

Between the Lakes

A Newsletter of the
Interlaken Historical Society

Volume 46 No. 1 July 2020

www.InterlakenHistory.org

13th Annual Society Social Sunday, July 26, 2020 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

The trustees of the Interlaken Historical Society would like to invite the community to join us on Sunday, July 26th for our 13th annual Old Fashioned Social. This dish-to-pass event will be held on the Interlaken Public Library front lawn.

The Historical Society, and other community organizations, will provide the grilled hot dogs with rolls and fixings, lemonade and ice tea and of course ice cream and toppings for dessert. The ice cream comes from Trimmers, so you don't want to miss this opportunity to build your own sundae.

Serving starts at 4 pm and we usually wind down around 6 pm so arrive when you can and enjoy a time of good food and fellowship.

In case of rain or changes in the Covid-19 status, the event will not be held, watch our Facebook page for updates. For more information, please contact the society at 607-592-3224.

Monday, June 15, 2020

Village of Interlaken Water Tower is taken down.

The legs and center stand were cut and with a lift from a small jack the tower was laid down.



Museum Updates

Due to the continuing concerns caused by Covid-19 the museums will be open by appointment only this summer. Please contact the Historical Society at 607-279-1965, 607-592-3224 or 607-280-2099 and we will be happy to set up a time for your visit.

In the mean time, we have special displays at the Community Life Museum that you can view from the porch area. "Structural Elements," which looks at a few items from the collection relating to former structures of our area. The second looks at the artifacts from World War II.

We hope you will stop by and take a look, and call us a day or two ahead to schedule a visit.

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President's Report

Greetings!!

We had our trustee meeting on June 10th at Brook Farm, our first since the last meeting on March 11, 2020. Due to the Covid 19 Virus, our nation has been on a shut down for over 11 weeks. We extend sympathy to all those who have lost loved ones, experienced ill health and limitations, and the many who have lost employment or business. As things start to open up, it's good to get out and meet people we haven't seen in months.

As we met, (with a breeze and proper social distancing) there was much talk about the summer of 2020. Do we open the museums? Open just the Farmers' Museum? Summer Social? A Fall Program? It also became clear, as far as the future is concerned, that things will be different. There will likely be more video and web sites to start with.

Please don't be afraid to share concerns and ideas with us.

We ended our meeting with the reelection of those whose terms were up, and reappointed our slate of officers.

I trust you will all be able to enjoy the summertime. Be healthy and give encouragement to those around you.

Thanks,

John Hunt, President

Recent Donations

A special thank you to Bob Betzler for the many items related to the Wickes, Slaght, and Bainbridge families. We look forward to sharing them in future museum displays.

While the museums have been closed we have been working to inventory and reorganize many of the scrapbooks, family papers and collections of items we have received over the years. With the new computer we can also find them quickly when needed.

A few items surfaced in the process and an item on the 1915 census was found. In this 2020 Census year it seemed a good piece to add to the Newsletter.

NOTE: the email address for the historical society has changed:
interlakenhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendar for 2021

Plowing Day 2020 has been postponed to 2021. We will keep you updated as plans are made later this year and into next.

Dues are due: please check the date on your mailing label. Dues for 2019-2020 are now due. If your label has a date prior to 2019 please consider bringing your membership up to date. If you feel there this an error in the date shown, please contact the society.

Grant Funds Received

The Museum Association of New York (MANY) partnered with the Pomeroy Fund offering \$50,000 in grants to museums affected by the Covid-19 shut downs. A May 13th email carried the welcome news that we were one of 31 successful applications from the 172 which applied.

“Congratulations! We are pleased to let you know that your application requesting \$1460 was accepted in this highly competitive process. We were able to fund only 18% of the applications that were submitted. Your application was well written and you expressed the needs of your organization clearly and concisely.”

The funds were used to purchase a new computer, monitor, software and Wifi router for the Community Life Museum. A special thank you to Jared Pratt for his assistance with designing the computer and the board for their support of this application.

We can now handle more of our administrative details in house rather than on personal computers. For those needing research assistance from the collections, we can connect with you online if needed to show photos, copy and send documents, or offer other assistance.

* * * * *

Pages 4 through 9 continue the World War II “Letters from Camp.” This issue features letters from Europe and/or D-Day connections.

1915 Seneca County Census

Interlaken Review, Friday, October 15, 1915, clipping found in the files this spring.

STATE CENSUS-BUREAU Albany, October 14 Including the permanent inmates of institutions, Seneca county now has a population of 25,238 or 1,734 less than in 1910. The official census figures given out at the office of Secretary of State Hugo to-day. The tabulation of Seneca county shows 23,941 citizens and 1,297 aliens.

