NEW GLARUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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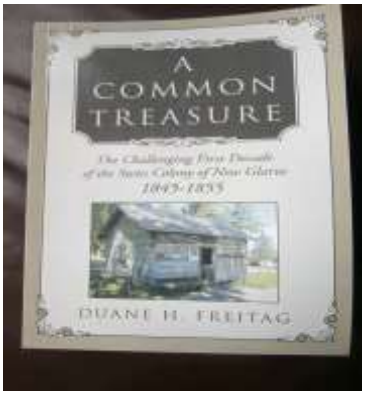

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

The Board reviewed visitor attendance data at its end of August meeting and is pleased to report a slight increase in attendance this season, despite the change and later opening of the Swiss Historical Village on Memorial Day weekend. As of the end of July, we had 42 more visitors than we hosted at this time in 2018.

The Board acknowledged receipt of a rare, brass hanging fire extinguisher from Mike Nevil, New Glarus Fire Department, which is now on display in the Fire House. Photographs, postcards, books and other memorabilia was donated by Sandy Fransen, Holly Carnes, Thomas Hoesly Wright, Georgia Ascher and Kim Tschudy. Reggie Duerst made the first donation to the Hall of History matching funds account in the amount in memory of his mother, Margaret. Mary Usher and Kathleen Ingwell also made donations to the project's matching fund. Visitors made voluntary cash donations, following tours of the museum, in the amount of $123 since opening day. In addition, Julie Landmark made a contribution in memory of Carlton "Tex" Zentner.

A special thank you to Reverend Kim Moeller and the Maennerchor for the beautiful memorial service honoring the original immigrants of New Glarus on August 17. The offering was donated to Green Cares Food Pantry in the amount of $146.00.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13th, the date of this year's Harvest Fest Special Event. Remember, members are admitted to the event free of charge, as a benefit of membership.

Duane Freitag publishes New Glarus History Book

Duane Freitag has generously donated more than three dozen copies of his newly published New Glarus history book to the New Glarus Historical Society for sale in the gift shop and to benefit the Society. Additionally, Duane donated a hard cover edition for the archives. Duane's book, A Common Treasure, *the Challenging First Decade of the Swiss Colony of New Glarus, 1845-1855* is also available on Amazon.com.

PLANS FOR RENOVATING HALL OF HISTORY EXHIBITS MOVE FORWARD

The New Glarus Historical Society has made significant progress toward renovating the exhibits in its Hall of History. With materials in the current exhibits showing the wear of the years and of climatic conditions, the goal is to install an exhibit that uses permanent materials that will last for years to come.

Three themes are being addressed in the renovations and will replace the materials in current exhibits: 1) the emigration story, 2) the first ten years of the settlement when it was under the authority of the Emigration Society, and 3) how the community has created its own Swiss-American culture. A decision was made early on that it was important to tell the stories that are unique to this community and to recognize that the general history of early towns on the edge of the lead mining district and the Driftless Area are told to great effect in other area museums and need not be retold here. Also, the other buildings on the museum village grounds tell the story of the growing community.

We are fortunate to have received a grant from the Community Foundation to contract for professional consultation. Brian Bigler, with a BS in History, has extensive experience as a curator and exhibit designer, and has done work at state historical sites, for local museums and for a variety of other organizations. He has been assisting us since spring and has been indispensable. We are also fortunate to be receiving help from others. The *Landesarchiv* in Glarus, Switzerland, selected and sent us digital images for use in the exhibits. Additionally, historians from our community who have rigorously researched New Glarus's history have graciously shared their insights and, when needed, corrected misinformation. We have relied heavily on their work.

We have started working with Park Printing in Verona. This company has experience creating the type of display panels we will need and a graphic designer with experience in historical exhibits. They will work with us to create panels of text and images that will respond to the interests and expectations of today's museum-goers. Next steps include securing carpenters and painters as well as volunteers to assist with removing existing displays to make space for the new ones.

The Hall of History exhibits will be renovated in three phases. The first story – the emigration story – will be completed for the 175th anniversary. We have received three generous donations so far that have doubled in amount through the match opportunity announced in last month's newsletter. This opportunity is still available – to double your impact – through the end of this year.

Scroll Woodcraft by Lloyd Babler

A New Glarus man, Lloyd Babler, followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, Oswald Babler, one of the original immigrants that arrived and founded New Glarus in 1845. Oswald was only 10 years old when he stepped on the ship that carried him to America. Oswald became a woodworker and while his son did not follow in his father's footsteps, Oswald passed along his skills to his grandson, Lloyd, who made woodworking a hobby in his retirement years.

