



The Backbone

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

BECAUSE HISTORY MATTERS

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FREE CONCERT

Fiddling on the Backbone Ridge

2-4 p.m.

October 29th, 2016

Searsburg Grange Hall

(near the intersection of Searsburg and Burr Roads)



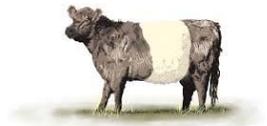
Uncle Joe and the Rosebud Ramblers offers a mix of lively up tempo New England fiddle tunes, energetic old time tunes from before the Civil War and family oriented traditional folk songs that have stood the test of time. Music will be enhanced with history of the instruments.

Co-sponsored by the Backbone Ridge History Group and Searsburg Grange No. 494.

For more information call 607-532-4213

BY ALLAN BUDDLE

It is with great sadness that we inform you of Dave Beckhorn's unexpected passing. Dave was a wonderful person so involved in so many community organizations including the Backbone Ridge History Group in which he led the Cemetery Restoration Project. The summer issue of the *Backbone* highlighted Dave's work and respect for the veterans whose graves he marked with flags each year.



This summer the theme for the parade floats and exhibits was "The Backbone Ridge, a Tight Knit Community of Sheep and Wool." Photos by Doris Pike provide a glimpse of the float at the Hector Firemen's Parade, the Trumansburg Firemen's Parade and the exhibits at the Trumansburg Fair and the Interlaken Historical Society Plowing Day and Country Fair. The large number of folks who contributed items for the float and exhibits and who participated in both demonstrates again the importance of partnering that is a hallmark of the Backbone Ridge History Group. A sincere thank you to all!



The BRHG float during the Interlaken Fair parade

Please join us at the Searsburg Grange Hall on October 29th for what promises to be a real toe tapping time with Uncle Joe and the Rosebud Ramblers. Renee Baum provided this tidbit about the group : "It's a common sign to see a spontaneous square dance or elegant waltz break out among the toe tapping audience during a performance. Joes wonderful renditions of traditional folk songs are enhanced by Mike's solid guitar playing. Robin holds down the groove and keeps 'em honest. Renee's thirst for finding new tunes for the fiddle offers the listener and dancer new treats at every show. Alice Ploss adds her beautiful voice and spoons to complete the rich sounds of vocal harmony.

Editor's Note- *As a follow-up to the wonderful Dr. Gillmor presentation, Charles Fausold was asked to provide an article for the Backbone so that all of our members could enjoy the important story. A Tale of Three Doctors follows. Since preparing the article, Charles has located the site of the cabin where Dr. Gillmor was born near the intersection of Potomac Road and Chicken Coop Hill Road. It can be seen on the 1853 Hector Map which is on the Backbone Ridge History Group website and is labeled I. Gillmore.*

William Spence Gillmor, my great-grandfather, was born in 1855 in a log cabin on what is now the Potomac Road at the very crest of the Backbone Ridge. His grandfather James Gilmore and great-grandfather (on his mother's side) John Spence were among the area's first residents, arriving in the late 1700's. John and his wife Rachel are both buried in the old burying ground on the Crisfeld Road.

After attending local schools, graduating from Starkey Seminary and Cook Academy, and a brief stint teaching school in Searsburg, William decided to study medicine. In 1885, as he prepared to graduate from the Medical Department of the University of Buffalo (as it was called then), he was uncertain where to establish his practice: In the city, with all its amenities? Or back home in rural Schuyler County, NY. He sought the counsel of one of his professors, the surgeon Dr. Roswell Park, who would go on to found the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo and helped treat President McKinley after his assassination. Dr. Park responded to Dr. Gillmor's request for advice with the following letter:

Buffalo, March 10, 1885

Dear Doctor:

Yours at hand. The city is the place for enterprising men who want to keep up with the times; I think there is no doubt about that. I dare say you could make more money in the country the next five years than you can here in the same time. But five years of country hum drum is enough to intellectually cripple – almost kill – the student, unless he has exceptional opportunities.

