

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 43 No. 4 April 2018

www.InterlakenHistory.org

*A white
buck at the
former
Seneca
Army
Depot.*



Our Anomalous Old Depot and White Deer Monday, April 23, 2018 7:00 pm

Whether you are a multi-generational inhabitant, a transplanted resident, or an extended visitor to the Heart of the Finger Lakes, you have undoubtedly caught your breath at the sighting of an infamous white deer or two grazing behind the fence on the out skirts of the Seneca Army Depot. And once the awe of seeing the deer and the pondering of their existence fades a bit, you may have thought – ‘I wonder what else is really behind that fence?’ (We’ve all had certain suspicions...) It just may be that an update of news or a touch of history could answer that question as well as satisfy any tangential curiosities you may still have, even if you were once affiliated with the Depot or have occasion to conduct business there now.

You may know that in 1941 the U.S. Army built a 24-mile long fence that would enclose the Seneca Army Depot along with a number of white-tailed deer. Perhaps you knew that in the early 1950s, soldiers at the depot spotted two *white*, white-tailed deer and protected them perpetually. Did you know that today, the *world’s* largest herd of white,

white-tailed deer reside behind the fence at the old Depot? Lest you think it redundant, white, white-tailed deer are NOT Albino’s. (So, what’s the difference?)

You likely know that after nearly 6 decades of service, the Army closed the Depot in 2000; the Seneca County Industrial Agency then took ownership. You probably recall when some 7,000 acres of the old Depot were offered up for sale and were purchased in 2016 by a private concern. But, did you know that the Agency stipulated that a ‘deer management plan’ must be incorporated into any/all purchase proposals? (Who knew they were such good guys!?!) As a result of this, after the purchase, Deer Haven Park was established. Mr. Dennis Money and friends, known as Seneca White Deer, Inc. then collaborated with the purchaser to manage the property. After 20 years of dedication and hard work, Mr. Money’s dream of preserving the deer, wildlife, and military history of the old Depot, AND availing it all to the public, has finally come true. Did you know you can now visit and tour the former Depot?

President's Report

Greetings to everyone. I trust you all got through the winter in good shape. We had bitter cold and wind earlier and now, in March, the Hudson River Valley and New England are getting Nor'easters.

But, spring is here and that brings a new year of activities at the Interlaken Historical Society.

Plans are being formulated for our April meeting – it will be with Jim Petropoulos from Seneca White Deer, Inc. He will be sharing what is being done to preserve the deer population, along with other wildlife.

Also, we are in need of folks to be docents and volunteers for Old Home Day, June 9th, and on Saturdays in July and August at the museums.

2018 is the year for our biennial Plowing Day and Country Fair. If you would like to assist with setting up and help on Saturday, September 22, please contact us.

I would like to thank again all who made our Bicentennial Celebration last year a great success.

Thanks *John Hunt, President*

Recent Donations

Phyllis and Bob Betzler: business items from Wickes' Pharmacy, a child's dresser, photographs and other printed items..

Anonymous gift: A framed poster from the Lakes Theatre.



Mark your calendar and make plans for
FLOW DAY & COUNTRY FAIR 2018
Saturday, September 22, 2018

Brook Farm Barn 8228 Route 96 N

The day begins at 10 and goes into the afternoon.

Our speaker in the barn at 11 will be Dick Thomas of Caledonia, NY. He will be speaking about The Wells Barn Construction. The Brook Farm Barn is a Wells Barn, built in the early 1900s. He will provide interesting comments and plenty of pictures. Come early and get your seat in this unique example of a Wells Barn.

We are looking forward to having displays of quilts, spinning of thread, different crafts and those who have preserved them. Outside there will be our parade of oxen, horses, and vintage tractors of all types.

Along with gift basket drawings, food to buy, and plowing to watch, there will be games for the kids, including a Kiddie Tractor Pull.

Remember, free admission, free parking, with rides to and from the Interlaken SSSS parking lots. The event is held rain or shine.

For more information as a vendor contact John Hunt at 607-592-3224. For vintage tractors and plowing equipment or pickup trucks contact Bruce Wright at 607-279-0976. Our Facebook page will have updates as well.

