

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 41 No. 3 January 2016

www.InterlakenHistory.org

*Undated
photograph
of snow
removal on
West Ave.*

*See page 6
for another
view.*

Covert Memories 1950-2015

Monday, February 22, 2016 7:00 p.m.

NOTE the date change

Our January 2016 meeting will be in February, and it will be a celebration! Over 70 people submitted articles for our 65th Anniversary book, and now it's ready for you. As this newsletter goes to press so does this 238 page book.

Plan to join the Historical Society on Monday, February 22, 2016 as Diane Bassette Nelson, book committee chair, and associate editor Valerie Bassett, talk about the process from idea to final copies. You can pre-order books ready for pick-up that evening, or pre-order and we will ship them to you for delivery on or after February 22nd; they can of course be purchased that evening as well.

A grant from the Delavan Foundation has made it possible for us to offer the books for only \$12.50 each.

The back cover best describes the volume **2016 marks the 65th Anniversary** of the Interlaken Historical Society. To celebrate this event a volume was suggested and through the efforts of many community members came into being. Over 80 articles by 75 people share the history of our community. The articles tell first-person stories of the local farms and agriculture; in addition, they tell the past and present stories of the businesses,

education, and government of our community. They delve into how we cared for the community, and the organizations which shaped who we are and how we arrived here. Over 1,200 individuals are noted throughout the volume.

In the event that winter weather closes the schools that evening our meeting will be postponed, but books will be ready for pick-up or shipping. You can also enjoy three more articles from the book in this issue. See you on the 22nd.

The meeting will be held in the dining room of the Masonic Hall, 8396 Main Street, second floor at 7:00 pm. The meeting room is handicapped accessible. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact the society at 607-280-2099.

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President's Message

I'd like to thank everyone who donated time and energy to the Interlaken Historical Society.

For the Trustees and docents whose work made for some enlightening times of our heritage.

Danny Armitage had us riding the rail as he shared growing up on the Lehigh Valle Railroad. Harold Stewart did a great job on maintenance of windows in the Farmers' Museum.

I would also like to thank Diane for heading up our book project, coming out in February. She and many others for organizing and writing memories to keep our past alive. It's been great to read some of the articles submitted, first person accounts bring the personal human side out.

Thinking about the coming winter brings back memories of past, harsh time with cold and blizzards, of people who sought shelter with my parents and grandparents when roads were closed, and deep drifts abounding. The section of road between their places with high snow banks pushed back by snow plows gave the stretch of road a local name of "Hunt's Pass." Coming out of town in clear skies, all of a sudden you were in a white out.

Looking ahead, we're open for people to submit articles to be considered for our newsletters or ideas for programs.

2016 looks busy, book release, summer museum to prep, and plans getting finalized for our Plowing Day and Country Fair in September. If you have ideas or comments for our focus on animals this year let us know.

Thank you,
John Hunt, President

Recent Donations to the Society

Phyllis Wickes Betzler: two pictures of the 1939 Robinson Hotel fire showing fire trucks, and one picture of the Stinnard home, now the south building at Glass Magnolia. Also other paper memorabilia items.

Wendi Hanford Arundale: Letter opener and scissors from Don Hanford's desk, a Hanford Hardware mailing or shipping tag and a 1940 Hanford Hardware calendar.

Greece Historical Society: photo cards of McCall family members.

Frank Porter: the 1948-49 Interlaken Central School PTA scrapbook. Including two charcoal on paper drawings of the ICS building. Shown below is the one with Ann Marie Stout noted as the artist.

Sympathy is extended on behalf of the Historical Society Board and the mem-

bers to the family of Ruth Lincoln who died January 5th. Ruth was a docent, trustee, and dedicated volunteer for the society for many years. We will miss her smile and memories of years past.

Sidewalk Story, 100 Years Later



Recently several pictures of homes on Knight Street were given to this author. One of those pictures is shown above. Notice in the middle of the picture a very distinctive roofline and trim? The question immediately came to mind, “How and when did the former bank building get moved to Knight Street?”

