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*Carlisle, Schoharie County, New York
Chartered 2008*

Exploring the Caves of Carlisle

Thirty folks turned out for the Carlisle Historical Society's "Driving Tour of the Caves of Carlisle" on June 1. The tour was led by Mr. Bob Addis, president of the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC), an organization which works to protect and study caves and karst areas. Mr. Addis describes himself as a "caver" since the early 1960s when he was still a high school student from Cobleskill. Carlisle is well known in the caving community for its many caves, and Carlisle holds the distinction of having

the longest cave in the northeast.

Most cave entrances lie on private property and permission must be obtained before approaching those caves. However, part of the NCC's mission is to acquire land around caves in order to manage and protect the cave and the watersheds they affect, and these sites provide nice public hiking areas. Cautioning the audience that one should never enter a cave without the proper equipment and knowledge, Mr. Addis also

described the two cave preserve locations in Carlisle that are owned and managed by the NCC and the NSS (National Speleological Society), which anyone is welcome to visit and explore around the surface. These were the sites he would introduce us to over the course of the next three hours.

Our first stop was at McPhails Cave Preserve on Lykers Road, which is owned by the NSS. This site has a display at the

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Beautiful Birds Captivate

Stunning pictures by Carlisle's Dave Keefer, and an informative presentation by Chris Keefer, enthralled the audience at our May 14th meeting. Introduced by Ray Briggs, Chris has been an avid birder for many years, and birding is the reason she and her husband Dave settled in Carlisle in 1987.

Using pictures and facts, Chris was able to show

the group the wide variety of birds that can be found in Carlisle. Of course we know that bluebirds can be found in Carlisle – the Route 20 Bluebird trail was founded by our own Ray Briggs. But due to the array of habitats in Carlisle – farmland, woods, wetlands – as well as the fact that Carlisle lies along a "popular" bird migration route, a variety of commonly seen and not so commonly seen birds

are here for the "viewing".

Enough can't be said about the quality of Dave Keefer's pictures. From a nest of fledgling bluebirds to a stoic snowy owl, his pictures showcased all sorts of birds in their natural setting.

Chris answered several questions from the audience, including how

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Bob Addis discusses aspects of the McPhails Cave system, using the National Speleological Society display located in the parking lot of the McPhails Preserve.

“Carlisle holds the distinction of having the longest cave in the northeast.”

... Caves of Carlisle

head of the path detailing the cave and its several openings as well as showing pictures taken from inside the cave system. The woodland path skirts a large field and the group saw a variety of wildflowers including white violets.

The McPhails Cave system is over seven miles long, which makes it the longest cave northeast of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. To enter the cave one must be lowered by a rope. Once inside, some parts of the cave system can be walked or crawled through, but much of the system requires scuba diving equipment. The preserve includes McPhail Hole, Ack’s Shack, Hanor’s Cave, Featherstonhaugh’s Flop (surprisingly pronounced “Fenshaw”) and Cave Disappointment pit entrances.

Our second stop was at Doc Shauls Spring on

Barnerville Road. All the water from the Carlisle caves drain to this location. Professors and students from Cornell University visit the site every spring and track the drainage of the different Carlisle caves by putting dyes into the caves then returning a week later to find them in Doc Shauls Spring. The water at Doc Shauls has never frozen, and the water depth has been measured to at least 110 feet.

We had a brief stop on Wetsel Road to point out half-mile long Browns Depression, a large underground drainage area. A passage was found in the early 1990s, and the cave was named Barrack Zourie in honor of nearby Barrack Zourie Mountain. This site is privately owned and visitors are not allowed.

The final stop on our tour was the NCC’s Sellecks Karst Preserve on

Kniskern Road. There is a parking area and visitors are cautioned to stay off the field when walking to the woodland path. Both Levys and Sellecks Caves are located in the woods of this preserve. The opening to Sellecks Cave is quite remarkable; a vertical opening in the rocks in a sinkhole. Again, the 45 minute roundtrip walk included the opportunity to observe the peaceful natural setting.

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Peering down into Ack’s Shack at the McPhails Cave Preserve.



The All-American Turkey

... Birds Capture the Interest of the Society

she and her husband were able to photograph these birds so beautifully. Chris has been able to find many of her “life birds” here in Carlisle, including the golden eagle, indigo bunting, snow bunting in breeding plumage and red headed

woodpecker.

After the presentation there were two raffles – one a 50/50, the other a raffle of bluebird boxes donated by the Bluebird Society.

Everyone who attended the presentation as well

as any interested members of the community were invited to attend an early morning driving bird tour of Carlisle on the morning of Saturday, May 17, guided by Chris.

