

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

June 2014, Issue 235

Pine Lake Manor

Local history at its best shone brightly at our June meeting at **Pine Lake Manor**.

The Schermer and Baumann families shared their history of their resort, giving insight to a successful business and the many rewards that accompany it. Started as an overflow business from the Twelve Maples boarding house across the street, Willow Rest Farm (later, Pine Lake Manor) made the changes needed over the decades to remain a thriving business today.

The front table included **Tom and Joanne Baumann, their son Kevin, and her mother Jo**, all of whom added a valuable perspective to the evening's account.

Joanne had prepared a history of the resort for our meeting. I could attempt to paraphrase but, after Joanne gave permission to use it, I know you will be better served to read her account on the next two pages.

Tom had started the evening by giving a ten minute history of the area that stretches from the resort eastward for a half-mile or so. Locals know it as **Brandy Hill** (referenced in Joanne's history), and it was a village into itself. The Butler-Rundell-Haight family history, the Butler tinware, the Ray Beecher article, the turnpike, the moving of buildings, etc., was fascinating enough that it begs more time for another program. I think I heard Tom agree to anchoring a Brandy Hill program for next year possibly.

Kevin spoke briefly about his role and memories of the resort business, from a kid until a late-40s-something (sorry, Kevin, but this number is young by our standards!). And

Bryn Fitzmaurice, Jacqueline's young daughter, read her prepared speech standing on a chair and supervised by her brother, to the rapt attention of all. Four generations came out for the evening, again emphasizing the importance of family succession.

(The previous two years, we have visited Sunny Hill and Baumann's Brookside, and that very same ability to pass along the business to family is one marker to our local resorts' success.)

A large artifact inviting everyone's attention leaned against a dining room door—a **cellar door**. But it was much more than that. On it were penciled numbers and family names, the earliest dating to 1886!

Questions at the meeting's end covered several directions. Flip Flach made a comment about the financial impact the resorts fifty and sixty years ago made—from food and carpentry and plumbing and hiring and more. Flip gave a brief history of the Flach bakery and the importance of the resorts' support.

Another side from Flip revolved around family history, of which I made a mental note to consider a Flach program sometime, which led to someone suggesting a program about Main Street, Greenville. All good ideas.

Other questions centered on changes in the resort business, cooperation and competition between resorts, the changes in hiring practices, the change of the typical vacation/stay, the use of computers, cultural changes, and so much more. Two-thirds of the audi-

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THE HISTORY OF PINE LAKE MANOR

(Joanne Schermer Baumann, with help)

At the age of 15, Nicholas Schirmer left Germany to work on a farm in Minnesota. Canada was giving out land parcels to homesteaders and Nicholas went to claim a piece and built a "hut" to live in.

He went to Germany to visit relatives and met his future wife, Lydia. After corresponding, Lydia came to Alberta, Canada. They married and had the first three of their six children, Reinhold, Ruth and Harold (Pete) in Alberta.

Nicholas and Lydia decided the Canadian winters were too cold and wanted to travel to California. They got stuck in a blizzard during their travels and this postponed their arrival. Nicholas (Jr) was born in the State of Oregon. They left Oregon to return to Canada in the Spring.

In 1922, they left Canada so Nicholas could work as a tenant farmer in Kinderhook, New York. They continued to own the farm in Canada until it was sold in 1958.

Lydia went to visit relatives in Germany and after a few months, Nicholas joined her. They stayed in Germany until their daughter, Lydia was born.

In 1924, they returned to the States and bought the farm in Greenville. The farm then consisted of the main house and two barns. An addition was added to the front barn to create the annex building which had rooms upstairs and a small recreation hall downstairs.

Twelve Maples was an established boarding house across the road when Nicholas and Lydia purchased the farm. Mrs. Zeh asked if they would take the overflow guests and they started renting out rooms on the farm.

Within a short time, they were taking in their own guests and Willow Rest Farm was formed. Their last child, John was born in 1926 in Greenville.

In 1931-32, Nicholas planted the forest of pine trees next to what was then the primary swimming hole but is now referred to as the "back lake".

During that time, a bowling alley was also constructed and a tennis court was added. The bowling alley was eventually removed in order to make room for the installation of the shuffleboard courts. This was done prior to 1961 when the pool was installed.

In the late 30's and early 1940's the shower house and a two-room bungalow were built next to the annex building. The bungalow sits on the original site of the Episcopal Church.

Reinhold Schermer, eldest son of Nicholas and Lydia, met Josephine Gawel while he was working in New York. Although they were first introduced to each other while both living in Brooklyn many miles away from upstate, the resort had played a hand in their first introduction, (but she can tell you that story). They married in 1942 and continued to reside in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1943, their daughter, Joanne was born and in 1945 their son, John was born.

