New Glarus Historical Society, Inc.
Swiss Historical Village Museum

Newsletter Issue 7 (108) **October 1, 2017**

September Board of Directors Meeting

Secretary Ott has prepared a grant application for submission to the New Glarus Community Foundation that will allow us to replace the mural and restore and enhance the flower bed on the north side of the Hall of History. Professional muralist Emida Roller has made a commitment to us to replicate the scene that appears in a picture postcard of the building and which was originally painted by former museum Board member and president, Paul Grossenbacher. A portion of the original mural remains and will be touched up as part of the project. The project also continues an ongoing collaboration with the Master Gardener Volunteers of Green County. To learn about Ms. Roller and her work, visit her website here: http://designsbyemida.com/about-the-artist/

Members of the Building and Grounds Committee will be meeting in the near future with Michael Yaker, the craftsman that did the Settler's cabin restoration, to work out details and an estimate for addressing issues with the Community Building chimney and stabilization of the Log Church replica.

We acknowledged a number of donations in memory of John Marty. In addition, Elliott Sweet made memorials in honor of his spouse, Marion, and his sister-in-law, Miriam Blum, and Peter Ott donated a stipend he received for speaking at the Green County Genealogy Society about ancestor Fridolin Streiff, who served in the Iron Brigade.

We say good –bye to student guide Michael Schieldt at the end of this season. Michael worked at the museum for three years and received numerous compliments on his thorough and detailed tours.

Newsletter printing courtesy of the Bank of New

The Bank of New Glarus and Sugar River Bank Branches

Visitors in September

As the tourist season at the Swiss Historical Village comes to an end, we make some final additions to our list of visitors from Wisconsin counties, states and foreign countries. In September, we welcomed visitors from Hawaii, Michigan New Hampshire, North Dakota, Utah, Vermont and West Virginia. The flags of Ecuador and Russia were added to our 2017 collection. Groups that made the museum a destination during September included a Boy Scout troop from Madison, Tours Etc. of Eau Claire, WI, the Green County Leaders group, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students from St. James School in Madison and 90 German language students from Sun Prairie High School.

Whatever happened to our electric rail line?

By Duane Freitag

Many years ago residents of New Glarus would often go to Exeter Crossing to catch an Illinois Central Railroad train to Madison or Monroe. Perhaps they made the several mile trip on foot, but more likely had someone give them a ride by wagon or horse and buggy.

Back in 1897, someone apparently had a more ambitious idea. They proposed an electric rail line to make the connection. At least that was the story line in a short item in the Monticello Messenger of Dec. 14. "The project is being seriously considered by the residents of our sister village and, if they fully realize the great convenience it would be to them, they will be slow about letting the matter drop," the newspaper reported. "About three miles of track would be required for the enterprise."

Apparently the idea was to have the electric rail car track parallel the Milwaukee Road tracks to what was known as "New Glarus Crossing," the point where the tracks crossed today's Exeter Crossing Road. From there it was a short walk to the Illinois Central crossing, where an old rail car was available as a waiting room. We wonder where the electric power would have come from.

Das Bienenhaus (The Bee House) at the Swiss Historical Village– Part I

Reprinted with permission from the Low Technology Institute blog by author Scott Johnson, Ph.D, lowtechinstitute. com

In Switzerland and other German-speaking Alpine regions, bees were traditionally kept in large, purpose-built sheds. Since the 1970s, their popularity has declined as they were overtaken by Langstroth and other cheaper beehive configurations. I've been interested in this type of beehive because they are aesthetically pleasing and may provide better winter survival as the colonies share warmth. Unfortunately, they are almost nonexistent in the U.S. but have remained popular in some parts of the Alps and eastern countries (according to Wikipedia, they persisted in East Germany when the west was adopting Langstroth hives after the 1970s). I was only able to find one company that produces them in the U.S. And then at a meeting of the Dane County Beekeepers' Association, someone mentioned to me that the Swiss Historical Village of New Glarus had a *Bienenhaus* (or "bee house") on site, only a half hour west of the institute. I immediately contacted them and the helpful staff arranged for me to come see the structure in person. Today I'll present pictures and a description of their Bienenhaus and tomorrow I'll share pictures of designs and technical information about these structures from the archives of the historical village. Thank you to Ann Marie Ott and the other friendly folks at the historical village for allowing me to share this information here on the blog. If you're in southern Wisconsin October 8th, check out their harvest festival, where they'll have tours and people on hand recreating traditional skills.