White Deer program (continued from page 1)

I know you won't want to miss getting all the details from Mr. James Petropoulos; he is the Tourism Operations Manager for Seneca White Deer, Inc. who sponsors White Deer Tours. He will be providing us with a slide presentation at our next meeting and will be happy to answer all of our curiosities and gladly guide us to see for ourselves what else was and is really behind that fence! (Do you know if the fence itself has a storied history?).....

The meeting and presentation will be on Monday, April 23, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. at 8396 Main Street, second floor in the Masonic Meeting Room. There is a convenient chair lift to allow easy access for everyone. Bring a friend – You know we hope to see you there!

Questions, contact John Hunt at 607-592-3224.

(photo on the front cover from their website)

PLEASE NOTE

To bring everyone the most up to date information on the 2018 Plowing Day and Country Fair we will again publish our Fall newsletter in late August.

*Lakes Theater Poster
Part of the 2018 displays.*



Those Were the Days

As the January issue of the Newsletter went to press we had our first look at the now empty lot where the Melville, and then, Lakes Theatre once stood.

As you walk along Main Street, you have the opportunity to wander through the Memorial Garden where once the Fire House and equipment stood ready to respond.

No doubt many could tell tales of the days when the Goodman was the social gathering spot within the village.

All three are now memories. The Historical Society has been the recipient of a number of large gifts which take us back to the days when each of those buildings existed. A light fixture from the theatre, parlor stoves from the Goodman, and pictures of the fire house and some of the people.

This summer, beginning with Old Home Day on June 9th, we invite you to visit both museums where these and many other items will be on display.

The museums are open on Saturdays in July and August, and by appointment. Are you coming into the area for a visit? Have family and friends coming in, but not on a Saturday? Call or email one of the board members and we can arrange for a time to show you around. John Hunt, 607-592-3224, Harold Stewart 607-279-1965 or Diane Bassette Nelson 607-280-2099, museum@interlakenhistory.org

The article on the next two pages looks back at the Gambee/Goodman House. It is reprinted from snippetfromthepast.blogspot.com.

On Wednesday, June 25, 1986, The *Geneva Times* reported on the Seneca County supervisors' meeting: "Goodman Hotel: Heard Covert Supervisor Donald Kenyon report the Goodman Hotel at Interlaken was demolished Monday, under contract with the county."

Much has been written about this landmark, from the fire on February 10, 1891 to the many events held there. It has been a ready reference point in many pictures, and the second-floor porch was a perfect location to photograph Main Street events.

Two questions have often come to mind when thinking about the Goodman Hotel, 1) when was it rebuilt after that 1891 fire, and 2) when did the name change occur?

The February 21, 1891 issue of The REVIEW had two small items. "The Gambee house ruins are smoking yet this morning." In another column, "It looks favorable for re-building the Gambee house. A subscription paper to aid that purpose is meeting with success."

The February 28 issue noted a few of the rebuilding plans. "Active operations toward rebuilding the Gambee house were commenced Wednesday morning. The new hotel will be two stories high, a mansard roof over part forming a third story. A basement will run under all."

As shown in the old maps of Main Street, there was no Railroad Avenue in 1891. One note on the

new building stated, "The building will be located about 6 feet further south than the old one, widening the street just that much." [February 28, 1891]

Over the next five months short one-line items commented on the progress of the new building.

March 28, 1891, "The cellar walls on the new Gambee house are being rapidly laid. Carpenter work will probably commence next week."

April 18, 1891, "The cellar walls on the Gambee house are up and the timbers all laid for the first floor. Work will now rapidly proceed. Delos Collver and a dozen other carpenters make things jingle."

June 13, 1891, "The third story of the Gambee house is nearly plastered."

June 20, 1891, "The second and part of the first story of the Gambee house are plastered."

July 11, 1891, The steam fitters and plumbers have finished their work in the Gambee House and the painters and paper



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hangers are now 'in it.' It is expected the hotel will be ready for occupancy about August 1st."

July 25, 1891, "The formal opening of the Gambee house will probably take place about August 5th."

