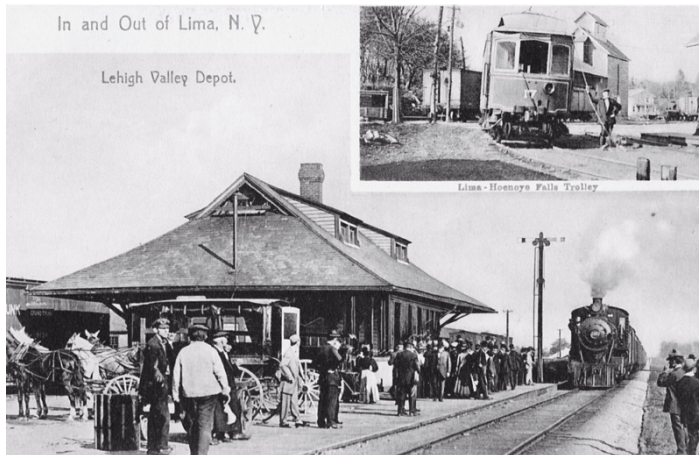


# THE YELLOW WASP

**Lima Historical Society**

**May 2024**



## **Exploring Lima's Colorful Past Via Historic Photos and Videos**

**Children's Old Time Crafts  
Ice Cream Social**

**Sunday May 19th 2 to 4 PM  
Lima Town Hall**

This Sunday afternoon family event will take place on May 19<sup>th</sup> (2-4 PM) on the fully accessible second floor of the Lima Town Hall, 7329 East Main St. The program will focus on the early days and historic architecture of Lima NY through photographic and video imagery. It will also include old time crafts and activities for the kids and an Ice Cream Social free for all.

Two continuously running slide shows—one showing many historic photos selected from the voluminous collections of Lima Historical Society's Tennie Burton Museum, as well as a well-researched talk on Lima's historic architecture (highlighting Lima's 59 structures on the National Register of Historic Places). The beautifully-restored historic video, "Positively Lima," will be shown promptly at 2:30 PM. Children's activities will be taking place throughout the afternoon, and the Ice Cream Social will occur at around 3 PM.

For those who are interested, there will be a second showing of "Positively Lima" allowing time for pauses to accommodate questions or comments about individuals or places in the video, and other recollections from the audience. We are hoping some of you with a long history in town will share in this exchange, so that we might better document our video. Please add to our history by telling us what you know.

For newcomers to Lima, this will be a great opportunity to meet neighbors and familiarize yourselves and your children with the more than 200-year history of the community in which you live. Those from other communities are of course welcome to join us for this Lima Historical Society event.

## **All Hands On Deck! LHS 2024 Membership Campaign**

To increase the visibility and membership of the Lima Historical Society, let's all get on board to spread the word about the LHS membership campaign and the exciting free campaign raffle. Enclosed please find a raffle coupon for a multi-course dinner for two served in your own home and provided by Spinelli Catering <https://spinellichefservices.com> (\$200+ value).

Everyone who joins the Lima Historical Society as a new member this summer, as well as all of our current members, may enter the raffle for free by bringing the coupon to the Tennie Burton Museum on any Sunday afternoon between Memorial Day and September 15<sup>th</sup> and entering it into the raffle box. Drawing will take place at our Year End Picnic/Annual Meeting at Mark Tubbs Park on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. This is too good an opportunity to miss.

Please tell your neighbors. We want everyone in town (newcomers and oldtimers) to know who we are, where the Tennie Burton Museum is, and what LHS is doing. Watch for street signs on Rochester St. for Sunday "special" programs that day.

## LHS Calendar of Events

PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE.

- May 19th Exploring Lima's Colorful Past Via Historic Photos and Videos, Crafts for kids, Ice Cream Social. Lima Town Hall 2-4 pm.
- Memorial Day Museum Opening 10- 12pm. Come and watch the Parade with us from our front lawn. Bring your coupon and enter the raffle.
- September 22nd LHS Annual Meeting and Picnic. Mark Tubbs Park. Watch for details in next *Yellow Wasp*.
- October 15<sup>th</sup> "Maggie's Brood." Elizabeth Osta will review her engaging new book about her Irish family who settled here in Lima. Lima Town Hall, 7 PM.
- November 12th "Undertaking Genealogical Research." Talk by Dennis Hogan. Lima Town Hall 7PM.

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### LHS Sale of Gently Used Items June 7th and 8th

Please set aside any unwanted saleable items for the Lima Historical Society's upcoming sale in June. It will be held at the home of Fran and George Gotcsik 7364 East Main Street. Items may be dropped off during the week before the sale. Please not earlier.

We would appreciate your help at the sale on Friday or Saturday. It is always a good time. Contact us via the website. Proceeds from the sale will be used for a new sign at the Tennie Burton Museum.

### Photo Scanning Project This Summer

We have had a wonderful response to our request for volunteers to assist with our photo scanning project at the museum. Thanks particularly to Shirley Murphy and members of the Lima Senior Citizens. We are very grateful to all of you, and ask that you please be patient. We will be getting set up and ready to begin scanning next month and will contact you.