The Wheeler Bank building stood on Main Street south of the Hinman Memorial Library, or as it was then, the Hinman family home. Without really thinking about it, I had presumed that when the new bank building was opened this building was torn down prior to the opera house being built. As the photo shows, that was not the case. A bit of online research at fultonhistory.com brought up several news items and ads which tell the rest of the story.

The building remained in place and the Interlaken Realty Company “fitted” it up for their offices. (*Interlaken Review* Dec 1911)

April 2, 1915 *Interlaken Review* “For Sale—The former Bank Building on Main Street. To be taken away. Mrs. E. Melville.” (The ad appeared for several weeks.)

May 28, 1915 *Interlaken Review* “James Switzer has purchased the former Bank Building and is moving it to the lot he recently purchased on Knight street, just south of where S. P. Stone is building a home.”

The building on the left in the picture shows Sam Stone’s finished home. For many years this home was owned by the Tulla family, and the Willson’s lived in the one to the right.

The *Ithaca Daily News* June 2, 1915, repeats the information about James Switzer then adds, “Ground will be broken on the old site on Main Street, in the near future, for the new opera house...”

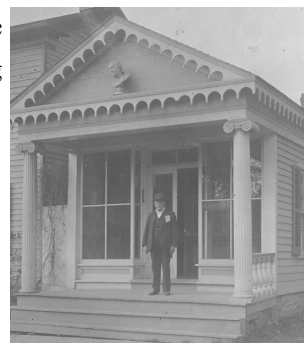
Another article noted, “the building used for so many years by O.G.& D.C. Wheeler for their banking business was last week Friday moved to Knight Street...Nobody seems to know the year this building was erected, but it has been one of the landmarks of this place for over 60 years.”

That leaves a new question, when and/or how was the building modified, removed, or lost from the lot?

Oh the stories the sidewalks could tell if we knew how to get the answers.

Diane Bassette Nelson

1906 Photo of the
Bank Building



Outstanding Winters of the Past

People will be talking about the winter of 2014-2015 for a long time as the winter that wouldn't quit, but how does it really compare with some of the winters in the past? Everyone can recall winters which have special meaning to them, and three such winters come to mind for us.

The Winter of 1958

Consider, for instance, the Winter of '58. It is perhaps described best in the little booklet we printed at the *Interlaken Review*, following a photo contest that involved hundreds of entries submitted by dozens of our readers.

The booklet titled (unimaginatively), "The Winter of '58 Photo Album," sold hundreds of copies, in two printings, and was in demand for years. Today, it is somewhat of a collector's item. (We are told that the library has only one copy left.)

The first prize winning photo, titled "The Last Snow," was taken by Charles Brinkerhoff on March 21 in front of his garage and ram barn on the Brinkerhoff farm while eight foot drifts were piled up on their lawn. This photo appeared as the cover photo for the booklet.

Second place was taken by F. L. Dickerson and third place was taken by Ed Harkonen. These photos occupied the center fold and were explained with the following captions:

On Saturday, February 22, the road to Lodi was opened after

being closed for several days. It was a big event when the Seneca Ordnance Sno-Go, operated by Joe Arcangeli, cut through the 10-15 foot drifts.

The picture, taken in front of the William Peabody home, and Walter Stuck residence, took second place in the contest for F. L. Dickerson.

Ed Harkonen took third prize with his picture of the heavily laden trees lining South Street in Trumansburg in February after one of 1958's heavy snowfalls.

More than 20 other outstanding photos, selected to tell the story of the winter of '58, were scattered throughout the publication, which was inspired by a winter explained in the booklet as follows:

Everyone knows what a blizzard is, and certainly, after the winter of 1958 everyone in the Interlaken area and the rest of Central New York State understands a lot more about the hardship and discomfort a bad blizzard can cause.

When the snow began to fall in early February, after "a thus far reasonably uneventful winter," it looked very pretty and practically everyone with a camera took full advantage of the beauty, producing many fine photos.

But as the snow continued, it was impossible to ignore the fact that the situation was getting serious and roads were closing so fast that all the snow-fighting equipment in the area, working day and night, could only keep main arteries open. Time and again roads were opened only to be filled in again, forming an even harder-packed barrier which, in some instances, had to be opened with bulldozers, rotary plows, grade-alls, and other heavy equipment.

