public work. What we have mentioned has been the result of private enterprise. The roads have been some improved, and considerable new walk laid on some streets while on others but little has been done, little in comparison to what the taxpayers have paid. For instance, within the village proper, or in that portion which it has twice been voted on as to incorporation, there is over \$600,000 assessed property which all these years has been paying a highway tax of \$1 per \$1,000, which tax added to the poll tax would make a sum of \$800 per year for street improvement, or a grand total of \$8,000 in the past ten years. We do not see where \$4,000 of this sum has gone to, in fact it would be hard to show where \$2,000 has been spent, yet it is gone. The yearly tax judiciously expended would give us greater improvements than we have had in both roads and walks and would also give us a good system of street lighting,

not in front of a few places, but on every street in the village. We have always been of the opinion, and are still, that the only true solution of this problem is to incorporate the village. Many, however, differ with us on this question. It has been voted on twice within the ten years, and twice defeated, and the time has now come when it can be voted on again, and this time under more favorable circumstances. The old law required an area of 640 acres regardless of population. This made it necessary to take in considerable farm land. The law which went into effect July 1, 1897, requires a population of at least 300, and specifies the area must not exceed 640 acres. This leaves it so half or any portion less can be incorporated if it has 300 inhabitants, and this can be done by leaving out all farm land. The price paid at the present tax would keep our streets in good condition and have enough left to light them with electricity, same as our neighboring villages of Ovid and Trumansburg. We understand the question will again be submitted in the near future.

This review has already taken more space than we intended. Here is hoping that the next ten years will see Farmer and her citizens as prosperous and happy as they have been since the REVIEW'S advent in 1887 .

Fly Wheel in the Review Building, still in place in 2012.

**INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
GIFT SHOP ORDER FORM**

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_____	<i>Historical Images of Interlaken</i> a coloring book based on historical photographs 12 full page drawings of historical buildings with descriptive text.	\$3.50
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Mark your calendar

October 22, 2012 Celebrating 125 Years of
the *Farmer Review* and the *Interlaken
Review*

January 28, 2013 Seneca County Historian
Walter Gable and
the History of the
Seneca Army De-
pot

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One of the alpacas at
the Country Fair.



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