



The Backbone

A publication of the Backbone Ridge History Group of
Schuyler, Seneca, and Tompkins Counties

BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

REBIRTH OF COMMUNITY IN THE HEART OF THE BACKBONE RIDGE

BY MARK BROWN AND JAMES JENSEN

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190 years after its birth, the Logan Community Center, once the Logan Methodist Church is experiencing a rebirth of vitality. Closed in the 1970s by the United Methodist Conference, the building sat empty for over a decade at the mercy of vandals, theft, and neglected maintenance. This very beautiful and historic site sits right at the heart of the Backbone resettlement district. In 1984 a group of local community members came together and formed the Logan Community Center Association.

"This group was started by my grandmother, Gladys Lott," shares LCC Association President James Jensen. The members of the association were able to raise enough funds over the next year to purchase the building from the United Methodist Conference in 1985. Over the next 16 years a great amount of restoration work was done to the building including steeple work, exterior painting, interior restoration, and more.

Around 2008 Association membership began to decline due to the aging of members and fewer new members joining. From 2008-2017 the buildings maintenance was not kept up on because of lack of manpower. However, in 2018 there was a renewed amount of public interest that helped to kick off a new start and begin more efforts to save the building and a renewed vision.



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BY CHARLOTTE DICKENS

Greetings to members and readers of this newsletter.

It is my pleasure to announce that we have a new coordinator for the newsletter, Richard Paige who has graciously agreed to serve in this capacity. We are so grateful for all the years that they have been coordinated by Beth Bevars and to Kari Milliman Gauntt who will continue to do the layout and editing for us prior to its publication. We are always looking for new articles from new and old contributors who have articles of historical interest that they might like to share. If you have a subject and would like to write an article, please do not hesitate to contact us to make a submission. This also applies to any other capacity that you might like to help the Backbone Ridge History Group go forward with its mission to present programs, provide a newsletter, educate the public and serve as a repository for historical information that pertains to the backbone ridge area between the Seneca and Cayuga Lakes and surrounding areas.

We are happy to report that our fall series of programs got off to a good start with approximately fifty people attending our first program, presented by Walter Gable, Seneca County Historian about The Queen's Castle (Fossenvue), and which was held at the Logan Community Center on November 6th. We so much appreciate the Logan Community Center for opening its doors for use by our group. Much renovation has been happening there which makes it a great place to hold community events. Also, we so much appreciate the warm welcome by the group that sponsors the Community Center and by James Jensen who was there on that day. Also thanks to the Delavan Foundation for funding this series of programs and to members of our group who made refreshments and otherwise helped. Attendees were first treated to harmonica music played by Harold Bush prior to the presentation. Then we got to hear the story of Fossenvue so ably presented by Walter Gable.

Our second program, held at the Lodi Historical Society, was with the Jesse Alexander band. 85 people were in attendance and a wonderful time was had by all! A huge thank you to Mark Brown for imagining and producing these events and to the whole BRHG Board for supporting them. A special thank you to Sheila Lutz for her help with the refreshments!

The first round of programming will conclude on Sunday, December 4th at 2pm at Logan Community Center. Gary Emerson, Schuyler County Historian, will give a talk on the Ferries and Steamers of Seneca Lake. The December 18th Holiday Concert with Devora Johnson has moved into the new year. The date will be announced as soon as it is confirmed.

Thanks to all for what you do to keep alive the history of our area.

Charlotte Dickens
President

HISTORY OF THE BACKBONE RIDGE TIMELINE IN PANELS

BY BETH BEVARS

In 2018, my dad, Allan Buddle submitted a funding proposal to the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation for a new project – a panel timeline of the Backbone Ridge. The project was funded but, due to Dad's illness and death, and then to the pandemic, we are just now bringing it to completion. In this edition of the newsletter, you will see the first 3 of 6 panels that were beautifully realized by local artist Chris Wolff. (Panels 4-6 will be in the Spring newsletter.)

In this newsletter you will find an artist statement in which Chris talks about what materials he used and a little about the process behind the creation-especially given the possibility of outdoor use!

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BY MARK BROWN AND JAMES JENSEN
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

During the decade gap that the building sat empty and unused it was subject to vandalism, theft, and maintenance neglect. The original stained glass windows were stolen as well as some of the original religious pieces that belonged to the church. Some of these items have been recovered over time but the location of many pieces is still unknown.

What was the catalyst for this restoration initiative?