In 1948, they moved to Greenville. Within a short time, the bungalow by the pool was constructed as a temporary summer residence for Reinhold, Josephine and their two small children. In the Fall of 1948, the family moved into the Main House.

In 1949, Reinhold and Josephine purchased the property and changed the name to Pine Lake Manor.

Also in 1949 a small house was also constructed on the property for Nicholas and Lydia.

In 1951, the barn was converted into a recreational hall.

In 1952, the downstairs of the annex was converted to additional rooms.

In the late 1950's and early 60's until 1962, Pine Lake remained open during hunting season. During those years, their last child, Gayle was born in 1958.

Sometime during 1959-1960, the man-made front lake was constructed and in 1961, the pool was installed.

In 1962 the lake motel was built and was ready to use in the summer season of 1963.

In 1963, Reinhold and Josephine's eldest daughter, Joanne married Thomas Baumann and they started their resort life together. Their first daughter, Amelia was born in 1964. Their son, Kevin was born in 1967.

In 1968 the "back" motel was constructed. It was during that year that Nicholas Schirmer passed away.

In 1970, Twelve Maples was torn down and Joanne and Tom's last child, Jacqueline was born.

In the early 1970's, the Shear/Heslin house was purchased and converted to additional motel units.

In 1976, Joanne and Tom built a home which now houses the Resort's office and they moved "on-premises". Reinhold and Josephine then moved from the Main House.

In 1979, the "30s" motel unit was constructed. That same year, both Reinhold and his mother, Lydia passed away.

In 1981, the small house of Nicholas and Lydia was remodeled and additional motel units were created.

In the 70's, 80's and 90's many various additions were made to the Rec Hall and Main House. Both bungalows were subsequently torn down and replaced with new modern buildings. The one located at the original site of the Episcopal Church was rebuilt in 1984 and the one by the pool was rebuilt in 1995.

In 1996, the former Aaron Butler/Haight property was purchased.

Kevin and his family make their home on the former Aaron Butler/Haight property located on the south side of Route 26.

Jacquie and her family make their home on a portion of the former Aaron Butler/Haight property on the north side of Route 26.

Both Kevin and Jacquie and their families now are all involved in the operation of Pine Lake Manor. Though located in Boston, Amy also contributes in the operation.

Pine Lake Manor now sits on 220 acres with three lakes and continues to thrive through much hard work from our family and many loyal and dedicated employees and guests.

This is our 90th year and we are hoping that in another 90 years, Pine Lake Manor will still be thriving and our great-great grandchildren will be making a home here.

ence had worked at an area resort, and thus this meeting, for many of us, was a gathering of nostalgia.

Finally, a round of applause showed our **appreciation for Pine Lake Manor** to host our meeting and especially for Joanne and Tom for preparing so well. And they even had a full table of **refreshments** (I heard a few oohs and ahhs over the two cakes!); thank you, Tom and Joanne, for organizing the "refreshment committee."

Thank you, Tom and Joanne, and Jo, and Kevin, and all the family who shared in the Pine Lake Manor story this evening.

So, what do we do next year, now that all three of the surviving resorts have hosted a meeting? Drop me a note, and I will ponder long on a snow wintry evening to see if we can continue this series.

Other notes:

The **July 14 meeting** returns to the Library where **Chuck D'Imperio** will regale us with Upstate New York stories. Chuck presented us with accounts from his first few books, with another that was on the way, now out on the stands. (This was the one that Judy Rundell contributed to the files and has been read by a few of us!) C'mon on out and enjoy local history that is statewide – different and yet reminding us how much we have in common with people everywhere. Bring a friend to enjoy the evening.

The recent passing of Millie (Kaiser) Spinner is noted. Even though Millie never attended any of our meetings, she was a good resource about Freehold info and had contributed several items to the Historian's Files. In addition, I grew up with the oldest children, and Tom drives the Local History bus at Sunny Hill as I narrate. As Tom would say, between the two of us, we have 120 years of Freehold history. It was a long and full life that Millie lived.

Further on are some pictures I scanned from our meeting at Pine Lake Man-

or. If you have photos albums that show Greenville people, places, houses, events, etc., please consider sharing them. And if you know someone who a collection that might serve as a good resource of Greenville area history, let me know, and I will try to contact them.

Although attendance never measures the excellence of a meeting, the fact that over 50 people came out to an excellent meeting is appreciated. I will do this for a few people but the excitement that a crowd like that at PLM is pleasurable.

I hope to see you in July,



PS: OK, I reversed my usual attendance check. Here's the usual beginner of my Newsletters.