If you can afford it and are willing to bide your time I would decidedly say come here and settle down. When you are here I will give you what little advice I can. When here you must join the medical society and begin some systematic study and work. What you can't see in practice you will be largely laying in from a course of reading, and you will be near enough to help in case you need it. If within reach of hospitals attend all the clinics you can. Do everything you properly can to see cases. Pitch in with a microscope, and practice urinalysis. You will find plenty of work that you can profitably occupy your time with. And this will gradually make you known in your locality as a studious, diligent and precise man, which is the best reputation you could have, will win you respect and in the end patients whom you can in your turn respect.

Hoping to see you when you do come, I am yours sincerely, R. Park

Although he carefully considered Dr. Park's advice to remain in the city, personal circumstances led Dr. Gillmor to believe that his best chances for success were back home, and he returned there to pursue his career as a classic country doctor treating all manner of ailments when and wherever needed. From his home in North Hector (now Valois) Dr. Gillmor's service area extended from Caywood to Peach Orchard and east up the hill to Logan and Steamburg.

In 1888 William married Winnifed Budd, the daughter of Isabella Curry and Daniel Purdy Budd. They had one child, Eleanor Spence Gillmor who was my grandmother. Eleanor's daily diary entries, painstakingly transcribed by my Aunt, Priscilla Fausold Weir, provide fascinating insight into Dr. Gillmor's practice and community life in this area at the turn of the last century.

(continued on page 6)

LAST EDITION'S MYSTERY PHOTO

The mystery presented in the last issue of the Backbone related to the Searsburg School Class of 1894. We asked if any of you could match up the faces with the names and if anyone had any information about Mr. Russell, the teacher.

We didn't receive any responses to date, but if you have anything to share about the school or individuals listed, please let us know. A poster in the Searsburg Grange Hall listing Charter Members of Searsburg Grange No. 494 in 1885 includes some of the same family names. As an aside, the Searsburg Grange won first prize for their exhibit at the Trumansburg Fair this year. Their exhibit highlighted the history of the Searsburg Grange. Congratulations!

The photo below is of the Searsburg School, taken on May 18, 1894.



Searsburg School 1894 May

Santa Burr.	Marion Pisono
Winnie Sears	George Walker
Mabel Peck	Josh Wheeler
Agnes Peck	Ernie Wheeler
Lucia Curry	Florence Hall
James Curry	Dana Robinson
Jessie Curry	Jay Sherwood
Carrie Stillwell	Howard Clark
Elmer Stillwell	
Herbert Walker	
Maude Walker	
Jay Sherwood	
Wm. Sherwood	

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Russell with his students at Searsburg School May 18, 1894

THIS EDITION'S MYSTERY PHOTO:



Can anyone identify the girl or the cow in this picture?

A Weekly Journal devoted to the Farm, Shop and Fireside
Vol. XIV. No. 17 New York Saturday, April 25, 1885. \$1.00 per year
Entered at the Post Office of New York City as Second-Class Matter
contributed by Allan Buddle

Kicking Cows

I believe that kindness is the best method, and I flatter myself with the belief that I can take any calf from its mother's side and teach it to be a quiet, docile animal. Always treat the cows with kindness, and they will be quiet, and instead of hiding their calves, they will bring them up to show them. If-as will not be the case if you are always kind- she assumes a threatening attitude, approach her slowly, offer her some food, and allow her to take it from the hand, and if not pacified, fondle the calf; the cow will soon understand that no harm is intended. When satisfied, show her some suitable food, approach quietly and milk as quickly and carefully as possible. If a young cow, have everything still and allow no one near. Milk in a wooden bucket, for a tin one makes too much noise.

Turn the cow to the calf three times a day for four or five days; then, if possible, take the calf away where the cow cannot hear it; feed twice a day till it learns to drink, which will be in two or three days. Don't get into the pen, but let the calf put its head through the bars and feed it there. It may leave the bucket, but will come back. Allow it to have the fingers the first time; after that only put its head in. Don't box or beat it for knocking the bucket; it is cruel to abuse it for what nature taught it.

After it has learned to drink, feed two quarts of new milk three times a day, and when three weeks old, three quarts of skimmed milk, and place hay within its reach. Don't take the cow into the stable until she has forgotten the calf; milk at some suitable place some distance from it; give enough feed to keep her eating while milking. She will offer some resistance, but don't scold or strike her. If she kicks one over, get up again. What were feet made for? Or, if she knocks one's head take care to keep it out of the way next time. If the bucket is knocked over or away, get it again. Should she step in the bucket, hold it until she takes her foot out, which she will do; set the bucket away for the calf, and take the other; always have two at hand. Should she put her foot on the toes, press on the leader, and she will raise it.