August 8, 1891, "Many complimentary remarks are heard on the new stone walks about the Gambee house. They were laid by J. T. Hunt."

The front page of the August 8, 1891 issue of the *Farmers Review* carried an extensive article following the formal opening under the headline, "Opening of the 'New Gambee'." After recounting the fire, the article discusses the rebuilding, including a number of names not to be forgotten. "Mr. S. A. Drake was selected as the architect and builder...the new house is a marvel of convenience and beauty, the painting and decorations under the supervision of Mr. O. J. Slaght present an appearance of elegance..." "The house is heated by steam throughout and with hot and cold water, bathroom, etc...."

The celebration included a concert by "Travis full orchestra upon the balcony of the hotel." "An elaborate dinner was served from 12:30 to 3 p.m. and supper from 6 to 8 p.m. The dining hall was handsomely trimmed under direction of Mrs. Jennie Van-Liew. Dancing began at 9 o'clock and was indulged in to a late hour."

The article concluded with, "we predict for the new Gambee house a successful and profitable future and we are sure we but

voice the sentiment of the community when we wish Mr. and Mrs. Gambee great success."

So, the first question was answered, August 5, 1891, the new Gambee house was opened to the public.

On the second question, when did it change name, that answer was found in the *Farmer Review* August 21, 1903 issue. "The name of the Gambee house has been changed to 'The Goodman'."

By 1986 changes had occurred and the once "Roaring 20s" establishment was no longer roaring. Arrangements were made for Seneca County to tear down the building. Throughout the day, residents and visitors took photos as the work progressed.

As I recall, it was close to noon, shortly after the siren blew, that the front façade was brought down.

Today, through the work of many people, the site of the American Hotel, Gambee House, Goodman Hotel is now home to the Interlaken Historical Society's Farmers' Museum.

Left: early 1900s photo, below the pile of rubble after the demolition.



Interlaken Public Library

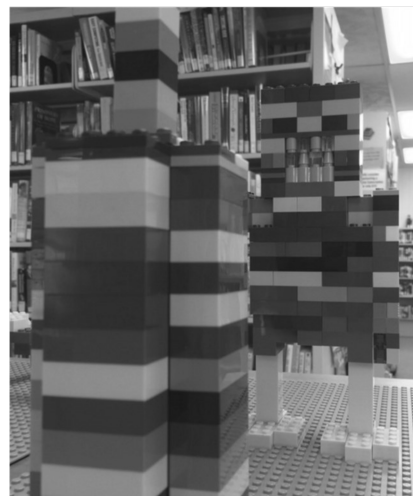
Chelsea Hastings

Renovations continue at your library! LED lighting has replaced old florescent lighting and new carpeting has been installed. In February we had Lilybug Floral in for an arranging class and she'll be gracing us again at the end of March for a floral centerpiece class just in time for the Easter holiday. Our Monday Storytime, Lego Literacy and Chair Yoga classes continue with great success and attendance.

We have completed our annual report and saw quite an improvement during 2017 in participation and engagement of our community. Your library held 33 adult programs and 91 children's programs in 2017, with combined attendance of more than 1,500 people. Almost 7,000 items were checked out during 2017 and more than 1,600 books arrived for our patrons thru interlibrary loan. According to the formula adopted by the Finger Lakes Library System, the value of your library reached more than \$205,000.

We recently welcomed two new faces – Barbara Hazard can be found on the desk on some Saturdays, and Nora Snyder has begun working with our preschool Storytime program. Please stop in and say hello!

As always, your library exists to serve you and your community. If you have requests or suggestions for services, programs or collection items please don't hesitate to contact us.



Library Hours

Monday & Wednesday 9 am to 1 pm

Tuesday & Thursday 1 pm to 7 pm

Saturday 9 am to noon

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DUES are due beginning July 1, Still only \$10 a year!

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www.InterlakenHistory.org

Mark Your Calendar

April 23 White Deer at Seneca Army Depot

June 9 Old Home Day, museums open

Saturdays in July and August Museums Open

Sunday, July 22, Summer Social

Saturday, September 22 Plowing Day and
Country Fair.

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