...Caves

Although the group never entered any caves, Mr. Addis was adept at describing the sights and conditions one would find upon entering any of the caves we visited. Walking the Sellecks Karst Preserve and McPhails Cave site is not only fascinating due to the cave entrances they harbor, but are a wonderful way to spend an afternoon, no matter what the season. In the spring, there are waterfalls flowing into many of the sinkholes, and

these freeze in the winter. The group learned quite a bit about the caves of Carlisle as well as cave safety.

More information about the caves of Carlisle can be found in the book "*History of the Town of Carlisle*", which contains an extensive and informative 18-page article written by Chuck Porter of the NCC. This article details the history of the caves in Carlisle and includes many spectacular pictures of

both inside and outside several of the caves. This book is for sale from the Carlisle Town Clerk, who can be reached at 234-3737 or from Ray Briggs, 234-3969. For more information about the NCC, check out their website: www.necaveconservancy.org.

All the pictures for this article were taken by CHS member Donna Walker.



Impressive entrance of Sellecks Cave.

Kitchen Gadgets, Mills and Tractors - Highlights

Joan Sondergaard was kind enough to agree to be The Carlisle Historical Society's first historical presentation, on November 14, 2007.

Armed with a table-full of antique kitchen gadgets and farm implements, Joan challenged the audience to identify each item and its purpose. Kim Howe, the person with the most correct answers, won a door prize.

Our Spring Schedule began with Bob Cross presenting his research on the Sawmill at Beckers Corners. Bob grew up around the location of the sawmill, in one of the houses built with wood

from the sawmill in Grosvenors Corners. Throwing in tidbits from his own childhood as well as research from observation and first-hand accounts, Bob provided a first-rate recount of the location of the mill, its production and its demise.

In May, just in time for the beginnings of the farming season, Bill Massoth of Fort Hunter wowed us with approximately 100 slides of farm tractors – from the late 1800s to the present. Bill has many interests and is fluent in many historical topics. His lifelong interest and pursuit of antique tractors has provided him with a

grand assortment of slides and knowledge. This was a very enjoyable presentation for our farming community. We hope to have Bill back to present us with other topics.

The society benefited from scheduling difficulties by having a May AND June meeting. Chris Keefer presented a delightful slideshow on the birds of Carlisle in May. Armed with professional-grade slides taken by her husband Dave, as well as a life time of knowledge gained from watching birds, Chris got us ready for an exciting spring of bird watching. She even

gave a guided driving tour of birding sites around Carlisle early the following Saturday morning.

Because we couldn't get Bob Addis from the Northeast Cave Conservancy in May, we added a June meeting in order to accommodate those interested in Caves. Thirty people came out on the afternoon of June 1 to check out cave sites around Carlisle. The tour included two forest walks to observe the sink holes at McPhails Preserve and Sellecks Karst Preserve.

Can't wait for season two!

Interested in a tour of the Rock House in Rock District? Contact Ray or Bud Briggs for a fall guided tour: 234-3969.

CHS Cookbook



The historical society is immersed in recipes! Just in time for Christmas, the historical society will be publishing a cookbook full of local cooks' favorite recipes from the past and present.

Happily, there are lots of delicious dessert recipes –

but never fear, there are plenty of main dishes, vegetables dishes and bread recipes as well.

The society is appreciative of everyone who searched through their recipe boxes and sent in family favorites, old-time gems and new successful

kitchen experiments!

At this time, we don't know how big the book will be or how much it will cost, but keep your eyes out for further news. We hope to have it published in time for the holiday season.

History Book Reprint

We are fast approaching an exciting milestone – there are only about 25 first print copies of "History of the Town of Carlisle" books left!

Ray Briggs and Colleen Crofts have had a steady request for the books during its first year of publication.

With over 350 pages of informative articles and wonderful pictures, the history book has been in demand locally and nationally. Ray has had

requests from Maryland, Florida and Utah.

Currently, the Town of Carlisle holds both the copyright and ownership of the book. However, once the society receives its tax exempt status from the IRS, the profits from sales of the book will go to the society.

As the first print has almost sold out, the board of the society has discussed and is planning a second printing of 200 books.

Contact Ray Briggs (234-3969) or Colleen Crofts (234-3737) if you are interested in purchasing one of the few remaining "first edition" copies.

If you know of something that needs to be corrected in the book, please contact Jacqueline Turnquist (234-3041) as we may try to make edits before the reprint.

"...The history book has been in demand locally and nationally. Ray has had requests from Maryland, Florida and Utah.

Thanks for the Refreshments

The historical society is lucky to have Jenine Empie and Colleen Crofts as two active members. Jenine and Colleen provide wonderful refreshments at the end of each of our meetings.

From carrot cake to rhubarb muffins, attendees are assured of finding tasty goodies to tempt their pallet after each presentation. The society is thankful to Jenine and Colleen for

their generosity in preparing these marvelous snacks.