James: "The original inspiration for the restoration was the love that the community had for the building as many of the original members had been married and baptized there. The building is also the last standing major landmark of the hamlet of Logan. My main reason to push for the continuation of restoration is my personal love for the building as well as the fact that I am a fourth-generation member and I feel it to be my responsibility to continue the work of the generations before me. Our group is a smaller one with a count of eight main people and a few other part-time volunteers that pitch in



when help is needed. We would like to have a larger number of standby volunteers that are willing to help with small projects and act as event staff when needed. All of our group members live locally and either have an interest in the history of the area or have a personal tie to the building and wish to help. As for recruiting help, we advertise our volunteer days on Facebook and try to reach out to the community that way and by word of mouth. Over the last year we have accomplished quite a bit of work. We have had a fair amount of work done to our bathroom facilities including having a new concrete pad poured, new walls, new plumbing, new flooring, etc.

We have also been working on exterior painting of the building which is still under way because of the size of the building and limited hands to help. We recently have cleared the East end of the building of the brush, undergrowth, and sad looking trees. This has allowed for better sunlight and dryer conditions for the building. Our rear roof over the dining hall is being recoated with sealant to extend the lifetime. Our front doors are also being restored as well.

What is your dream or inspiration for the building now?

James: "My personal dream for the building is to have a full restoration completed so that the building may be used by the community and the public for weddings, parties and gatherings. And our long-term hope is that once restoration work is done and regular maintenance is kept constant, that we can use extra funds to give back to the community. We currently try to donate to the local fire departments when able, but we would like to be able to do this more and for other nonprofits in our local area."

To find out more about the Logan Community Center, visit their Facebook page: Logan Community Center Logan's Landmark, call (607) 592-0343 or email Loganccinfo@gmail.com
BRHG is thrilled to be working in such close partnership with the Logan Community Center!

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REBIRTH OF COMMUNITY IN THE HEART OF THE BACKBONE RIDGE

BY MARK BROWN AND JAMES JENSEN
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)



Before and After Photos—Hard work by volunteers makes such an incredible difference!

BRHG PROGRAMMING RESUMES

BY BETH BEVARS

It is with great excitement that we have been able to resume in-person programming this Fall!! Mark Brown anticipated this moment and wrote a grant to the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation to present a series of concerts and lectures. We are grateful for his connections and expertise! We heard a fascinating talk on Queen's Castle and Fossenvue of Caywood by Seneca County Historian, Walt Gable on Sunday, November 6th at Logan Community Center. 50 folks attended and a good time was had by all!

On Sunday, November 17th, the Jesse Alexander Band provided us with a wonderful Bluegrass concert at the Lodi Historical Society. For those few who might not know, the Alexander Family originated Pickin' in the Pasture and hold this world class Bluegrass Festival on their farm in Lodi every year in August. 85 friends and neighbors attended the Sunday concert and Jesse was especially pleased to recognize his 2nd grade teacher in the audience!

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Join us Sunday, December 4th at the Logan Community Center for a talk by Schuyler County Historian Gary Emerson. Gary will speak about Ferries and Steamers on Seneca Lake. Like all the events in this series, this talk is free because of generous support by the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation.

Our 4th event, the Concert with vocalist Devora Johnson has been postponed until after the New Year. Please stay tuned for more information on the new date.

What a pleasure it was to see so many of you! Thank you for supporting the Backbone Ridge History Group's programming! If you have any ideas of events you'd like to see, please email backboneridgehq@gmail.com.

Top Left:

Mark Brown, Charlotte Jane Dickens (BRHG President), James Jensen (LCC Director), Sandra Bradford and Harold Bush

**Top Right and Bottom Left:**

Walt Gable, Seneca County Historian, presents a talk on Queen's Castle & Fossenvue of Caywood

**Bottom Right:**

The BRHG is thrilled to be presenting programs again!



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BRHG PROGRAMMING RESUMES

BY BETH BEVARIS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

Below: Jesse Alexander and Band in performance at the Lodi Historical Society Nov 17, 2022



Above: Harold Bush, BRHG Vice-President playing period harmonica before the Band took stage

Below: Thank you to Sandra Bradford, Sheila Lutz, and Regan from Johnny's Kitchen for the wonderful refreshments!



(continued on page 7)

BY BETH BEVARS
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)



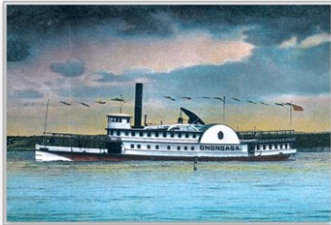
The Backbone Ridge History Group

Presents

Ferries and Steamers on Seneca Lake

Presented by Gary Emerson

Schuyler County Historian



Sunday, December 4 at 2pm
at the **Logan Community Center**
FREE

5242 Co Rd 4 Logan Rd

Funded by the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation
Refreshments Provided

STAY TUNED!

