

# Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the  
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 42 No. 2      October 2016

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



*Dr. Annie Madison, featured speaker at Plowing Day*

**No October Program**  
**We hope you enjoyed the Plowing Day**  
**and Country Fair.**  
**See pages 3 and 10 for photos**  
**of the day.**

We will look forward to seeing everyone on January 23<sup>rd</sup> for our Winter Program.

## **President's Message**

We have had a busy 2016 summer. In June the museums were open for Interlaken Olde Home Day. A float advertising Plowing Day and country Fair was in the Olde Home Day, Ovid Strawberry Festival and Trumansburg Fair Parades.

Our summer social was moved upstairs in the Masonic Hall due to the rain forecast. 2016 has been a very dry season and we have experienced drought conditions. I know several gardeners and farmer who wouldn't have minded getting wet outside.

Our summer hours in the two museum from 11 am to 2 pm pulled in some visitors to view the exhibits. We had the Boy Scouts visits as well to work on their merit badges.

We started planning for Plowing Day and County Fair in January. The Commit-

*In our continuing series of articles by and about our former Historical Society Presidents, we want to thank Muriel Patterson Huttenbach for the following article*

## **Pat Patterson Past President of the Interlaken Historical Society**

My dad, Maurice Lee (Pat) Patterson, served as president of the Interlaken Historical Society for 20 years, from 1960-81, serving in emeritus status on the board for many years after. Diane Bassette Nelson asked me to write about my father in this, the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the HIS. What I began writing as a profile on his tenure in the IHS, expanded to his contributions to the Interlaken community and then partly a memoir of his life. He was an educator, author and editor of books on local and family history and who spearheaded projects of area historic preservation. His books *Between the Lakes: A History of South Seneca County*, *The Covert Family*,

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**REMINDER:** Dues for 2016-2017 are due.

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tee met monthly to select a topic, get a speaker, and line up exhibits. My thanks to all who worked and gave of their time and energy to make this event a success.

September 17<sup>th</sup> was a beautiful day for “Plowing Day and Country Fair.” It was a bit overcast, with comfortable temperatures. A good crowd of approximately 500 attended. Dr. Annie Madison, a local vet, spoke on the history of dairy animals and the changes over the years to the dairy industry.

People had a broad base of animals to enjoy. They were able to see, pet and feed horses, oxen, cows, calves, chickens and alpacas. There was lots to see with the exhibits and quilts in the barn and many tractors in the fields.

I don’t believe there was an empty stomach as the food was plentiful and good. A band provided lively tunes in the barn for the listeners to enjoy. One remark I heard was “This is great. To get away and enjoy a beautiful day to relax and be with friends.”

We will have a debriefing meeting to go over the day. We will discuss what went well, what needs to be improved and ideas for the next plowing day in two years.

2017 is the Bicentennial for the Town of Covert. We are working the Town Board to plan four main events.

In our April meeting we will cover how the area was settled. The Summer Social will be a longer day at the Interlaken Firemen’s field with additional activities, and as always, great food.

In September we will be focusing on transportation over the last 200 years. An

evening of music and dance will be held in October. The September and October events will be held in the Brook Farm Barn. If you would like to help with planning these events, please contact Colleen Freese the Covert Town Clerk at 607-532-8358 or by email (all lower case).

[covertclerk@rochester.rr.com](mailto:covertclerk@rochester.rr.com)

Thank you for your support and interest in the Interlaken Historical Society. If you have ideas for future exhibits, programs or topics for our newsletter, please contact us.

John Hunt, President

The Sympathy of the officers and members of the Interlaken Historical Society is extended to the family and friends of Anne Knight who passed away this summer. We all recall her many gifts of time and talents. Her two books and the many note cards she designed will be lasting tributes to all she enjoyed and shared with others.

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

Jane Kellogg, Interlaken: early 1800s bureau from the Whiting family, family portraits, and reference materials.

Tom deLyser articles written by Herb deLyser and reproductions of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington documents and signatures

Muriel Patterson Huttenbach, financial donation in memory of Pat Patterson.