Lloyd made jewelry boxes, fruit and letter baskets, shelves, wall brackets, Swiss Chapels, and miniature doll furniture as well as magnificent clocks, two of which are on display in the Swiss Historical Village and pictured below. Another item made by Mr. Babler in the Historical Society's collection is an elaborate and fanciful scrollwork bird cage, also pictured below. Mr. Babler sold his items at his home with prices beginning at a mere $1.00. It is reported that Mrs. Babler receives credit for these pieces of art, as she helped to stain and assemble the items. Do plan a visit to the Swiss Historical Village soon, to take a close look at Lloyd's incredible craftmanship.

The Link between Lakeland College and New Glarus

A new addition to the Historical Society's archives is a college yearbook called *the Spectrum* dated 1948. *The Spectrum* was published by Mission House College and Seminary which later became Lakeland College in Sheboygan. The original Mission House school was located on section 20, in the town of Herman, ten miles northwest of Sheboygan, WI, and seven miles east of Elkhart Lake. A Mission Committee met on the 6th of December, 1860, where it was decided to found such a school to educate men for the ministry and teaching professions. Having no house in which to conduct a school, Rev. H. A. Muehlmeier opened his house to the first students, furnishing them with a home, as well as giving them instruction. A Sheboygan County History Book dated 1898 reports that, "on certain days of the week the students would walk four miles, carrying their dinner with them, to receive instruction from Rev. Dr. J. Bossard, pastor of the Saron's congregation." The Saron United Church of Christ was organized in 1855, with Rev. Dr. J Bossard as its first minister and was named likely on account of the level country in the Town of Sheboygan Falls resembling the Saron of Palestine, a tract of land between mountains in the central part of the country and the Mediterranean Sea. The college was officially founded in 1862.

Additional history of Mission House and its importance to Swiss and German immigrants to WI is described in the 1948 yearbook: "In the wake of migration from Switzerland and Germany to Wisconsin, it was urgent that the missionaries who accompanied these pioneers have helpers. Because of this basic need Mission House was founded in 1862. The school was first divided into a preparatory and a seminary department. Instructors were added to its teaching staff and finally definite college and academy courses were given special emphasis. The Main Hall was built and more professors were hired. Those who desired Christian education in any field could now attend Mission House. It became an established college in the Middle West. A Jubilee fund was raised on its 50th anniversary and in 1917 the Men's Dormitory was built. Shortly after this English replaced German in all the classes, coeducation came in 1931, the gymnasium was built in 1932, and the administration building in 1940. Throughout the war years Mission House was able to hold its own and continue in its basic function. The students of Mission House can be proud of their heritage and look with confidence to the golden future when their Alma Mater moves to Sheboygan."

A Sheboygan County History book published in 1898 documents that the school was under the control of three synods, "namely; Synod of the Northwest, Central Synod and the German Synod of the East. However, the school was reported to have been supported by the German Reform Church throughout the United States."

The Swiss and German presence was apparent as one looks at the names of the faculty. Led by Dr. Paul Grosshuesch, faculty names included Bauer, Kraus, Beckmann, Friedli, Welti, Grunewald, Zimmerman and Ernst, to identify a few. The student population in 1948 was small, with twenty-one college students and fourteen seminarians enrolled in that particular school year. Local individuals found in the student section included Sophomores Nathan E. Figi and Allen K. Marty. Don Ott was a Freshman that year as was Charles Rolph from Monticello. Many students hailed from Wisconsin and the Midwest states. Lastly, among the Seminary Seniors was none other than Linus Wierwill, from Botkins, Ohio who later answered the call and became the pastor at the New Glarus Swiss United Church of Christ.

Mission House

Linus Wierwill-1948 Graduate

Did You Know?

Did you know that in 1901, the Town of New Glarus issued pool table licenses? At the time, J.J. Figi was the clerk and he noted the $5.00 license fee and issued receipts for 7 pool tables. The number of pool table licenses remained the same in 1902 and 1903. Other fees recorded in the receipt book were $1.50 to $2.00 for various special events, including an “athletic exhibition, Mac the hypnotist, the GUGG Verein running a saloon, operating a skating rink, Reno novelty and the James Family Exhibition.” In addition, several receipts indicated businesses had paid to remain “open all night.” No details about the hours of operation were recorded. The charge for “running a bowling alley for a month” was recorded as $8.75.

We thank the Bank of New Glarus for their support in publishing the New Glarus Historical Society newsletter.

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