OUR CONCERT WITH
DEVORA JOHNSON
HAS BEEN MOVED TO
AFTER THE NEW YEAR.



HISTORY OF THE BACKBONE RIDGE TIMELINE IN PANELS

BY BETH BEVARS
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

We see beauty and talent. Chris sees an artistic challenge. I'm grateful to him not only for the beautiful artwork but also for truly being a partner with Dad as they brainstormed this project – even when Dad was no longer able to speak.

The Backbone Ridge History group has been fortunate to work with Chris on multiple projects throughout the years. He built and decorated a wooden teaching trunk used with SSCS 4th graders as they read Farmer Boy by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Inside the trunk were period artifacts for the students to handle while they were comparing life in the 1880s with life today. Chris also created a painting of the Bethel Cemetery and Meeting House (Town of Covert) from the mid-1800s. The painting was converted into a cemetery sign. Both projects were funded by the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation.

We are also fortunate to have a wonderful description of Haudenosaunee life on the Backbone by Dr. Samantha M. Sanft as a companion to the Native American panel. Sam and I met during the summer of 2018 to talk about what image to choose and I asked her to write a statement. I'm sure she never realized that it would be 4 years before it was published! In the time since we met for coffee in Ithaca and then in the fields on Indian Fort Road in the Town of Ulysses, she has completed her work and been awarded a PhD in Anthropology from Cornell. She had previously designed an exhibit of artifacts found on Orchardland Farm (my family farm) in the Town of Covert. That exhibit is housed at the Interlaken Historical Society. I am grateful to her professor and mentor, Dr. Kurt Jordan, for introducing Sam to our family. Congratulations on your PhD, Samantha!

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HISTORY OF THE BACKBONE RIDGE TIMELINE IN PANELS
BY BETH BEVARS
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

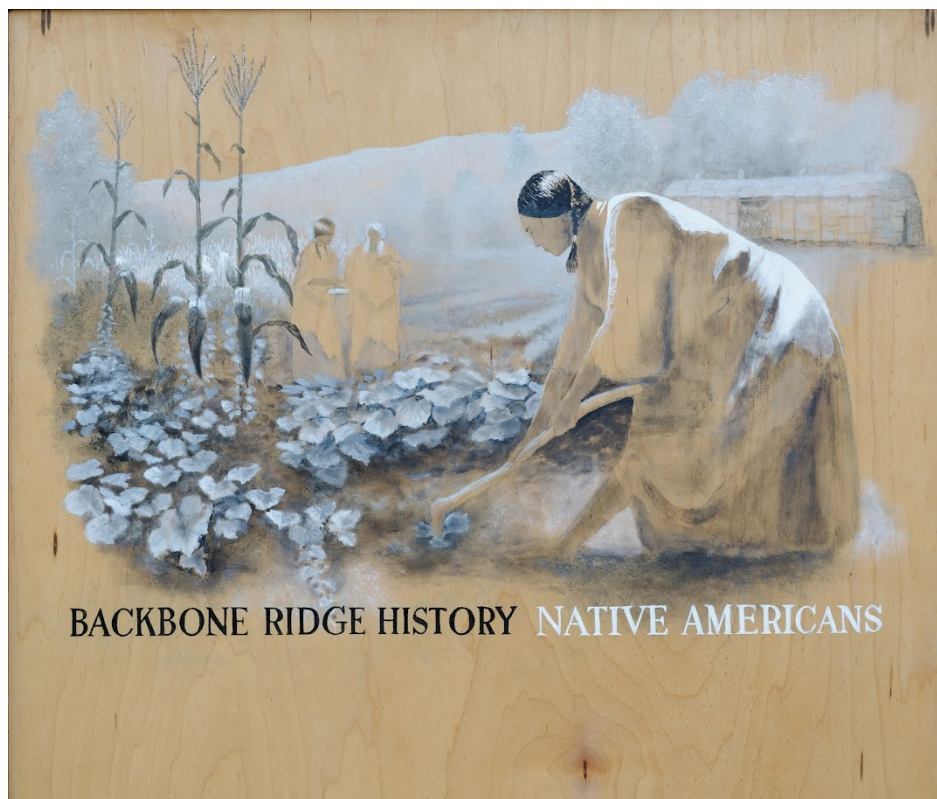
As written in the Delavan grant, the panels are a segmented timeline of history of the Backbone Ridge. The periods included are:

- Native American: prior to European settlement
- Settlement (1790- 1830)
- Peak population which occurred in 1850
- Period of mechanization in agriculture and the home (Civil War to early 1900's)
- Abandonment and Resettlement (Early 1900s to 1930s and 40s)
- Public Land Use including Grazing (1940s to present)

The panels were conceived as six individual framed exhibit boards each 4 feet high by 2 feet wide. The artwork makes up the top of each panel with space left below for optional, interchangeable displays pertinent to each different event. 6 beautiful easels made by Harold Bush provide secure display for indoor or outdoor use. [Look for more information on the handmade easels in the next newsletter!]