For several weeks, schools and factories were forced to close, mail service was curtailed with carriers reaching as many families as possible by snowshoes. Many farmers were unable to get their milk to the local plant and others brought it with whatever means they could—sleds, toboggans, sliding discs, etc. Outlying areas were isolated and food and supplies were carried in by foot, and finally, dropped from helicopters.

During this period, the camera fan recorded the situation as it developed, preserving for future generations a picture story in many family albums. With this thought in mind, the *Interlaken Review* sponsored a photo

contest, made possible through the advertisers in this booklet. We urge you to patronize them.

We hereby congratulate the winners and dedicate this booklet to the workers who assisted in so many ways during the “Blizzard of 1958.”

The Winter of 1964

Then there was the winter of 1964 when it took us three days to get home from Syracuse following a meeting of the New York Press Association. Gov. Nelson Rockefeller was guest speaker at the annual banquet and, as a trustee, I was asked to meet later with the governor to discuss some issues, and during that meeting he received word that, because of the accumulating snow his plane would be unable to take off from Hancock Airport, so they were sending a car for him to return to Albany.

Wanda and I, along with 2 of our employees, John and Phyllis Murray, quickly departed for home, only to discover that all roads ended in Seneca Falls. We spent that night at the Gould Hotel, then the following afternoon got as far as Romulus, where we slept in the school gymnasium on cots furnished by the Army.

Sunday morning broke bright and clear and we were thankful to be able to continue our trip home, if only, in places, thru caverns of snow, only 1 car wide.

We never did hear how the governor made out.

The Winter of 1972

After being wounded in Viet Nam, our son Dan was reassigned to a destroyer escort out of Norfolk, Va. Before departing for the Mediterranean, he came home for a short visit and overnight, on his last day here, a severe snowstorm hit central New York and all highways were closed. Naval officers in sunny Virginia had a difficult time believing his phone calls, concerning his inability to return on time, until the sheriff's department called to verify his story.

As soon as the ban was lifted, he headed south, only to arrive at the base minutes after his ship had left the dock. A helicopter took him out to catch up with the ship and all was well.

Many people have stories about severe Finger Lakes weather, but these experiences we will never forget.

Duane Waid, 2015

Undated photograph of snow removal on West Avenue. Note the water tower on the far left.

Interlaken Sales Company

My mom and dad were married July 15, 1919, and decided to leave Ithaca for Interlaken to start a new business, an automobile dealership. My grandfather, an auto dealer himself, received the Dodge Brothers franchise in 1915, just one year after Dodge began building cars and trucks. William T. tried to talk James out of moving to Interlaken on this adventure, but Dad was not to be swayed. Grandpa Pritchard finally told him to give it a try but mentioned he would move back to Ithaca within a year. Of course, this didn't happen.

James and Edith set up housekeeping upstairs in the building that is now Jay's diner. Loren and Pat Cloyes live there now. The new dealership was located where Seneca Fitness is now. Soon the couple moved to the house on Main Street, two buildings south of the Baptist Church. I remember this place as the residence of D. P. Norton, the principal of the school. My sister, Jane, was born there in 1923. Once again the family moved, this time to Orchard Street, just west of the Catholic Church. This was my home as I was growing up and attending Interlaken Central School.

My dad split his time between the main dealership in Ithaca, the one he founded, but the Interlaken Sales Co. was the one dearest to his heart. At one time approximately 10 employees were working for him. Helen Patrick was the office manager and Homer Stewart worked in sales. Roy

Messier, Jink Johnson, Al Wright, Howard Potts, Jim White, and Charlie Kelley were some of the people who worked for my dad. The new car storage area and showroom were located on the ground floor, and the service and parts departments were in the basement.