Better shut the other cows away, for they may bother and frighten her, when she will be sure to kick. If a bucket of corn is left in the yard, and the cow goes to eat it, don't go roaring her about; take it kindly away- it is not her fault. Should she go in at the open barn door to eat the oats on the floor, drive away and shut the door; don't chase her around the yard with a pitch fork. Allow her to take a nubbins now and then from thy hand. In two or three days she will quit kicking, and with such treatment in six weeks any one could milk her. I once had entrusted to me a cow that baffled all efforts of her owner to milk her, evidently wishing to kill him and the calf too. I put feed in one corner of the yard and coaxed her to it. For a while she hesitated, and started back every time I approached, but never having received any harsh treatment from me, she soon became quiet and allowed me to milk. She spilled what she could but I got enough to feed the calf; and in six weeks a child of eight might have milked her.

This spring I am milking a young cow that at first seemed to dare me to touch either her or her calf. I offered her some feed, fondled the calf and treated her as the other. I can now milk without fear of being disturbed. Is it not easier to come home from harvest field and find the work all done, ready to enjoy a pleasant evening chat, than to have to go after the cows, and after racing them about the yard for an hour, get half the milk one have got, spending time strength and temper? Well, then treat the cows kindly, and they will come lowing home to be milked. If by maltreatment the cow has been taught to kick, I have nothing to say, unless I would advise kindness; it is a law of heaven and it should be the law of a Christian.

A TALE OF THREE DOCTORS

BY CHARLES FAUSOLD
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Monday July 2, 1900. I got ready and went riding with Papa. I held the horse as usual. In the afternoon Papa and I went to the farm over Hector hill and I went upstairs in the house where Papa was born. Downstairs in the bedroom was a hen sitting in the pantry.

From the Watkins Express of May 14, 1885:

W. S. Gilmore MD is now located at Mecklenburg with headquarters at the office of Dr. H. H. Fish. Dr. Gilmore, who was formerly a resident of North Hector, after graduating from Cook Academy, entered upon the study of medicine at the University of Buffalo, where he recently graduated as one of the ten honor men in a class of fifty-six. Industry and integrity are traits of his character, and assure success in his new field of effort.

Gillmor Farm, Searsburg Road, c 1894



William S. Gillmor: A Country Doctor on the Backbone Ridge

Friday, April 5, 1901. The roads are very muddy and slushy. Papa rides all day long every day. Poor Papa.

Mon Feb 26, 1900. Wind North. Temperature 4 degrees. Grandpa went to Watkins and the stage tipped over with 5 in it. Grandpa came home in an open wagon about froze. He brought lots of good things.

Monday, June 11, 1900. Went with Papa up on the hill. We came back by North Hector and saw the first automobile I ever saw.

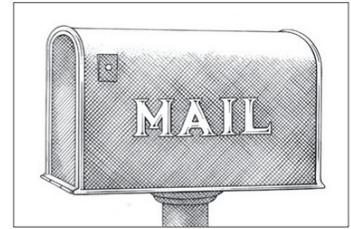
Sunday March 21, 1901. The mud is terrible. Papa must have rode 20 miles today and is now off again. Poor Papa.

Friday August 3. I went way over to Steamburg with Papa. I saw little Clara Covert. She's a real nice little girl. On our way back I saw a little girl by the name of Aline Abbott visiting at David Bond's. We got some nice eating apples there. On our way over to the farm I saw Mable Kellogg while Papa went in to a patient.

*Wed. Feb 6. 1901. They think they will have to take Fred Brown's eye out. It will be terrible!
(continued on page 8)*

MAIL BAG

Editors Note: Dave Townsend corresponded with us and sent us the following information. Soon after sending this information, Dave received the Civil War Diaries and other John Wesley Townsend family documents. If you have information to share with Dave or have questions of him, please contact Dave at this e-mail address- dtownsend2@stny.rr.com or contact us at Post Office Box 62, Trumansburg, New York 14886 and we will forward.