The panels will be displayed at the Lodi Whittier Library one at a time over the course of the next few months. They are beautiful works of art as well as valuable additions to the historical conversation about each period. I'm confident that Dad would be thrilled with them. Thank you to all who worked so hard to turn the vision into reality.

Here is the Native American panel:

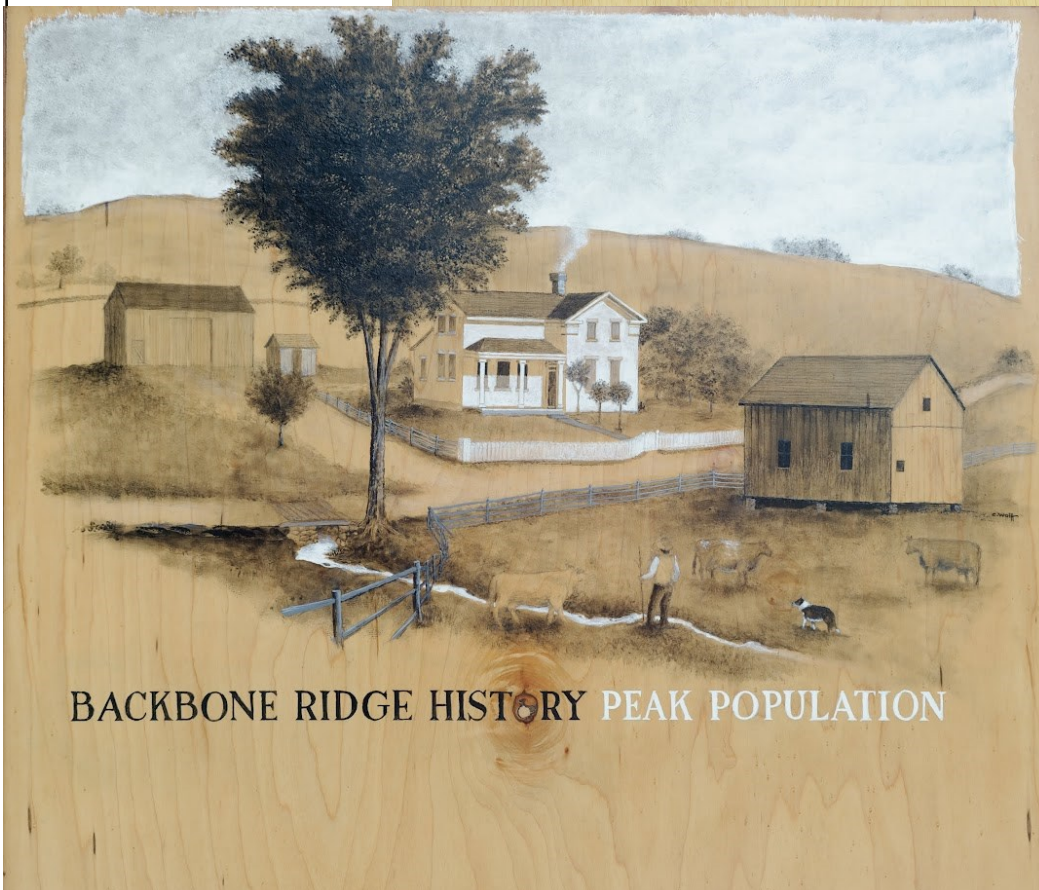


BACKBONE RIDGE HISTORY NATIVE AMERICANS

(continued on page 9)

Right:

The Settlement panel:



Left:

The Peak Population panel

BY BETH BEVARS
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

The following is information on Chris Wolff, Graphic Designer & Illustrator. (Editors Note: I am leaving it in the font that he used and emailed to us, as I think font is very important to him and is part of the Artist's statement)

Artist Statement

I was asked to help with this project by Allan Buddle. I thought of him every step of the way.

The panels, edged in local walnut, were made by Jack Katz of Trumansburg.

The reference material was supplied by the BRHG.

In an effort to indicate the past, I chose to do all but the final illustration in black and white. Artists oils gave the Native American scene (based on N.Y. State supplied materials) a sort of mystical quality, perhaps.