Unfortunately, we had to defer the scanning project due to other, more immediate needs at the museum.

### Sunday Activities at the Museum Watch for Signs Out Front

We are scheduling a series of special monthly history programs on Sundays at the museum this summer. Some will be geared toward children; others will be of more general interest. We will send out a detailed schedule by email.

Please watch for signboards each Sunday announcing the program of the day.

### Volunteers Needed as Museum Docents

In order to keep the Museum open to the public, we need the help of volunteers who will work in pairs on one of sixteen Sunday afternoons throughout the season. Docent training is available on our website (Go to Museum heading and pull down to Docent Training).

In person group training will be offered upon request for anyone who would like to do that. Contact us on our website.

## The Gillette Bottling Works

One of the most prominent and successful industries in early Lima was the Gillette Bottling Works established by Schuyler Gillette on Livingston Street in 1858. He built a cider mill which yielded apple cider that was then fermented in large vats in the basement and bottled for sale as bubbly "champagne cider." Gillette's products were popular far beyond the local market, and were shipped to cities as far away as New York City.

Around the turn of the century, the company, probably then in the hands of his son, Erson Gillette, turned its emphasis to soft drinks such as sasparilla and ginger ale which required soft water. It was initially carried in tanks from Hemlock Lake. Later, they relied on rain water collected from the roof in a 250-gallon barrel cistern. (continued on Page 3)

## Lima Connects to the World Number Please ????

For many children who visit, one of the most intriguing items in the Tennie Burton Museum is the old telephone switchboard located in a front room on the second floor. Little do they realize, given the presence of phones in their lives, that there were not always phones in everyone's home, hand, and pocket in Lima.

According to Mabel Jenks' *History of Lima: The Crossroads of Western New York*, 1964), the first switchboard (magneto-type) was installed by Bell Telephone Company in the old Salmon pharmacy building on East Main Street sometime around 1890. Callers had to come to the store and be assisted by the pharmacist's son, Harold—Lima's first operator. Later, a second phone was installed in the old Corner Store at the corner of College and Rochester Streets.

Because a growing number of Lima residents were installing home phones, creating increased demand for service, a second switchboard, similar to the one on the right was installed in the pharmacy. Soon a competitor to Bell Telephone installed a third switchboard on Rochester Street downtown, but eventually that company consolidated with Bell as Rochester Telephone Corporation in 1918.



One of Lima's earliest switchboards. It is one of only two of its age surviving in New York State, thanks to the efforts of Harold Hennessey who had it donated to the Lima Historical Society. Come see it in person.



For 50 years, the second floor of the Salmon (later Swartz) Pharmacy served as home to Lima's phone system with its three switchboards, eight regular operators, and an ever-increasing number of customers. Then on July 25<sup>th</sup> 1957, *the Lima Recorder* reported that "Lima Phones Will Be Cut Over From the Old Crank System to Modern Dial Next Wednesday (July 31) at 7 AM." The new dial service would accommodate more than 700 local customers and local calls could be made from home. Only long distance calls required going through an operator in Honeoye Falls. Rochester Telephone built a small substation on the west side of Rochester Street adjacent to a two-story building that had formerly served as Lima's Town Hall and the Rev. John Copeland Ladies Academy. The shift to dial was touted as the latest in telephone technology. In a personal tribute, Mrs Clayton Powers, Lima night operator for 33 years, was celebrated for her service with a luncheon at the Avon Inn. (Honeoye Falls Times Aug 15, 1957).

In 1964, Mabel Jenks made the following prediction about the new dial system: "Probably in another fifty years, it will be superseded by equipment as radically different as these two types are now" (Jenks, *History of Lima: The Crossroads of Western New York*, 1964), p. 46). **She could never have imagined how right she was!**



## Gillette Bottling Works (contin. From p. 2)

Then, it was filtered slowly down to the basement tile tank through a complex series of 23 filters. Carbonic acid gas was added to achieve the bubbly effect of the soft drinks. Gillette soft drinks gained huge popularity and success during the days of the growing Hemlock Lake resort community just down the road.

Schuyler Gillette had also invented a wooden bottle washing machine, the first of its kind, which was promoted by his son Erson, in partnership with five other Lima businessmen. They received a patent for the "washer," and this Lima-made machine was exhibited at a bottler's convention, advertised, and shipped to customers all over the world (Jenks, *The History of Lima* 1964; Democrat and Chronicle, Oct 5, 1941). We know that the two-story Gillette structure was purchased by the Mignon Transformer Company in 1941, at which time it was being used as a garage. When did the Gillette Company cease making soft drinks? Please contact us through our website if you have information to share.

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**Lima Historical Society  
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 See Enclosed 2024 Ballot  
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**New Membership Dues /Information**  
 LHS website [www.limahistorical.org](http://www.limahistorical.org)  
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