NEW GLARUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

The Board of Directors re-elected its officers by a unanimous vote at its May meeting and are identified in the box at the left.

The museum opened on Saturday, May 28, and the following individuals are serving as cashiers: Gail Beal, LouAnn Bodenmann, Ruth Elmer, Peg Hammerly and Kelly Hermanson. Guides for the 2022 season are: Larry Klassy, Steve Gmur, Dave Hustad and John Eglsaer. We are still seeking individuals to work as cashiers on two Sundays of each month and additional guides. Volunteers are also needed to help open and close the museum buildings at the beginning and end of each day. Please contact the Historical Society, using the contact information in this newsletter on page 4, if you are interested in supporting the Historical Society in these roles.

Jackie Judd is seeking support from a Swiss photographer to create the new panels of information about Canton Glarus for the Hall of History. This project is funded with the large donation from Canton Glarus, given in honor of the 175th anniversary of the founding of New Glarus.

We are happy to report that we have made arrangements with Duane Freitag to once again offer his book for sale in the gift shop. All previously available copies of the book, *A Common Treasure The Challenging First Decade of the Swiss Colony of New Glarus 1845-1855,* sold out quickly.

DONATIONS

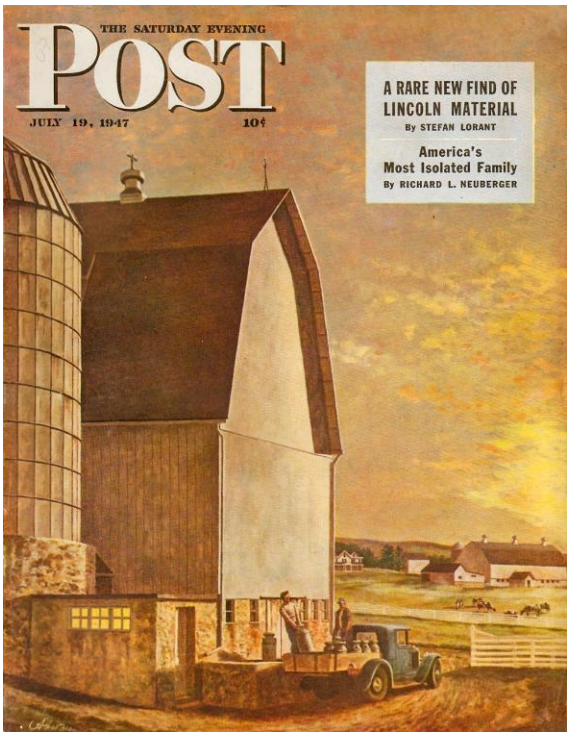
We would like to acknowledge the generous donation of $2000, received from the estate of Larry and Mary Ellen Steussy Shanahan. Mary was living in New Glarus at the time of her death in 2016, was a retired professor of English and a grand-daughter of Nic Freitag, whose farm was just south of New Glarus. Mary worked as a guide at the Swiss Historical Village for a number of years. Larry passed away in February 2022.

In addition, another former tour guide, Fred Ruef, passed away in March of this year and his family has donated his large Swiss bell to the museum, pictured at the right. Born in Bern, Switzerland, Fred served as a guide for many years at the Swiss Historical Village. Thank you to Fred's family for sharing this treasure with the Historical Society. Fred's full obituary can be found at:
https://www.martinschwartzfuneralhomes.com/obituaries/Fred--Ruef-?obId=24418307

NEW GLARUS DAIRY COUNTRY ART

By Todd Klassy

At a time when it was a big deal to appear in one of the more popular nationwide publications, it is impressive to know New Glarus was featured by some of the most popular magazines of the day. Articles about the Swiss colony New Glarus and the dairy industry that took hold in the hills around the small Wisconsin village appeared in magazines such as National Geographic, Reader's Digest, The New Yorker and more.



One of the more interesting instances was in the July 19, 1947 issue of "The Saturday Evening Post." With a circulation of more than 2 million issues every week in its heyday, "The Saturday Evening Post" was one of the most widely circulated and influential magazines from the 1920s to the 1960s for the American middle class. On the cover of that issue was a painting by American artist John Carlton Atherton that featured an early morning rural scene, including barns, men loading milk cans onto the back of a truck, a house, and a small herd of Holstein cows. The magazine said the scene was located "in the rich dairy country of Wisconsin, where if all cows are not contented, they are hard to please. It's a section as sleek as its cows, where life has a very high butterfat content."

According to the magazine, the farm Atherton chose a farm scene near New Glarus for the inspiration for the painting, "a town settled in 1845 by Swiss from Glarus, Switzerland" as the magazine also says.