John Wesley TOWNSEND

John W. Townsend, who is an honored veteran of the Civil war and upon the battlefields of the south manifested his loyalty to the Union, is a representative of one of the prominent families of Schuyler county. In days of peace he has been equally faithful to his country and is now regarded as one of the leading representatives and valued citizens of Schuyler county, making his home in North Hector, where he is capbably filling the office of justice of the peace and is also engaged in the real estate business.

John Wesley Townsend was born in Hector, Schuyler county, June 11, 1838, and is a son of Jeremiah and Belinda (Bailey) Townsend. The father was a native of Delaware and when a young man came to New York, becoming one of the early settlers of Schuyler county. He was a soldier of the war of 1812 and was taken prisoner at Black Rock near Buffalo. He was married in Schuyler county to Miss Belinda Bailey, a daughter of John Bailey, who came here from Connecticut at an early day.

Our subject pursued his education in the early subscription schools and when he had put aside his text books, he began learning the wagon-maker's trade, which he followed continuously until after the Civil war broke out. Being unable to content himself longer at home while the Union was in danger, he offered his services to the government, enlisting as one of the boys in blue of Company A. Fiftieth Regiment of Volunteer Engineers. He was mustered in at Elmira as a musician. It was on the 18th of September. 1861, and he served continuously until June. 1865, in the meantime being promoted to the rank of corporal July 28, 1862. He was made sergeant on the 5th of January, 1863, and on the 22d of February. 1864, he re-enlisted at Washington, D. C., as sergeant, being mustered out with that company on the 13th of June, 1865, at Fort Barry, Virginia. He participated in the battle of Yorktown and those of the peninsular campaign under General McClellan. He took part in the battle of Fredericksburg under General Burnside, December 11, 1862; the battle of Chancellorsville; Franklin Crossing, June 5, 1863; the Gettysburg campaign; and the engagement at Harper's Ferry. After the battle of Fredericksburg a pontoon bridge was swung across the Rappahannock river, the Union troops being on one side, the Confederates on the other. One night at a council of the Union officers it was decided to send the Fiftieth New York Infantry to take this bridge, but before sending the whole regiment it was deemed advisable to send a dozen men as scouts into the hollow where the bridge spanned the stream to see what was to be seen, and Mr. Townsend was one of the brave men who volunteered. Before the battle of Fredericksburg Captain Perkins had been shot and killed on the bridge, and our subject was one of the four chosen for the daring undertaking of bringing the body to the shore. He was with the company and regiment in all of their campaigns, and was ever a faithful soldier, always found at his post of duty, whether in the thickest of the fight or on the lonely picket line. He then returned to Hector, where he engaged in wagon-making, following that pursuit for many years, but for the past twenty years he has devoted his attention to the undertaking business, and has the patronage of many of the best families of this portion of the county.

Mr. Townsend was united in marriage to Miss Sarah Milliman, a daughter of Andrew and Cornelia (Henry) Milliman. Two children were born unto them: Bert M., who is now living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Walter J., who makes his home in New York City, so that Mr. and Mrs. Townsend are again as they were when they started out upon their married life—alone in their own home. In religious faith Mr. Townsend is a Methodist, belonging to the church at North Hector, in which he has served as steward for a number of years. He is a stanch Republicm in his political views, unswerving in his allegiance to the party and he has been honored with a number of local offices. For fifteen years he has held the office of justice of the peace and he discharges his duties without fear or favor his decisions being strictly fair and impartial. In 1898 he was appointed post-master of North Hector so that he is holding the office at the present time. He was also appointed justice of the sessions and held that office for one year. Socially he is identified with Daniel B. Smith Post No. 423, G. A. R., of North Hector, and has served as officer of the day almost continuously since the organization of the post. Mr. Townsend is a gentleman of genuine worth of character and genial manner and of marked enterprise. His record as a soldier, as a private citizen and as a public official is above reproach and all who know him entertain for him warm regard. Both he and his wife have a large circle of friends in Schuyler county and the hospitality of the best homes of North Hector and the community is extended to them.

A TALE OF THREE DOCTORS

BY CHARLES FAUSOLD
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

Sunday, April 28, 1901. Mrs. Sarah Halsey and Miss Bowlby were killed by a fast freight coming from the south. It threw them 20 feet in the air. They saw the train and were trying to get over before the train did.