I have many fond memories while I was growing up, spending a lot of time washing cars and helping in all the different departments of the dealership. One of the things I'll always remember was the great winter snow storm in March, 1945. Interlaken was snowed in for several weeks and there was no school. The snow banks were huge and a special plow was engaged to drill a tunnel at the top of West Avenue. The equipment came from the Seneca Ordnance Depot. People could actually walk over the top of the tunnel from one side of the road to the other. It just happened that a truck loaded with live chickens was marooned in the village during this time. In order to keep the chickens from freezing, my dad agreed to store this truck in the service department at no charge. Many people received fresh chickens, and the Goodman Hotel, owned by Donald Ellis, offered chicken dinners for a very special price. The only downside of this story is that it took months for the odor to dissipate from our service department.

Another humorous story is about events that occurred sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s. In those days a new vehicle had to be driven no more than 35 mph for the

first 500 miles. This was called the engine break-in procedure. I was the designated driver to deliver new automobiles and trucks from the main dealership in Ithaca to the Interlaken Sales Co. Some of these units were sold and some were for stock. As soon as I left for Ithaca to bring back the designated unit, my dad would call ahead and instruct one of the staff to call him back as soon as I left Ithaca for Interlaken. He knew exactly how much time it would take at 35 mph to get home. Thank the good Lord I didn't get to Interlaken too soon. I never found out about this until years later.

There are many more stories I could tell about the Interlaken Sales Co. in those good old days. Caroline and I still live on North Main Street, and our three children, Tom, Dan, and Patti live locally as well. Tom and Dan work with me at the Ithaca dealership and Patti is an elementary teacher at South Seneca Central School. We are also blessed to have lots of wonderful grandchildren and even two great-grandchildren. Caroline and I commute five days a week to Ithaca, but we are very proud to be members of the Interlaken community.

William "Bill" Pritchard, May 2015



Interlaken Memorial Garden

A small welcoming garden graces the corner of Main Street and Railroad Avenue in the heart of the Village of Interlaken. River Birch trees as well as Shad Bushes shade the many types of flowering plants. Spring brings a profusion of bloom. It's a tribute to the caring community of the Village and South Seneca County. However, this same space was once a parking lot - utilitarian, functional but certainly not attractive. The transformation is a testament to the talent and vision of the community.

The Interlaken Community Action Group (ICAG) began discussing the possibility of a garden or park on the site of the former fire house in 2002. The task was formidable. A concrete foundation needed to be removed and the sloping site required leveling. This would involve building a retaining wall as well as a considerable amount of fill. It all would depend on available funding.

Douglas VanBenschoten and Cynthia Kloppel visited businesses and neighbors explaining the proposed project and asking for financial support. Over \$5600 was raised. ICAG handled the funds, paying bills as required.

The various tasks were done by local providers either gratis or asking to be paid for materials - usually at cost. Ray DeLong removed the concrete slab and hauled away the debris. The Village provided and placed the quarry stones for the eastern wall. Dare

Daniels laid up a beautiful sloping stone wall along Railroad Avenue. Chuck Dunlap, a landscape architect, gave the vision reality with a plan for the garden.

A conduit for electricity was pushed under the road by Todd Welch. The electricity was installed by John Hubbard and comes from the Interlaken Historical Society Farmers' Museum. The Village of Interlaken installed the water hydrant, and provides the water. Tim Stewart arranged for the purchase of trees and rose bushes per Chuck Dunlap's plan. He also supervised and helped with the planting. Lowes and Home Depot contributed the lighting thanks to Doug VanBenschoten's requests.

A number of items were gifted to honor an individual or in memory of an individual. The deLyser bench, given by the family in memory of their parents, was constructed by Dare Daniels as a further gift to the garden project. There is a lovely Green Thumb Garden Club bench as well as a Richard Ritter bird bath and a Betty Langlois Rose of Sharon.

Fencing material was given by a local resident and installed by volunteers. Plants were donated by many, many gardeners in the area. A lovely pagoda built by Bill Larsen welcomes visitors as does the sign created by Chris Wolff above it. Mulch was spread around the plantings to minimize care. Gravel provided by the Town of Covert was used on the walkways in the garden. The Village Department of Public Works

crew, beginning with Joe Lincoln and continuing with Ray Langlois and Wes Ahouse, have been available to help as needed.