Atherton was a painter and magazine illustrator who was born in Brainerd, Minnesota and spent much of his time painting rural Midwestern scenes. He is arguably the second-best known painter to have ever contributed to "Saturday Evening Post;" the most popular of which was of course Norman Rockwell. His works are found in the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, as well as dozens of other art museums around the country. And when his paintings appear in auctions, they often fetch well over $15,000 to $20,000 each. It is likely the original painting seen here on the cover of "The Saturday Evening Post," which is called "Dairy Farm," is now in someone's personal collection or hanging in a museum somewhere in America still today.

Does anyone recognize this barn or farm scene "near New Glarus, Wisconsin?" Unless Atherton used a scene somewhere near New Glarus for his painting we may never know. But if this was a literal interpretation, it would be fun finding out. There is also scant information online about where the original painting is today. Though reproductions are being sold in a handful of poster and art stores online, it is not associated with any museum collection online. Atherton died while salmon fishing in New Brunswick, Canada in 1952 at the age of 52.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Folk Art Workshop

Join local artist Beth Blahut for a special folk art workshop on Wednesday, June 22nd from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Find inspiration in images of Swiss decorative arts, European folk art and calligraphy to create a colorful 11" x 14" work on paper, suitable for framing. Design a purely decorative piece or commemorate a special life event such as a birth, graduation, marriage or new home by drawing and painting a document that you will embellish with folk-art-inspired imagery. Choose whatever motifs are meaningful to you, including hearts, birds, flowers, trees, stars, etc. In this workshop, we will look at Scherenschnitte (Swiss paper-cutting), traditional painted Swiss architecture, Pennsylvania Dutch barn hex signs, and historic "Fraktur" documents to inform your unique folk art.

Archival paper, ink pens, colored pencils, watercolor paints and brushes provided.

The workshop is open to anyone 16 or older. Please note that we are unable to offer on-site child care.

This event will be held at the Swiss Historical Village, at 612 7th Avenue in New Glarus.

Space is limited, and registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Use this link to register:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdkJRLJBc2IDjXmR5w6dIEAUP2I6DA0PECzSu1gbRdMtsEbdg/viewform

Farming, Factories, and the Frontier: Midwestern Genealogy Basics

We invite you to attend a special workshop on Thursday, July 7th at 6 p.m., presented by Eleanor Brinsko of Carlon Genealogical Services.

Midwesterners make up the heart of America. We live and work among the farmlands, the Great North Woods, and factories and industries. It's time to take a look at the people who have called this place home by looking at the history of the region and its people, and where to find the documents to fill out our ancestors' stories.

Weather permitting, we will be gathering at the Hall of History pavilion. Please enter through the west gate on 7th Street. This workshop is free and open to the public, and is presented in partnership with the New Glarus Public Library.

About the presenter: Eleanor Brinsko is a professional genealogist who specializes in Scandinavian-American genealogy by looking at genealogical and social trends on both sides of the Atlantic. She also teaches a graduate-level genealogy course for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's iSchool, and has contributed to "Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s Finding Your Roots" on PBS.

New Glarus Wine Walk

Board of Directors member, John Eglsaer is working with other businesses in the community to participate in a Wine Walk on Saturday, July 9th. The Swiss Historical Village Museum will be the starting point for the event at 4 p.m. To promote the museum and hopefully increase attendance, the Board decided at its May meeting to offer each Wine Walk participant a ticket for free admission to the museum during the 2022 season. Watch for more information about this event, including how to purchase tickets on Facebook or in the Post Recorder Messenger newspaper.

Pioneer Churches of Wisconsin

Looking ahead, the New Glarus Public Library will host Michael J. Cooney, photographer and author of the new book Pioneer Churches of Wisconsin. Michael will present a program about his book on Thursday, September 8th at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Village Hall.

DID YOU KNOW?

As we celebrate June Dairy month we remember Ralph Elmer, known for his family's nationally-recognized holsteins. Ralph's dad, H. Otto Elmer, was born here in 1895 and and married Esther Hoesly in 1918. This 1920 photo shows the barn, located on Farmer's Grove Road, before it was painted. Two hundred hardwood logs were cut by hand and hauled to the Postville sawmill to make the lumber. Nine carpenters and four stonemasons boarded at the farm during the week while construction was underway. Otto and Esther died in 1973 and Ralph passed away in 2013. Ralph served on the Board of Directors of the Bank of New Glarus for 17 years. This Ralph Elmer collection photo first appeared in the 1994 Bank of New Glarus calendar.

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

The Bank of New Glarus
Powering Growth in Our Community

Contact Us

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