Mon. Feb 25, 1901. I have had the measles and could not write in my diary but am getting better. Miss Brown closed school for the rest of the week on account of the measles nearly all the schools have them.

Tuesday August 9. The old man Albert Knapp had a chicken bone in his throat. Papa, Mama and I went up to the festival at Hanley Hall. It was an ice cream festival.

Tuesday Jan. 8, 1901. Miss Brown was not able to teach so Hattie Bond took her place and Tom her brother acted up and disturbed the whole school. She had to close school on account of him.

Friday, December 16, 1904. Classes same as ever. Practiced. Went home over the lake. Ate fudge, read some, ran errands and fooled with the telephone which we have just had put in.

Thursday Sept. 6. I went to the Trumansburg Fair with Ana and Glen Hawes. We were in part of a shower but were in Goodwin Sherwood's barn most of the time. Papa was at the farm to take me home. I did not want to go home I wanted to stay all night but I couldn't. Papa is so busy all day long every day.

Tuesday May 26. Practiced on piano. Went to school. Had algebra, Physical Geography, Spelling and Drawing. Our school went up to Logan to a social given by the Logan School. They all went in two loads. But Papa and Mamma wouldn't let me go. They won't let me go anywhere. It is a nice night for a social.

Beginning in 1898 Dr. Gillmor befriended a young man by the name of Francis Peyton Rous, who along with the rest of his family travelled from Baltimore to spend summers at VanValkenberg's boarding house along the shore of Seneca Lake between Peach Orchard and North Hector. Young Peyton had an interest in medicine and would often accompany Dr. Gillmor on his rounds, travelling country roads by horse and buggy, visiting patients, and sharing views on the medical profession and life in general.

Peyton Rous took a different route than Dr. Gillmor, and after graduating from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1905 began a distinguished career as a cancer researcher, primarily at the Rockefeller Institute. In 1910, just four years after his last buggy ride with Dr. Gillmor, he discovered that certain types of cancer (sarcoma) in chickens could be transmitted by a virus. Although the significance of his work was slow to be recognized, in 1966 Dr. Francis Peyton Rous was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery.

In 1908, after Dr. Gillmor's untimely death, Dr. Rous reflected on his influence:

Dear Mrs. Gillmor:

A paper has brought the news about Dr. Gillmor, and, now that this sorrow is realized, I want to write you. At first it was not possible to think of anything but of my friend himself, who was so good and wise, and who toiled so among his people.

You cannot know exactly, Mrs. Gillmor, what contact with your husband meant to the boy growing up into the same profession. I have met many physicians but not one who taught so finely by example the right life to lead. Yet it is from a closer side that I shall love especially to think about Dr. Gillmor – of his humor in our never-ending discussions, of his way of looking at one, of his views about things and people..

(continued on page 9)

A TALE OF THREE DOCTORS

BY CHARLES FAUSOLD
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Fifty years later my grandmother reestablished contact with Dr. Rous, and in a December 1958 letter he wrote:

Your father was the first to show me what being a good doctor could be like. Every now and then he took me on his all day journeys to patients, by horse and buggy... Mostly he and I just talked but sometimes he'd take me into the houses. I remember in special, perhaps because of my own work since, a hopeless old woman with cancer. Always he had my admiration for he was well aware that the medical resources of his day were meager and that all he could do was his best with them and never be down hearted. He certainly never was.