The figures for the towns of Seneca county exclusive of inmates of institutions are as follows with comparative 1910 figures.

	Aliens	Citizens	Total	1910
Covert	13	1850	1863	1947
Lodi	26	1373	1399	1408
Ovid	12	1832	1844	3355
Romulus	19	1968	1987	2803
Varick	26	1247	1273	1173
Fayette	133	2507	2640	2593
Waterloo	293	4471	4464	4429
Seneca Falls	769	6862	7631	7407
Junius	5	937	942	957
Tyre	1	894	895	900

Permanent inmates of institutions number 51.

The villages of Seneca county, including inmates, have the following population according to the last census:

	Aliens	Citizens	total	1910
Interlaken	1	662	663	692
Ovid	2	589	591	548
Waterloo	267	4028	4295	3931
Seneca Falls	765	6253	7018	6588

WWII Letters From Europe

Blew, Gordon Page 40 May 26, 1944 Somewhere in England Dear Fred:

I received my first copy of the Review yesterday and wanted to thank you all for it.

I am now somewhere in England. The weather is fine and I am well but I sure wish I was back in good old Interlaken again.

Once again thanks for the paper and best regards to all the folks

back home. Sincerely, Sgt Gordon Blew

Page 45, August 11, 1944 Somewhere in France. Dear Fred and Neighbors:

Just a few lines to say hello and let you know I am feeling OK.

Hope this finds everyone the same. I am now in the front lines somewhere in France, so can't write very much. I do want to thank you for sending the paper and also all of the neighbors for the package they sent me.

Enclosed you will find a little poem which explains why I can't write more

Yours truly, Sgt. Gordon Blew.

The poem follows: CAN'T SAY A THING

I can't say a thing, The war is to blame; So I'll write I am well, And send you my name.

Can't tell where I am, Can't mention the date; Can't even remember The things that I ate.

Can't say where I'm going, Don't know where I'll land; Can't even inform you Just how I stand.



Can't mention the snowflakes, Nor even the rain; All Army manoeuvres Must secret remain.

Can't use a flashlight To guide me by night; Can't smoke a cigarette, Except out of sight.

Can't keep a diary, For such is a sin; Can't keep the envelopes, My letters come in,

Can't say for sure That these words that I write, Will pass by the Censor; So I'll just say good-night.

Thank you Brad Barber

for the photo of Gordon Blew.

Boyes, Tom Page 46 Sept 1, 1944 Somewhere in France. Hello Fred: I've neglected writing this letter for a long time, but now that I have a few spare moments I'll try to dash off a few lines before someone starts yelling for me to get under motion. Since I last wrote you I've seen quite a good bit of England, crossed the English Channel, and now I'm on my way towards seeing France. Right now I've seen enough to know that the French people have gone through real hell, and even though their homes are all shattered they are thankful for their freedom and glad to see the Yanks. Already some have started to rebuild their homes. I'd like to give you a better picture of it here, but due to censorship it's impossible. Perhaps you have already seen some of the newsreels

Everyone lives in a foxhole here and likes it. Some were a little lazy about digging dugouts at first, but after one night of it they were seen digging the next morning.

So long for now, and thanks for the Review, As Ever, Tommy Boyes

Page 56 January 5, 1945 Somewhere in France Dear Folks

I want to thank you for the swell Christmas card I received from you today. To see some of the good old American money was a treat in itself. It's really a great comfort to know that the people back home are pulling for you.

I've seen a lot of people since I left, but none can ever take the place of you folks back there, no matter how nice they are. I only hope it isn't too long before the rest of the fellows and myself can get back to where we belong.

Thanks again for the card and gift and Season's Greetings to you all. Sincerely, Tom Boyes

Donnelly, William Page 36 Mentioned: Lt. William Donnelly, Jr. is now in England with the Ninth Air Force.

Page 49 October 6, 1944 Article Lt. William Donnelly Home After 64 Missions.

Lt. William Donnelly, Jr. the first of our local boys to return from the European theater of operations, arrived last Thursday to spend a 21-day leave with the home folks. Lt. Donnelly, or "Bill," as it is still a great deal easier to call him, completed 64 missions over the continent before leaving England by boat to make the return trip to America.

A graduate of Interlaken Central school in June 1942, he reported for training Oct. 17 the same year, going to Fort Niagara, then an induction center, before being assigned to attend Preflight School at San Antonio, Texas. Primary training followed at Uvalde, Texas, basic at San Angelo, Texas, and advanced flight training at Lubbock Field, Lubbock, Texas, where on Oct. 1, 1943, he received his "wings" and commission second lieutenant.

