

THE YELLOW WASP

Lima Historical Society

February 2023

The Early Years of Genesee Country Village & Museum

**By Peter Wisbey
Curator of Collections,
Genesee Country Village & Museum**

**Thursday, February 16th
7 PM**

**Lima Public Library
1872 Genesee St. Lima NY 14485**

**Co-sponsored by the Lima Historical Society
and the Lima Public Library**

With 67 historic structures, Genesee Country Village & Museum, located in Mumford NY, is the largest living history museum in New York State and the third largest in the United States. Please join Peter Wisbey, Curator of Collections, as he presents a history of the museum and its complicated process of development, as it now approaches its 25th anniversary.

Mr. Wisbey's talk will highlight the three Lima buildings that were acquired and moved to the Genesee Country Village & Museum: the 1797 Amherst Humphrey House from West Main Rd. in Lima (see photo on right) ; the "Town Hall", William Hamilton's 1822 Inn from South Lima, as adapted for public use; and the 1850 Toll House — the southernmost of Lima's two toll houses along the 23-mile Rochester and Hemlock Lake Plank Road.



Amherst Humphrey House – from Lima

Peter Wisbey is the Wehrheim Curator of Collections at Genesee Country Village & Museum – a position he has held for over 15 years. He was also the Executive Director of the Seward House Museum in Auburn. A native of Horseheads, NY, he graduated from St. Lawrence University with a degree in history and has two Master's Degrees – one in History Museum Studies from SUNY Oneonta/the Cooperstown Graduate Program and one in American Material Culture from the University of Delaware/the Winterthur Program.

LHS 50th Anniversary Dinner Celebrating Lima's Remarkable History

Saturday, May 20th

4:30 PM Appetizers & Beverages: The American Hotel

6:00 PM Catered Dinner, Historic Photos, Music: The Lima Presbyterian Church

Priority Member/Guest Price: \$25 per person (Reserve before April 1st)

Reservations after April 1st - For LHS Members and the Public: \$30 per person

******Watch your mail for your invitation with details on the menu and reservations.**

LHS Calendar of Events

PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE.

- February 9, 2023 *LHS Hybrid Board meeting at Museum 7pm. Members welcome to attend. Contact us for link*
- February 16, 2023 “The Early Years of Genesee Country Village & Museum” by Peter Wisbey at Lima Library: 7pm
Co-sponsored by Lima Historical Society and Lima Public Library
- March 9, 2023 *LHS Hybrid Board meeting at Museum 7pm. Members welcome to attend. Contact us for link.*
- May 20, 2023 **50th Anniversary Dinner Celebration. Reservations will be required (Watch your mail).**

LIMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PO Box 532. LIMA NY 14485 (585-624-1050)

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Heartfelt Condolences To the Culbertson Family

Honorary LHS member, Katie Culbertson (1970-2022), gave generously to the Lima Historical Society with help in reorganizing the LHS library and her donations of hand-embroidered items for sale in our Gift Store. She will be greatly missed by all in the community who knew her.

Thank You

Our sincere appreciation to all of you who donated so generously to the Lima Historical Society, either through Year End donations or through Memorials for members lost during 2022. Those extra funds helped us to complete the planned refurbishment of the museum last fall and to continue to expand the digitization of our enormous photo collections with purchase of new scanner.

Be Part of Planning 50th Anniversary Events

We are looking forward to welcoming all who are interested in joining us in planning the 50th Anniversary celebrations coming up— the dinner in May and the LHS events on Crossroads Days (see p. 3). We meet regularly. A particular need is for LHS member to help in selecting historic photos for paper and electronic displays. Contact us on our website:..Attn John Serafin.

New Acquisitions

The museum received a number of new items in 2022. Among them:

- A **Harness Shop sign** from a 19th c. Lima building. Received From Jeff Corcoran of West Bloomfield.



- An **1842 article about a fire at the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary** from Richard Palmer of the Medina Railroad Museum.

From Rochester Daily Democrat Friday, May 27, 1842: Destructive Fire At Lima.