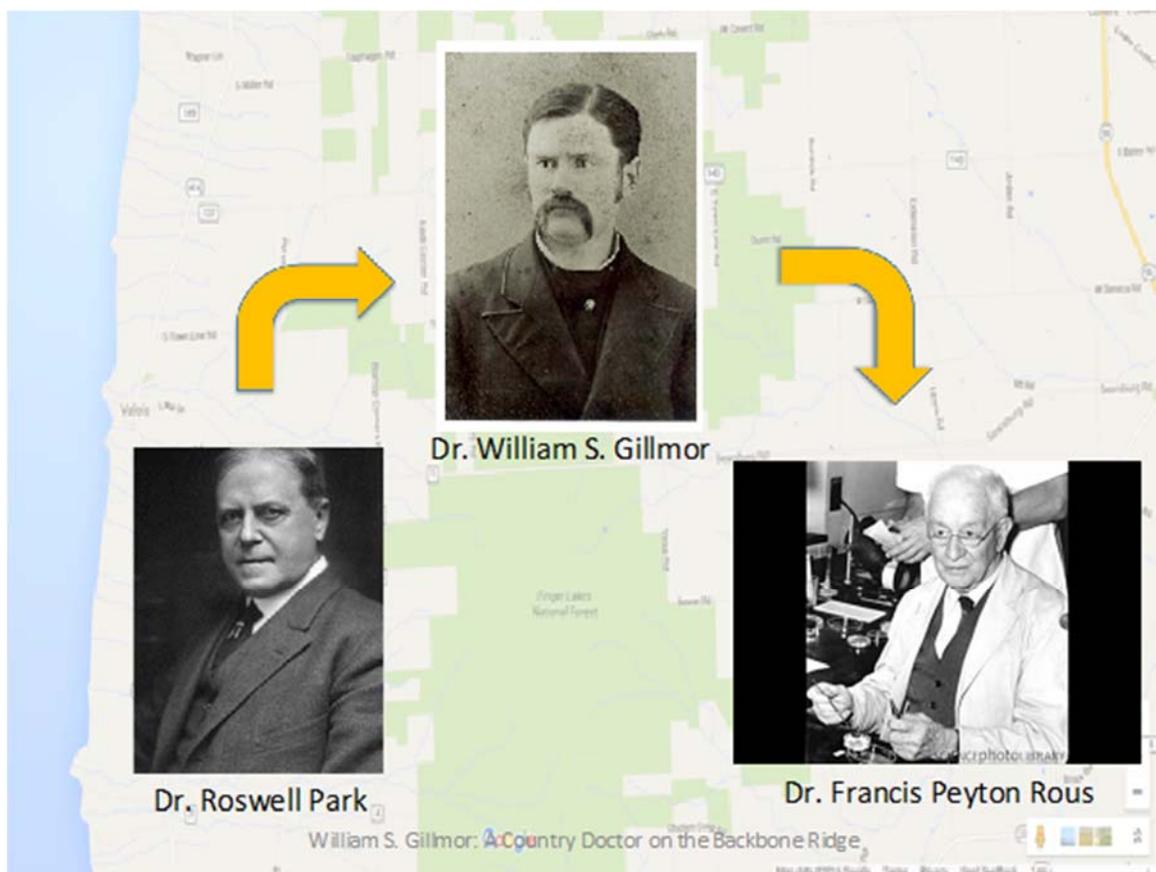
In a final letter dated July 3, 1960, after my grandmother had shared Dr. Park's letter to her father with him, Dr. Rous wrote:

Dr. Park's letter has impressed me deeply, for now, after 75 years, his advice could be bettered only in details. He must have cared for your father, perceived his worth, to have so generously gone all out for him.

Important – *your father always impressed me as a happy man, as one who had made the right choice.*

(Dr. Park's original letter has since been donated to the archives of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute.)

Dr. Park's counsel to Dr. Gillmor, and his subsequent mentoring of Nobel Laureate Dr. Rous is a reminder that although knowledge can be acquired and skill developed, wisdom is passed from generation to generation in subtle and mysterious ways. It is fascinating to ponder how the bucolic environs and community structure of the Backbone Ridge might have contributed to the influence these three doctors had on each other.



Backbone Ridge History Group
PO Box 62
Trumansburg, NY 14886

*****PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN PO BOX NUMBER FROM 64 TO 62*****

Trustees:

Sandra Bradford, Doris Pike, Rose Smith, David Smith, Kelly Paonessa Terry, Charlotte Dickens, Phil Davis

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Allan Buddle, President; vacant, Vice President; Gerard Messmer, Secretary; Julie Clawson, Treasurer; Rose Smith, Membership Chair;
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Trustee meetings are held at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of each month at the Backbone Ridge History Research Center at the intersection of Route 96A and SR 414 in the Village of Lodi.

WWW.BACKBONERIDGEHISTORYGROUP.COM

The printing of this newsletter was supported by the Nelson B. Delevan Foundation.



At left: Jules Hojnowski working on bobbin lace in the Hunt/Usher barn during Interlaken Plowing Day

Below: Shelly Marino and Jean Currie demonstrating wool spinning at Interlaken Fair.



Our display at Interlaken Fair