The next two panels were painted using Rustoleum. I knew the paint would be hard and durable, given the future use of the panels, and it also presented an artistic challenge.

With the Peak Population illustration, I used an oil painting medium that allowed me to do washes of black and white. (Editor's note: This panel will be included in the Spring newsletter.)

Wood, of course, was the third color in all of the panels.

It was an enjoyable project, and I was honored to be involved with the group.

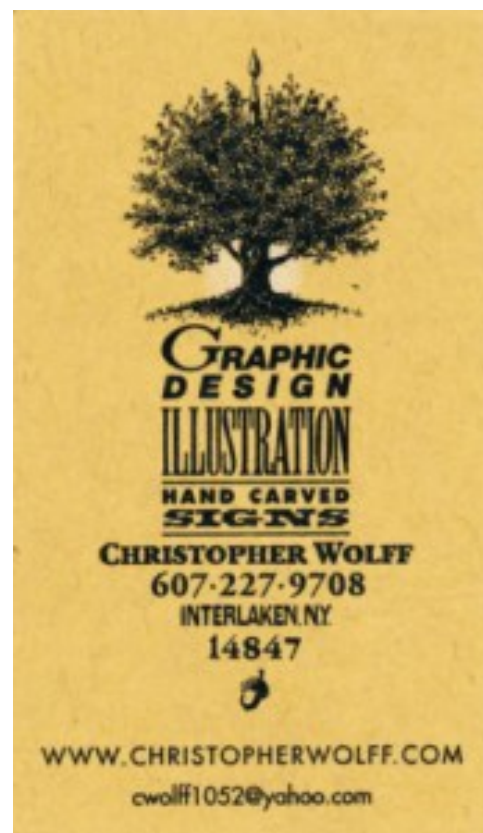
Christopher Wolff
Designer & Illustrator

WEBSITE:

<http://ChristopherWolff.com>



Chris Wolff, Graphic Designer
& Illustrator



BACKBONE RIDGE NATIVE AMERICAN PANEL

BY SAMANTHA SANFT, PHD

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Native Americans inhabited the area known today as the Backbone Ridge. Native peoples have been living on land across central New York State for over 13,000 years.

This image depicts life in the Backbone Ridge area circa 1500 CE. At this time, central New York State was inhabited by the Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee), often referred to as the Iroquois.

Haudenosaunee means “people of the longhouse” and refers to a confederation of five (later six) nations, known as Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk (Tuscarora joined the league in the 1720s). Following the metaphor of a longhouse stretched across ancestral Haudenosaunee territory, Senecas are known as “keepers of the western door”, being located furthest west. Similarly, the easternmost nation is the Mohawks, known as “keepers of the eastern door”. The centrally located Onondaga are known as “keepers of the central fire”. Haudenosaunee also call themselves Ongweh’onweh (ongk-way-HON-way), which means “real human being”. The Seneca and Cayuga nations likely shared the Backbone Ridge area.

Haudenosaunee peoples practiced a semi-sedentary lifestyle, moving villages about every 10-30 years mainly due to the depletion of local firewood. Villages were often located on hilltops and Haudenosaunee lived in structures called longhouses, constructed of a wooden frame covered in sheets of bark with doors on each end. Some longhouses were over 200 feet long. The interior of a longhouse was organized with sleeping benches along the walls and a row of hearths or fireplaces down the center.

The Haudenosaunee cleared land for both villages and agricultural fields using slash-and-burn methods. While men helped to clear the fields, women were the primary farmers. They planted corn, beans, and squash (known as the Three Sisters) together in the same mounds of earth in order to promote growth, a highly productive and sustainable form of companion planting. Even after plant domestication, Haudenosaunee peoples still continued to gather wild plants such as nuts and berries and also hunt wild game such as deer. Deer were an extremely important resource; venison was a main source of protein and deer hides were the primary material used to make clothing. Deer shoulder blade bones were even used (along with a wooden handle) as hoes.

During the late eighteenth century, the combination of American-led scorched earth military campaigns and controversial treaties forcibly removed many Haudenosaunee peoples from their homes and onto small reservations. But through the strength and power of active survival, Haudenosaunee peoples are alive and well today. Most current members live on reservations in New York and southern Ontario and Quebec, although an increasing number live off reservations on their ancestral homelands across central New York.





We need you!

The Backbone Ridge History Group needs ***you*** to

- serve on the Board;
- help plan & run events;
- write newsletter articles;
- research and write grants; and
- plan for the future.

Can you help?

If so, please email **backboneridgehg@gmail.com**
or call Charlotte at 910-988-2268.

Your assistance is vital to our continued work.

Backbone Ridge History Group

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