Thank you for these gifts and to all those who have given donations over the years

### **New Members**

John Eilers-Lloyd, Interlaken

## Plowing Day and Country Fair 2016

A perfect fall day greeted nearly 500 visitors, vendors and exhibitors to this event. Thank you to all who brought tractors, animals, displays and spent the day enjoying all of it.

We hope you took home memories and a new appreciation for dairy animals.

The Basket winners: Jim Wilkins, Meredith Wilkins Tuppen, Jennifer Nixon and Donna Brown.



Photos: Farmall tractor in the parade, one of the tractors plowing in the field, Mimi Schaffner, Valerie Bassett and Bruce Wright at the registration table. A young lady meeting the calves and the heritage vegetables with quilts and bean/grain sacks in the background. See more pictures on our Facebook page.



(700 pages, editor and co-compiler), *Pioneers of Quarry Hill, Interlaken Reformed Church 1830-1980* and *The Reed Family*. Pat also served as a Trustee of the Interlaken Library for 30 years, serving as president from 1960-81. As the Historical Society received many donations of old farm tools, he realized the importance of preserving our area's farming heritage. He applied for grants to move the Nivison Grain Cradle Factory to Main Street, Interlaken, and create a Farmers' Museum at the site of the old Goodman Hotel. The Town Board helped to make the land available, and many others were involved in this undertaking, especially the Hunt family. During Mr. Patterson's presidencies, he was instrumental in producing local history documentaries in the form of videos on "Architecture in South Seneca County," "Native Americans in NYS" and "The Sullivan-Clinton Expedition." He coordinated his publications with his service as Historian of the Village of Interlaken and Town of Covert, using contacts at Cornell as resources.

Pat developed his passion for history early in life. In 1927, as a teenager, he had the opportunity to meet a Confederate Veteran in Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia. The old man did not want to talk with a Yankee boy, but Pat told him if General Robert E. Lee had agreed to lead the Northern troops, the Civil War would have lasted only four months. The old veteran vehemently agreed and proceeded to share his

memories of battles with Pat. Thus began a life-long love of history.

**Early life:** Pat, born in 1910, grew up in a rather hard-scrabble area of the Catskill Mountains, the second of five children. His father, a plumber, and his mother, a school teacher, were very active in church and community events in their small village of Otisville, NY, serving alternately on various Presbyterian committees, the Board of Education (promoting the best education for their children) and the Health Association (organizing diphtheria immunization clinics); so Pat had excellent role models for his life. As my sister Janet and my brother Reed were growing up, he would always tell us a bedtime story about his boyhood; so we heard tales of his responsibility for the family cow which included walking her ten miles to the Patterson's fishing camp at Yankee Lake in the summer. We heard about trapping muskrat and the occasional mink to earn money. And his only partly successful attempt to release a skunk from a neighbor's trap. (He wasn't allowed to attend school for several days.) His Boy Scout skating cookout at a large Beaver Pond turned into an adventure when his friends let go of his hand during a game of "Crack the Whip," and he skated into open water and had to dry out his clothes over the campfire. His family visited his grandparents frequently; so he heard many stories of his pioneer forebears. He told of his father



creating Fourth-of-July magic, using dynamite for fireworks, including the year his father accidentally lit a more powerful stick and blew up the family vegetable garden. His mother was not amused. Now, when our families still gather for reunions at Yankee Lake, we point out the location of the log where Dad was “abandoned” by his brothers while fishing in a rowboat. He had to swim back to the family camp. When he told of pranks he and his siblings played, with a big grin, he claimed innocence and always blamed his brothers. Our dad thought that family stories of preceding generations helped young people gain a sense of who they were.