“We are *paned* to learn that the “Genesee Wesleyan Seminary” at Lima, Livingston County, was destroyed by fire about 3 o’clock yesterday morning. The fire originated, or, as supposed, by an incendiary, near the roof of the main building, which was four stories in *eight*, and 150 feet in length, and was not discovered until the roof fell in upon the inmates of the fourth story, who had barely had time to escape in their night clothes. In passing down stairs, some of the students were obliged to pass through a room on fire. The building contained the largest and most valuable library in Western New York, together with a *philosophical* apparatus, both of which, we are happy to learn, were saved. The whole structure cost \$20,000, and was insured for \$12,000 - half of which sum was in Ontario and Livingston counties, and the other half in the Genesee Mutual Insurance Company. The Methodist denomination had struggled through many difficulties to bring this Institution to its late prosperous condition, and its destruction at this time is peculiarly unfortunate. The losses, we understand, to the students, amount to about twelve hundred dollars. Among the articles lost were 15 silver and gold watches.” (Ed Note- Are the confusing words 19th c. typos or 20th c. scanning errors?)



Capturing “A Moment in Time”

Lima NY 1983

Forty years ago a cutting-edge audiovisual show entitled *Positively Lima* (original logo above) celebrating the history, the people, and community life in Lima, was designed and presented through the collaborative efforts of the Lima Historical Society and Elim Bible Institute, with assistance from Eastman Kodak Company. The 20-minute show included over 500 color slides shown on 6 synchronized projectors enhanced by music, special sound effects and historical narration. It was presented to a large audience of Lima residents in the newly renovated College Hall on the Elim campus on November 18, 1983. *Positively Lima* represented a warm, people-centered overview of a “moment in time” in the history of the small town of Lima NY—a unique historical treasure.

As we all know, though, electronic technology moved rapidly over the next four decades rendering much electronic equipment obsolete, and earlier digital materials often impossible to access. Unfortunately, that was the fate of *Positively Lima*. Nevertheless, the collective memories of the event, nine carousels of slides, the written script, and a grainy videotape of the show had survived at the Lima Historical Society’s Tennie Burton Museum.

The 50th anniversary of LHS seemed a fitting time to find the expertise needed to undertake the painstaking process of making this unique presentation viewable once again. After several failed leads, a dauntless board member, Elizabeth Osta, found her way to Mike Champlin of DeBergerac Productions who, when shown the original slides and the amateur video, was impressed by the genuineness, professional quality, and historical value of the *Positively Lima* production. Only one troubling problem remained—the original audiotape used in the presentation could not be located. Fran and George Gotcsik launched an all out search at the museum, and luckily found it. Bingo!!! Now we had the expertise and all the component parts for restoring this invaluable piece of Lima history.

If all goes as we hope, the LHS intends to sponsor free public showings of the restored production, *Positively Lima*, at the Lima Town Hall during Crossroads Days this summer, and at local schools and elsewhere thereafter. Our present goal is to secure the needed funds for restoration (estimated at ca \$3000) by way of sponsorships by LHS members, as well as other community members and organizations, and potential grants. If you would like to help underwrite this worthwhile project, please contact us at PO Box 532, Lima NY 14484 or by email: limahistoricalsociety@gmail.com to the attention of *Positively Lima* Committee.

RENEWED ANNUAL LHS MEMBERS FOR 2023 (Nov. 2022 Yellow Wasp Lists all Lifetime& Honorary Members)

Kirk Adams
Skip and Jen Adams
Gretchen and Jim Alday
Sally Bloom**
Don and Jennie Brown
Tim and Mallory DePew
Stephanie Dempsey**
Ben Dodzweit
Duane and Gail Fuller
Susan and Jurgen Gobien**
Michael Grills **
Susan and Hugh Harrington**
Marilyn Herke
Greg and Lori Hunt

Lyle Jenks
Barbara Kolstee
Lynn/ Dave Kowalski-Swartz
Dennis Lakis**
M and M Latterade/Eldred**
Anita Layfield**
John and Mary Ellen Little
Marilyn Macintyre**
Barbara May
Vincent Milliken**
Dave and Nancy Milne
Jim and Shirley Murphy
Jim O’Grady
Elizabeth & George
Osta/Van Arsdale **

Colleen Plimpton**
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Martha & John
Sempowski
John and Barbara Serafin
Judith Sisk
John Skiptunas
David Spencer
Jenny Tubbs
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Charmaine Yarka

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