After spending a leave at home, he reported at Godman Field, Louisville, Ky., where he remained until assigned to overseas duty with the Army Air Forces in England on Jan 4, 1944. Making the flight to that country by way of Puerto Rico, Brazil, Ascension Island and Africa.

A Martin B-26 Marauder pilot, Bill flew his first mission the latter part of February, getting one of the biggest thrills of his life out of it. Naturally, in the other 63 missions which followed over France, Holland and Belgium, many hair-raising and spine-prickling things happened, and although Bill is rather reticent about what occurred, he does admit coming in a least twice on one motor, once with 294 flak holes in his ship after a flight over Paris later finding that a piece of flak had cut the rip cord of his parachute, while on another occasion the cord to his throat microphone was severed by flak.

He also flew several missions on D-Day, June 6, over France, being the first squadron of planes over the coast that morning. Normally bombing from an altitude of 12,000 feet, the Marauders, medium bombers, ordinarily assigned targets such as bridges, railroad yards, troop concentrations and munitions and fuel dumps.

Still another matter which Bill is not overly anxious to discuss is the fact that he has been awarded the Air Medal, two silver clusters and one bronze cluster. In addition, although he himself did not mention it until questioned, he has been recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross, and Sept. 1st was commissioned a first lieutenant.

Page 81 Aug 19, 1945 Article Lt. William Donnelly, Jr., a Martin B-26 Marauder pilot, has

received his discharge from the Army Air Forces after nearly three years of service, nine months in England, where he completed 64 missions over the continent. He also flew several missions on D-Day, June 6, 1944, over France. Interlaken is proud and glad to welcome "Bill" home and to say thanks for a job well done. He is planning to enter the School of Journalism at Syracuse University on September 5, and in this as well as in all his future endeavors we wish him the best of luck.

Helfman, G. Joseph Page 40 May 19, 1944 Fort Ord, Calif. Dear Fred and Family: I have another new address again. We have been here about a week and a half.

Fort Ord is right on the Pacific Ocean. We could not have gone any further west unless we had gone into the ocean. We are about a hundred miles south of San Francisco. I was somewhat in hopes that we would travel east, but I guess we will stay in sunny California until we leave and finish our training.

We have plenty of work to do here on instruments, also on landing barges and Buffalo tanks. It is the training camp for amphibious units here. Now and then they are swamped and sink. They have to be overhauled on account of the salt water. It is very interesting to work and be around such equipment. This is part of our training here.

Before coming to Fort Ord, we were out on maneuvers at Camp Beale. We had a taste of the K2c rations. I don't care too much for them. The battalion that was out with us, and the major, just about threw the book at us. It was a little rough but we did learn a lot out of it.

Received two of the Reviews last week. Sure enjoyed reading them and about the fellows,

who are in the service. Thanks again for the paper, both to you and the people who make it possible.

Remember me to everyone in Interlaken. As Ever, Cpl. G. Joseph Helfman
Page 45 July 28, 1944 Camp Chaffee, Ark. Dear Fred: First of all, there is quite a change in the temperature here over that at Fort Ord, Calif. It was so cool there all the time, also foggy. Here it really is warm, but it does feel good for a change. We have been here almost a week now and I really like the camp a lot more, and it also is much closer to home.

We had a swell trip from California here. Came down through California into Arizona, and saw the wreck of the Santa Fe Chief, crack [incredible] train between Chicago and Los Angeles. It sure was the worst wreck I have ever seen. Then we came through New Mexico, northern Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri, and then Arkansas. There certainly is some very wonderful farming country in Texas and Kansas. Most all the grain was cut or harvested. They sure have large herds of cattle in the southern states, mostly beef cattle. It is interesting country; what I mean is that you often wonder how other people live.

As for Arkansas, they are somewhat backward, at least as far as I have been able to see; the people even admit it themselves.

Today I received two Reviews and sure was pleased to get them. I want to thank you and all the other people who help to make it possible for us in the service to get the hometown paper. Page 48, October 6, 1944 Somewhere in France. Dear Fred and All:

First of all, I have moved a few times since last writing you. We are now located some-

where in France. Have been here about a week now.

It is very peaceful-like right here, although after getting off the boat most of the towns we came through were damaged a lot, so you would know there was a war on.

We are camping in an apple orchard for the time being. The apples are now ripe and the farmers are making cider. The people over here drink very little water, mostly cider and wine. They have given us quite a lot of sweet cider, but it is not as good as that back home.