**Math-Science Teacher and Administrator:** After graduating from high school, Pat left home to work at General Electric and two years later matriculated at Alfred University, graduating in 1934. He was the first in his family to attend college and was always grateful to a supervisor at GE for encouraging him to do so. He earned a Masters in Education from Cornell University in 1939. Dad was a popular math and science teacher, who infused his teaching with humor. Teaching was one of his most rewarding life experiences. Former students stopped by our West Avenue home during reunion weekends to express their appreciation for mentoring them and encouraging them become what they wanted to be. Shortly before Dad died, a science student whom Pat had taught 40 years before,

dropped by the house; the man told him that he attributed his successful career as an engineer to “Mr. Patterson” because he had told the student that he had the ability to pass physics and he would help him do so. He tutored kids through physics, chemistry and higher math, often receiving live chickens and produce from grateful parents for his efforts. His classroom teaching was lively. I’m sure Bill Pritchard can speak to some of the hijinks. He also served as an administrator, as vice-principal of Interlaken Central School from 1936-61 and then became District Principal from 1961-68, followed by two years as Superintendent of Schools of the newly formed South Seneca Central School. He was in favor of the merger and an advocate of BOCES. He was also very aware of the home circumstances of all students. He would send Cynthia Troshure (?sp.), our school nurse, out to visit families living in rundown old farmhouses or trailers whom he suspected did not have enough food or the ability to keep warm or to check on families with illness. When a student was ill, he would send out tutors to help the child keep up with his work.

As an educator, he wanted to gain insight into education in other countries. During the East-West Cold War, the government in the U.S.S.R. invited U.S. educators to tour schools in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Dubrovnik. Pat was a participant, and he took my mom along.

**Post-Retirement:** Pat retired in 1970. His retirement lasted two weeks when he was hired to serve as Director of the Computer Center, Board of Cooperative Education Services in Ithaca. He also became more involved in community work. For his work in pioneering local efforts in historic preservation and education, Mr. Patterson received the Award of Merit of the Regional Council of Historical Agencies in recognition of “Long and Distinguished Service in Local Historical Work in New York State,” the Ruth Polson Public Service Award in appreciation of work as president of the Finger Lakes Library System, and the Alfred University Alumni Career Citation. In addition, his biography was published in Who's Who in the East, 24th edition in recognition of “outstanding achievement in [his] field and [having] contributed significantly to the betterment of society.” The Interlaken Library genealogical reference room is named in his honor. He was thrilled to be named, “Interlaken Citizen of the Year” in about 2000.

On a regional scale he was an active member of the Regional Conference of Historical Agencies Executive committee and served as president for two years. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the Finger Lakes Library System, as vice-president of the South Central Research Library Council and on the General Program Council of the Reformed Church of America. Other civic activities and memberships in-

cluded service on the Seneca County Health Association, the Interlaken Firemen's Association, Sons of the American Revolution, Elder and Deacon in the Interlaken Reformed Church, chairman of the Seneca County Bicentennial Committee, and Past Master in the Farmerville-Union Masonic Lodge #183.

**Pat Patterson as a family man:** When Pat first came to Interlaken, he lived at the old Goodman Hotel on Main Street as many single men and widows did in the 1930s. Then my mother Ferne Kitson came to Interlaken as a music teacher a couple of years after Dad began teaching. She was beautiful, and he was smitten. They were married for 64 years.

Dad was a great kidder and made a lot of friends in the community. He always believed in patronizing the local businesses (partly because they paid his salary). When he would leave a Main Street grocery store or Wickes' Pharmacy, everyone would be laughing. This came back to bite him when he took me in a baby carriage to show me off to barber Tim Mahoney and all the men who were hanging out in the barber shop shortly after my birth. “Nice looking baby,” said one patron. “Looks smart,” said another. “Looks just like Newt Boyce,” said Tim Mahoney. Newt Boyce was our next-door neighbor. As a result of his love of history, I think we knew more about the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition of 1779 than we did our