-----A variable, 70s-ish June day awaited those attended. And those attending numbered near fifty!

Those who got a good dose of resort history included: Rachel Ceasar and dad Rich, Mary Heisinger, Bob & Marie Shaw, Evelyn Jennings, Nick & Mary Lou Nahas, Paul & Katja Rehm, David & Judy Rundell, Phyllis Beechert, Diana Marshall, Richard Ferriolo and daughter Tracy, Walter Ingalls, Elise Turon, Carolyn Savery, Christine Mickelsen, Stephanie Ingalls, Margaret Donohue, Sherry Baron, the Baumann's Brookside clan (Rich & Carol Schreiber, brothers Tucker & Russell Lewis, Joan Smith), Phil & Barbara Flach, Betty Hayden, Anne Lafferty,

And we were pleased to see Pearl Capone and Kathie Williams renewing long-time acquaintances. Besides the four hosts named already, another ten of the Schermer & Fitzmaurice families were on hand to share the experience. And then there were several guests of the resort who listened in. Like I said, we filled almost half the dining room.

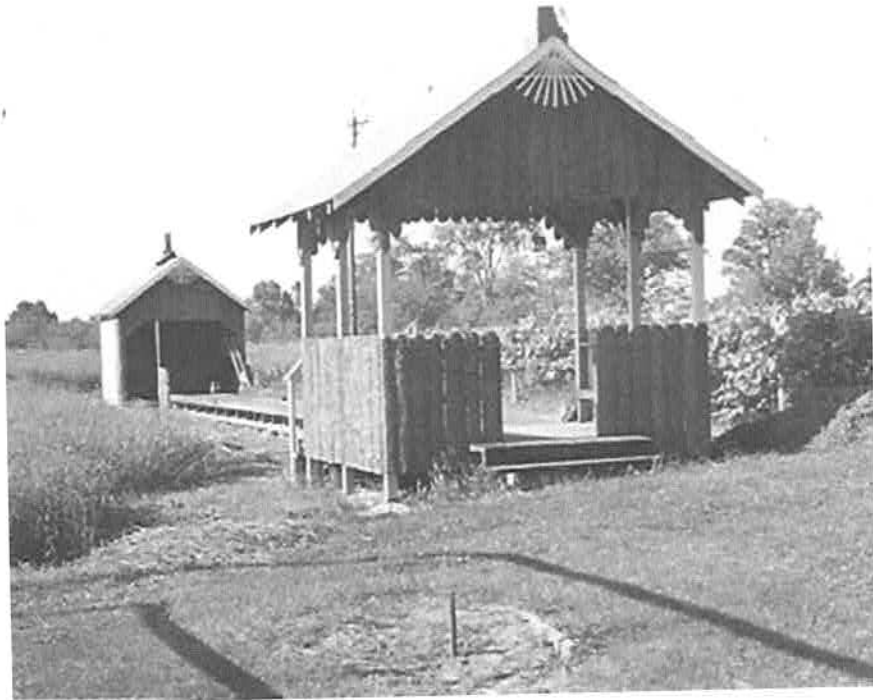


A group photograph from sixty years ago

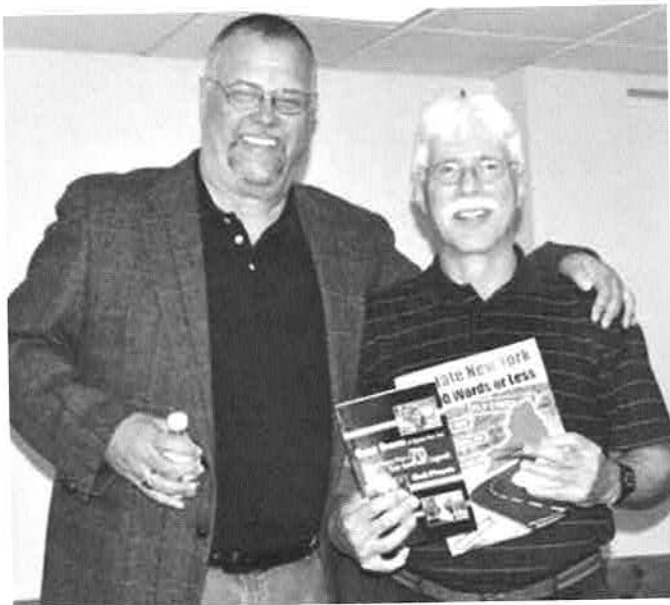
Willow Rest Farm Home



Early days, before the name change to Pine Lake Manor



Bowling & horseshoes—
Pine Lake Manor (Willow Rest) activities



Chuck Returns
for more Upstate NY stories
(photo from 2013)