The country where we are is somewhat rolling; farming and dairy cattle. The fields are very small and each one has a hedge around it. The farms are small too but everything is nice and green so there is very good pasture for the cattle. The wagons people use here are all two-wheeled affairs, nothing very modern. A farm house nearby is really an old castle, as it was built in the 13th century. The barn and house are now connected all in one.

The Red Cross has given us a number of articles so far, such as cigarettes, tobacco, soap, candy, books, gum, etc. They all come in very handy. Sunday we all went to a USO show near our camp. It was a very good variety show, one we all enjoyed a lot. That is about all for now. Will be looking forward for the paper soon. Thanks again to all who make it possible. As Ever, Cpl. G. Joseph Helfman.

November 17, 1944 Personal Mention Cpl. G. Joseph Helfman, who is now in Belgium, has been promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Page 52 November 24, 1944 Somewhere in Belgium Dear Fred

We had a swell trip from where we were in France to up here in Belgium. We went through

the once famous fashion center of France, Paris. It was almost dark but we saw quite a bit of the place. It is quite a modern city, like our large cities at home.

In France where we were the people were peasants, even money didn't mean much to them. They seem to be satisfied with what they have, which has come down through the years to them. The people here in Belgium are very clean, more up to date and modern; homes and contents also. Both the French and the people here are swell to us, just cannot do enough for us. The people are somewhat more thrifty here but just now money isn't much to them either. But, they are a different class of people, they do want to get ahead.

I have been in Cherbourg, Valogne, also Paris, and Leige, Belgium. Some of the cities and towns were very badly damaged.

It is a beautiful country. Much more so than France. The leaves are turning and the countryside is beautiful. It is rolling country like southern New York state.

We have been very busy here doing work on equipment that is really needed and it makes us feel that in one way we are helping out. Remember me to everyone around Interlaken, also thanks to the people who make it possible for us to receive the paper. As ever, Sgt. Joseph Helfman.



Thayer, Arthur J Page 16 April 30, 1943 Fort Myers, Florida Dear Fred

Just received the good old Interlaken Review. It sure is good to read some news from around home again.

This school is for basic training in Aerial Gunnery. We learn how to take machine guns apart and repair them, and how to adjust the sights for effective fire range and distance. We learn how to lead a moving target in the air and then go up in a plane and shoot at the target over the Gulf of Mexico. It is very interesting work and I have quite a lot of fun playing around with the Cal. 50 machine guns.

This is my fourth week of school here and I still have two more weeks to go. After that I will be shipped to another school.

I sure hope that it is some place back north. I always thought that Florida would be a nice state to live in, but after I have lived here in the sane for about two and a half months I would like to set foot on some hard ground again.

Well Fred, I don't believe there is any more to write about, but I do want to thank you very much for the paper. It sure helps out a lot. Sincerely yours, Pvt. Arthur J. Thayer

Page 17, May 14, 1943 Local Boy Finishes Aerial Gunnery Course

Pfc. Arthur J. Thayer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Thayer of Interlaken, was graduated Monday from the Army Air Forces Flexible Gunnery School at Fort Myers, Florida.

Now qualified as an aerial gunner, he will become a member of one of the thousands of bomber crews which will be sent overseas in a few weeks to battle the Nazis or the Japs somewhere "over there." He will receive his crew

training at an operational training field in the United States.

Hundreds of gunner are graduated each week from the school located near Fort Myers. The course lasts only five weeks and covers everything from BB and skeet shooting to firing from the power-operated turrents of a large B-34 bomber on special missions over the Gulf of Mexico.

Page 36 March 17, 1944 [Article] Sgt. Thayer completing Aerial Combat Training

Sgt. Arthur J. Thayer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Thayer of this place, is now completing his training for combat duty as a crew member of a B-24 Liberator bomber and soon will go overseas to a combat area. He is presently stationed at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Ariz.

Sergeant Thayer entered the service Feb. 1, 1943, and won his "wings" as a gunner.

Page 41 May 31, 1944 Personal Mention

A nose gunner, Arthur was aboard a Liberator bomber which circled Interlaken Apr. 27, while en route to an undisclosed destination in this country, prior to the flight across the Atlantic.

Page 44 July 21, 1944 Somewhere in England

I have received two copies of the Review since I have been here in England, and want to thank those who make it possible for us boys in the service to get the paper.

It has been a long time since I have have written to you, but that is because of my moving around so much. Once again thanks for the paper and best regards to all the folks back home. As ever, S-Sgt. Arthur J. Thayer

Page 44 July 21, 1944 S-Sgt. Arthur J. Thayer, has been presented with the Air Medal by Major

Robert J. Lehnhausen of Peoria, Illinois, a squadron commander in the Eighth Air Force Liberator group stationed in England.