family history. One of our family jaunts took us to the site of the capture and torture of the Boyd-Parker scouting party by the Indians. It was getting dark so we followed the path with flashlights to the tree where the poor scouts had been made to walk around a tree with their entrails hanging out. Kids remember history with that kind of experience. On trips to visit my grandparents, we would groan as we would turn into numerous battlefield sites. In such a small high school, I had my dad as teacher for three courses my senior year, physics, advanced algebra and solid geometry. "I got a great grade on my physics test," I would proudly tell my mom. "And who is your teacher and the vice-principal of the school?" my dad would ask. "You are," I would grin as dad would put me in my place. We had a huge garden behind our house on West Avenue. Dad planted strawberries, asparagus and several plantings of corn, and other vegetables; and over the summer we canned and froze them and made preserves. I rarely ate store-bought fruits and vegetables until I left home. (We'd pick seasonal cherries, peaches,



grapes and blueberries in the area orchards/vineyards, too, and put them by.) One of the school custodians, I think Charlie Morrow, would invite dad to bring his kids up to his farm every December to cut down a white pine Christmas tree. We all had to agree on the same tree. About the time when Dad would decide that we would return home without a tree, we were finally able to agree on the perfect tree. Sometimes we would lose our way and wonder across onto government land, but this is another story, and we never had to visit Dad in jail for trespassing and taking government property on Christmas Eve. To an adult's eye, our trees may have had a few barren branches, but to our eyes, they were beautiful.

**Extra-curricular Activities for a Well-Rounded Person :** In addition to traditional academic preparation in the classroom, Pat Patterson wanted his students prepared for life in general, and made sure that there were advanced courses in agriculture and home economics offered for students who preferred the non-college track. He taught square dancing, the fox-trot and the waltz (1,2,3; 1,2,3) in the gym as part of lunch period so that his students would not have two left feet, tho' some of us still did. My classmates and I learned the twist on our own. In post-WW II, Interlaken still was a bit of an isolated farming community, and some graduates would opt to take over the family farm. Technology in communications was in its

infancy, compared to today. In favor of students being exposed to the world at large, my dad supported the idea of senior trips to NYC and later to Washington, D.C., stopping for a few hours at Gettysburg, touring the battlefield. Our parents were not open to pulling out their wallets for paying their child's expenses for these trips. We learned how to sponsor fund-raisers: class plays, roller skating parties in the gym, Donkey basketball games (I think against the faculty), magazine and Interlaken Review subscription drives. The community was wonderful in their support of our efforts to earn our way to Washington. Our sales for Mr. Waid's *Interlaken Review* benefitted our senior trip, but I remember earning a pair of ice skates for myself in this effort.

**Service during World War II:** During World War II he was turned down by two branches of the military for medical reasons, and his teaching career may have been considered a vital occupation. His summers he served in what I think was the Civil Air Patrol in uniform, guarding munitions at the Seneca Army Depot and I think some summers at Sampson Naval Training Station (later Sampson Air Force Base). He also headed up the "Interlaken black-out committee." All village citizens were mandated to hang long black curtains occluding light from their windows at night because the military feared German attacks on nearby Sampson Air Force Base and the Ordinance.

There was concern that German U-Boats that were successfully sinking our ships off the coast of NJ might penetrate into the Great Lakes or even the Finger Lakes and seek opportunities for sabotage. Spotters reported to him every night regarding compliance. One night the neighbor in charge of this reported, "All houses are dark except one, Mr. Patterson." "And what household is that?" my dad asked. "Yours, Mr. Patterson," was the reply. While playing with my dolls, I had pulled a curtain open to peek at the snow. I would have liked to blame my sister Janet, but she was still in a bassinet.

**And the legacy continues.** Three months ago I took my granddaughter Emma to St. Simons Island, Georgia, and Janet took her grandsons Jonathan and Jacob. We visited Fort Frederica and the Battle of Bloody Marsh site. Four-year-old Emma will remember this bit of Colonial Georgia's history as she insisted she could still see blood in the brackish water from the 1742 conflict **between** British and Spanish forces. And just this week she attended an event sponsored Historic Roswell (Georgia) where she watched a blacksmith make a nail and learned to make a candle, butter, a cornhusk doll and a yarn doll to take home. Also in May, 2015, Ohio University Press published *The Boy is Gone: Conversations with a Mau Mau General* written by Pat's granddaughter Laura Lee Patterson Huttenbach about a Mau Mau General who had fought in Ken-