You will be able to find several of their recipes in the upcoming cookbook.

Membership in the Society

Know someone who is interested in history, or Carlisle? Anyone can be a member of The Carlisle Historical Society. There is currently no membership fee, but donations are welcome.

The society's focus is on local history, but we also showcase other topics of

local interest, such as the songbirds of Carlisle and caves in the region.

At every meeting there is an opportunity to sign up for the membership mailing list – either “snail mail” or e-mail. Members will receive two newsletters a year and information about

upcoming events.

In our first year our presentations have been extremely popular and well attended. We plan on continuing to host programs with topics of interest as well as field trips.

If you have any topics you would be interested in hearing more about, or are

knowledgeable about a topic and would be interested in presenting your information, please contact the society either through its post office box (PO Box 28, Carlisle, NY 12031), e-mail address (carlislehistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or by calling Chris Keefer, Vice President, at 296-8686.

Carlisle Historical Society Elections to be Held October 8

Elections for open offices and trustee positions of The Carlisle Historical Society take place in October during the Annual Meeting. Any member present may nominate a candidate and vote for a candidate. The Annual Meeting will be held on

Wednesday, October 8 at 7:00 in the Carlisle firehouse just before our historical presentation.

The following positions are open: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Correspondence Secretary, Recording Secretary, and two of the

three-year trustee positions.

If you are interested in one of these positions, please contact Jacqueline Turnquist (234-3041) or plan on attending the October 8th meeting.

“...elections for open offices and trustee positions ...will be held on Wednesday, October 8 at 7:00 in the Carlisle Firehouse.”

Current Executive Board Members:

President – Jacqueline Turnquist	Trustee (term expires 10/2008) – Allan Tillapaugh, Ray Briggs, Jr.
Vice President – Chris Keefer	Trustee (term expires 10/2009) – Art Graulich, Kim Wigen-Walton
Treasurer – Michelle Holyoak	Trustee (term expires 10/2010) – Connie Costello, Bob Smith
Recording Secretary – Donna Dunston	Town Board Member Trustee – Ed Sisson
Correspondence Secretary – (vacant)	Town Historian, Ex-Officio Trustee – Ray Briggs, Sr.

History Fair at the Old Stone Fort

Many organizations from the Schoharie region have been invited to participate in the Stone Fort History Fair 2008, including The Carlisle Historical Society. The fair, which is being held Columbus Day Weekend (October 11th

and 12th) on the grounds of the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie, will showcase craftsmen, re-enactors, music and the work of many organizations.

The Carlisle Historical Society plans to have a table at the fair. If you

would like to help out at the table, please contact Jacqueline Turnquist at 234-3041.

*Saturday, October 11,
10:00-5:00*

*Sunday, October 12,
Noon-5:00*

Fall 2008 Schedule – Make A Note Of It!

The Carlisle Historical Society

PO Box 28
Carlisle, NY 12031

E-MAIL:
carlislehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

We meet the 2nd
Wednesday
7:30 pm

Carlisle Firehouse
March, April, May
September, October,
November

Refreshments are always
served and all are
welcome

Wednesday, September 10, 7:30 – Replica Dutch Barn Tour and Talk.

County historian Harold Zoch will present a program about Dutch barns at Art Graulich's replica Dutch barn at the Graulich Farm on Schoolhouse Road in Argusville. Meet at the barn at 7:30 pm for a tour and presentation.

Attendees are asked to bring a folding chair for themselves.

Note: There will be an Executive Meeting just before the tour at 7:00 pm.

Directions to Graulich farm: At the junctions of routes 20 and 145 at Sharon Hill go north on Argusville Road 2.5 miles. Turn right onto Argus Acres Road. Graulich Farm is on the left.

Wednesday, October 8, 7:30 – The War of 1812, Captain Kellogg's Volunteers: William Young and the Sons of Carlisle in the Battle of Ogdensburg. Presented by Ray Briggs, who proudly displays the gun used by his ancestor William Young at the Battle of Ogdensburg. Please plan to join us as we are introduced to the "Sons of Carlisle" who fought in the early battles for our country.

Note: The Annual Meeting to hold elections of officers and trustees of the society will take place at 7 pm. This program is at the Carlisle Firehouse.

Saturday/Sunday, October 11&12 – History Fair at the Old Stone Fort 10:00-5:00/Noon-5:00.

Wednesday, November 12, 7:30 – Corporal Tanner and Other Civil War Locals; Presented by Pete Lindemann, local history buff. Corporal Tanner was a native of Richmondville and a veteran who was present at the deathbed of President Lincoln. Pete can provide the audience with information regarding other men who served during that conflict. This meeting will be held at the Carlisle Firehouse.

Refreshments are served at all our meetings and everyone is welcome.

THE CARLISLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 28
Carlisle, NY 12031