Sgt. Thayer won the award for "exceptionally meritorious achievement while participating in bomber combat missions over occupied Europe. The courage, coolness and skill displayed by him upon those occasions reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States," the citation reads.

Sgt. Thayer, better known locally as "Art," has participated in such celebrated attacks as those on Befort, Saarbrucken and Totenburg. Page 50 October 27, 1944 (Article) Staff-Sgt Thayer Awarded Flying Cross

S-Sgt. Arthur J. Thayer, was recently presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross by Brigadier General Leon W. Johnson. Sgt. Thayer won the award for "...extraordinary achievement while serving as engineer gunner on a B-24 aircraft on many bombardment missions over enemy occupied Europe. The courage, coolness and skill displayed by Sgt. Thayer on all these occasions reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States," reads the citation.

Sgt Thayer is a member of the veteran 44th Bombardment Group commanded by Col. Eugen H. Snavely, one of the first B-24 organizations to arrive in the European Theater of Operations. He has taken part in numerous aerial attacks on many vital Nazi targets including such outstanding strongholds as Kiel, Saarbrucken and Berlin.

In addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, Sgt. Thayer also holds the Air Medal and three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Page 54 December 15, 1944 Staff Sergeant Arthur J. Thayer, is enjoying a furlough at the home of his parents, following his return from England, where he served in the 8th Air Force.

Sgt. Thayer entered the service on Feb. 1, 1942, going to Miami Beach, Florida, for his basic training. Later he attended gunnery school at Fort Myers, Florida, and airplane mechanics school at Shepard Field, Texas, coming home in November, 1943, for his one and only furlough during training.

Reporting at Salt Lake City, Utah, he was sent to Tuscon, Arizona, for crew training, and in April 1944, flew over Interlaken while en-route to the east coast before taking on the flight across the Atlantic.

Nose gunner and assistant engineer on a Liberator bomber, Sgt. Thayer completed 33 missions while on duty in England, being over most of the now well-known targets in the occupied countries and Germany.

He and his fellow crew members flew two missions on D-Day, and he mentions that through a break in the clouds while high over the English Channel, he saw the "bridge of ships" convoying and transporting the invading forces.

Recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal and three Oak Leaf clusters, Sgt. Thayer will report after Christmas for reassignment.



Library News

2020 has been an eventful year for all of us. As with the 1918 Influenza pandemic, the Interlaken Public Library closed its doors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike the 1918 pandemic, this period has seen library operations continue behind the scenes.

Beginning March 16, 2020 programs were moved to an online format, allowing residents to virtually attend instructional and educational meetings via our website. E-book and e-audiobook collections swelled so patrons could continue reading the newest titles from their favorite authors.

Summer reading has been reimagined and will be based off our website instead of within the library building. Library staff maintained connections with library patrons, offering remote assistance for everything from genealogy research to tech assistance.

Looking forward, library patrons can now access physical materials thru curbside service. Materials are selected by the patron and holds placed by phone, email or via the online catalog. Items are collected by library staff and made available for pickup on our front porch.

Patrons are not yet permitted inside the building but we continue to serve the public in every way we can, within the Governor's guidelines. As the pandemic eases and life slowly returns to normal, we look forward to seeing folks back inside the building for programming, research and materials access.

We made it thru the 1918 pandemic and we will make it thru the 2020 pandemic, hopefully to serve another 100 years.

Originally built in 1934 the water tower has been replaced with a tank further up the hill which went online earlier this Spring.

<https://interlakenpubliclibrary.org/>

Library Hours

Effective January 1, 2020

Monday, Wednesday & Friday

9 am to 1 pm

Tuesday & Thursday

1 pm to 7 pm

Saturday 9 am to noon

Library Director, Chelsea Hastings

607-532-4341



**INTERLAKEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
GIFT SHOP ORDER FORM**

<i>Snippet From the Past, Covert Bi-Centennial Blog</i> Diane Bassette Nelson	\$35.00	_____
<i>Covert Memories 1950-2015</i> , Interlaken Historical Society	\$12.50	_____
<i>The Seneca Army Depot</i> , Walter Gable & Carolyn Zogg.....	\$21.95	_____
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<i>The Geology of Seneca County</i> , John W. Wells	\$10.00	_____

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

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

www.InterlakenHistory.org

For more information on the Historical Society events contact President, John Hunt, 607-592-3224

Sunday, July 26th 4 pm Summer Social on the Library Lawn

Monday, October 26th 7:00 pm. Pamela Raes will be speaking. She was our planned speaker for April, and we are delighted she can join us in October.

The Historical Society
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