ya's war of independence in the 1950s. Laura Lee met him while backpacking in Eastern Africa a few years ago. He was 87-years-old, and no one had told his story. So she returned two years later and lived on his family's tea farm while he told her the story of his life. He grew up wearing skins in the tribal tradition, studied hard to earn a teaching certificate and became an elder in his church. He became a community leader. 4,000 people attended his funeral in 2014. A grandson of the General read a eulogy written by Laura Lee. When she phoned me from the Meru district of Africa a few days after meeting the General the first time she said, "I looked into the General's dark eyes and saw Granddad's blue eyes." History has a way of repeating itself.

### **The Last Word**

Knowing my father like I do, he would want to have the last word here. The excerpt below comes from page 158 of *Pioneers of Quarry Hill*, written by my father and published in 1983:

*One evening when I was eleven or twelve (about 1921), Pop asked if I would like to accompany him on an errand in town. There Pop met an acquaintance who invited him to attend a Ku Klux Klan rally in Redman's Hall that would start in a few minutes. Pop asked if I'd like to go and I said, "Yes."*

*The meeting began with a local man giving a warm-up speech of welcome, and he*

*warned us of the subversive elements of our society who were jeopardizing the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.*

*The guest speaker, who was a Klan organizer for Orange County, then told the audience who these subversive elements were. They were the Jews who had control of the banking system of the country; the Roman Catholics who had arsenals in the basements of their churches ready to take over the government; the Negroes who were a constant threat to white folks' wives and sisters; the foreigners who were taking jobs away from American citizens. He ended his tirade by saying, "If there are persons here so cowardly that they don't want to rid the U.S. of these parasites, let them stand up."*

*No one moved – except Pop. Pop said he had never heard such nonsense. What happened to the Declaration of Independence that said all men are created equal and all are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Also, he had just installed a new heating plant in the local Catholic Church and found cobwebs, not arsenals.*

*There was a stunned silence as we left, and the speaker yelled, "Traitor!" as we went out the door. Half the audience left right after we had gone. So far as I know, the Klan never organized in Otisville.*

## Library News

By Valerie Bassett

Along with lots of new books and videos, the library is working on some exciting new capital projects that will make the library more visible and accessible!

New signage on the front lawn is planned to be in place before winter. The new sign, designed by Christopher Wolff, will be two-sided and set perpendicular to the sidewalk so it can be seen traveling either way on Main Street. It will also note the Genealogy Room and have space for additional information as needed.

The other exciting project is new front steps that will include benches on either side for patrons to take a rest and enjoy our beautiful setting. Financed in part by donations in memory of Robert Elliott, everyone's favorite guidance councilor for many years, the project will be dedicated to him. He was an energetic and faithful library board officer, supporter, and patron. This will be either a fall or a spring project, depending upon approvals and schedules.

A new program called Hoopla for Kids has begun and is available for free for those with active library cards in the Finger Lakes Library System, which includes our library. For computers, smartphones, and tablets, the service offers streaming videos, television, comics, audiobooks,

and more. Go to [www.hoopladigital.com](http://www.hoopladigital.com) to learn more and sign up.

Lots of kids enjoyed our free summer reading program that included subjects like healthy habits, juggling, and hula hooping. Story time on Monday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30 continues each week and is also free.

Painting and genealogy classes have been very popular this summer, filling to capacity. To keep up with offerings, go to our website, so you won't miss out. [www.interlakenpubliclibrary.org](http://www.interlakenpubliclibrary.org)

*Sandi VanEtten, Rhea Ike and Mimi Schaffner at the Library table in the Brook Farm Barn, Plowing Day 2016*



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**INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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*Two young oxen in the Plowing Day Parade*

**Mark your calendar**

Monday, January 23, 2017 the first meeting of 2017.

Monday, April 24th, Settlement of the Area, a program celebrating the bicentennial of the Town of Covert. More events all year long.

Check out the gift shop page for Christmas Gifts for all ages.

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

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