Over the years from 2006 to the present, an intrepid group of gardeners headed by Cynthia Kloppel has cared for the garden. These are all volunteers who fertilize, plant, weed and then weed again! Saturday mornings during the growing season may see small groups of cheerful gardeners, talking and laughing, yes, but also working! The lot that once housed a fire station and parked cars is now a tiny island of beauty, thanks to hard work and vision from so many people! It's a tribute to the spirit of community that exists in the Village of Interlaken and the Town of Covert.

Ann Buddle, November 2015



We hope you have enjoyed these additional articles from *Covert Memories 1950—2015*. Pre-order your book or plan to pick-up a copy at the February 22nd meeting. We will also mail copies to you when they arrive. To give you an idea of what goes into a work such as this, see the Appreciation at right.

Appreciation

Thank you!...

- first, and most important, to the many authors who supplied articles or assisted with them. Without all of you, we wouldn't have a book.
- to the Interlaken Historical Society Board of Trustees for catching the vision of this project 18 months ago and making it a reality.
- to Valerie Bassett for catching the vision and following up on so many articles, writing a few articles, and helping with all the editing. The editor's task is never easy.
- to Peggy Kopsa for long hours of reading, correcting, and being available to help.
- to Michelle Caci Rogers for assistance with the indexing, a huge task with any work, but especially with this project.
- to Barb Bassette for reading the final draft
- to Joan Hendrix and Karen Nelson for additional photographs for the volume
- to the Interlaken Alumni Association for sharing a number of articles from the annual newsletter.
- to the Delavan Foundation for the support of this book, and so many other projects of the Interlaken Historical Society.
- to all those who created the history and recorded it along the way. Thanks for the memories!

Library News

When Lewis Hinman donated the present library building to the Village of Interlaken in 1912 as a memorial to his grandparents (who built the home in 1826) one wonders he if ever imagined what this generous gift would mean to future generations. Or how much the library would have to offer to its patrons so many years later.

When the library was first established it provided the residents of the village and surrounding area with a place to borrow books and perhaps offer a chance for a bit of socializing. It's doubtful that Lewis Hinman ever envisioned the library as it is today, or with today's technology. One must also wonder what Lewis would think if he knew that today's library is as close as your library card and your computer, tablet, e-reader, smartphone or other such device. His generous gift combined with those of many people in the following years and the dedication of the staff and trustees provides a rich resource to our patrons today.

Today's technology also brings the library and its vast network of resources to your home. If you don't have a current library card, visit our website and apply for one today! You can then use your card to download eBooks, and audio eBooks from our library and from all other libraries in the Finger Lakes Library system. You can also access new periodicals via *Zinio*. Did you make a resolution to learn a new language in 2016? You can do this thru the *Mango* link. All of this is **free** when you use your library card and visit our website!

Plan an actual visit to the library and take home one of the many new books, periodicals, audio books, or DVD's we have added to our collection. You are sure to find one, or several, to take home and enjoy on a cold winter evening.

If you have a toddler to preschool age child, plan to come to our Storytime every Monday from 10:30 to 11:30. Children will enjoy listening to the books Ronata has chosen to read, as well as the crafts and delightful snacks provided each week. It is also an opportunity for your child to meet and interact with other children. While you are here, check out one of our Playaway Launchpads. These are a great way to introduce preschoolers to many new subjects from animals to gardening.

A generous grant from the Nelson B. Delevan Foundation will allow us to add many new programs and classes in the coming months. Already scheduled is a furniture painting class in February. Future classes we are hoping to schedule include cake decorating, watercolors techniques, floral designs, bird watching and genealogy. Check our website and Facebook page for dates and times as these classes are confirmed.

Lewis Hinman's gift to our Village so many years ago has provided so much to our patrons through the years and will, we hope, continue to do so for many years to come.

Our best wishes to all for a happy and peaceful 2016!

**INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
GIFT SHOP ORDER FORM**

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www.InterlakenHistory.org

Mark your calendar

Monday, **February 22nd** 7:00 pm

Covert Memories 1950-2015

The Historical Society's celebrating
65 years of history. **NOTE THE DATE**
8396 Main St, 2nd Floor

April 25th Historical Society quarterly
meeting; program to be announced.

September 17, 2016 Plowing Day and
Country Fair.

For more information on these events
contact 607-280-2099

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