The Exterior

Exterior of the Swiss Historical Village Bienenhaus.

This Bienenhaus was built new in 1994, when the family of Gottfried Barth donated his beekeeping equipment to the historical village. Barth was a local farmer and cheesemaker who ordered the *Bienenekasten* ("bee boxes") from a Swiss beekeeping catalog and had them shipped to Monticello, Wisconsin, where he built his first bee house in 1924.

Landing boards, up and down.

The structure measures about 20 × 15 feet in size with the southern wall devoted to colorful beehive entrances. The roof has a large overhang to prevent rain from dripping down on the colonies. Each entrance has a landing board that hinges down during the flying season and then up to block the wind in the winter. The hinge design leaves a gap between the hive entrance and the flipped-up board so that bees can still take elimination flights during the winter (that's beekeeper speak for the bees flying out to relieve themselves on warm winter days, leaving tiny yellow drops all over the snow). The entrances are painted different colors to help the bees identify their hives: imagine you're a worker bee in one of the 36 colonies contained in this bee house, as you fly back from foraging, you have to find your entrance, navigating among thousands of other bees seeking their own homes, all using their uncanny sense of direction and landing board color to find their way.

The Interior

On the inside, the Bienenhaus has space for working the colonies, which are all stacked against one wall. The hives are built into cabinets, each holding four colonies. In this house, cabinets are stacked three high and three wide for a total of 36 individual hives. The front of the insets are snugged up to the entrance wall. In Switzerland, these houses are often placed on stone foundations but the structure itself could be lifted “and” moved with the cabinets removed.

Cabinets; one with screening and one full of frames

Each cabinet consists of a few parts. The door is the access point for the beekeeper and sits on hinges with a little latch. The door has a screened hole to help ventilate the hive. Once the door is opened, a screen separates the bees from the door. A beekeeper can look in on the bees just by opening the door and observing the hive through the screen. Beyond the screen, the bees live on combs built on wood-rimmed frames. These particular cabinets kept the frames the "warm way" meaning parallel to the entrance (this effectively baffles incoming cold air), while many other types of bee cabinets store the frames perpendicular to the front in the "cold way" (cold air can flow from the entrance straight down the gaps between the frames.

The historical village has a variety of beekeeping equipment, including a tangential extractor with mesh boxes to hold the frames while strong centrifugal force pulls the honey out of the comb.

Extractor interior and detail of the turning mechanism.

From the New Glarus Historical Society Archives

The Barth family provided not only the cabinets and equipment from Gottfried Barth's original bee house, but also the plans and articles Barth had collected and used to build his Bienenhaus, and which Scott Johnson used to research and write his article. Another item in the archives was a label from Mr. Barth's honey pails. Interestingly, the label must have been produced using stock advertising art because you'll notice that the label depicts a traditional hive, rather than Mr. Barth's Swiss Bienenhaus.

Barth Honey Label

We thank Scott Johnson for his interest in our Historical Society, museum and archives and for his permission to reprint the preceding article based on his research.

70,000 Possible Errors in Every Single Column

When you read printed material does your eye catch mistakes? The New Glarus Post printed the article below in an early edition of the newspaper. Did you notice any errors in this month's newsletter?

"We do not like to make mistakes, but try as hard as we do they just get by us. Every now and then we find "is" spelled "si", "the" shows up as "eth."

Don't think for a moment that we are not sorry. We truly are. With the help of our correspondents and our readers we want to make just as few of these breaks as is possible. But when one of these slips gets by, please remember that in the ordinary newspaper column there are 10, 000 pieces of type, there are seven wrong positions in which a letter may be put, and there are no less than 70,000 chances to make errors, besides millions of chances for transposition.

In the short phrase, "To be or not to be", by transposition alone it is possible to make 2,759, 022 errors. So you can see the perils that beset the printer."

That's Progress

It was March of 1945, and staff at the New Glarus Post paged through an old 1910 issue of the paper. How different the New Glarus of 1910 was from the New Glarus of 1945, when all of its residents were being impacted in one way or another by World War II. The editor shared those thoughts in a March 7 editorial:

"We did not contact much of the world, outside of our own trading area in those days. World politics held little interest for us…. We were typical Americans, living in a typical town.

New Glarus was a good town even in those days. Folks here did their work, ploughed their land, went to school, attended church, carried on business and went hunting and fishing. Please don't get the idea that we are longing for the good old days of three and a half decades ago. Far from it! New Glarus of today is a much better place to live than it was then. It will be a much better place to live in the years to come than it is now….

Just to share our enjoyment of the past with the rest of you, we will try to review some of things that have happened in the thirty-five years that have gone since …. setting the last line in that old issue of the Post.

Back in 1910, New Glarus was a small Swiss Village with a population of 793. Today New Glarus' official population is 1,069, based on the 1940 census. That figure is probably low, for we know of no vacant houses in New Glarus today.

Back in 1910, there were only mud streets in New Glarus and each resident had its own sewage system. Water was pumped from one main well located in the center of town to a reservoir upon a hill in the Southwest corner of the Village. Four years later, a sewer system was installed over the entire village with a modern, up-to-date disposal plant…. And today New Glarus has many paved streets and a number of highways leading into the town.

Back in 1910, the Pet Milk plant at New Glarus was just starting operations. On the first day – in November of that year – about 10 local farmers hauled their milk to the plant making a total of 10,000 pounds of fresh milk delivered. By the following summer the receipts had increased to about 75,000 to 80,000 pounds of milk per day. Then there were approximately 50 employees working at the plant. Today there are more than twice that number gainfully employed in the vital war industry and the plant is equipped to handle 450,000 pounds of milk in twenty four hours."

"The Pet Milk plant, now in its thirty-fifth year as an important New Glarus industry, has played a vital part in the growth of our Village and is now playing a most important role in the war effort. Evaporated milk is the only kind of milk that can be used by the men on the fighting front. It serves as part of the ration for our fighting men all over the world.

Last year, almost half of the milk shipped from the local Pet Milk plant went to our armed forces and to Lend-Lease." [Evaporated milk from New Glarus was being shipped to U.S. allies under the 1941 Lend-Lease Act, a massive wartime foreign aid program.] "Last year's production showed a marked increase over the previous year. That increase, made at the request of Uncle Sam, was possible of accomplishment only by the loyalty and extra effort on the part of Pet Milk employees, people of New Glarus who helped out during the busy season and the dairymen of the New Glarus milk shed who stepped up their production in a patriotic effort to do everything possible to supply food for the needs of wartime…. This year, with demands still higher, even more strenuous efforts will be needed. New Glarus will do the job!"

The editorial addressed progress in the school, too: "Up until 1914, New Glarus had just 10 grades represented in the school. Then an addition was built which included an assembly room and a gymnasium. In 1933, another addition was put on, making it possible to add a business course and a science course to the curriculum. In 1939, a still further addition was made and today the school has an Agriculture course, a Home Economics course, a greatly expanded business course and a full sized room for a basketball court and gymnasium [that has] a stage and bleachers, and of course the school accommodates a greater number of pupils."

The Pet Milk Company, obviously a source of great pride and major economic driver for the community, shut down in 1962. Other businesses now help vitalize the community. The old brick school was refurbished and reappointed as apartments, and two modern schools edge the town on the southern boundary. And the population signs now read 2,172 as you drive into New Glarus.

As the editorial stated back in 1945: "That is progress . . . and New Glarus folks are progressive people."