

# THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

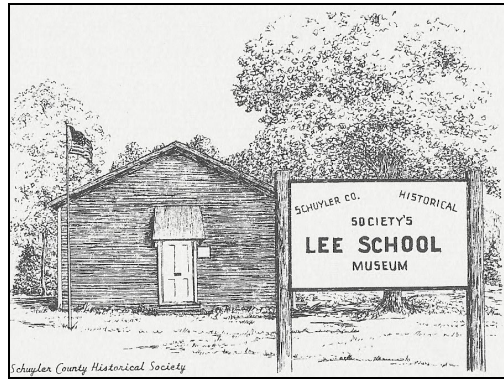
The Schuyler County Historical Society Inc., organized at a meeting of 13 persons in 1960, is a private non-municipal organization which received its absolute charter from the New York State Board of Regents in 1975. Its charter members numbered 133. First elected officers were Watkins Glen historian William Kelly as president, town of Reading historian Barbara Bell as vice-president, Janet Proaper of Odessa as secretary, and David Wickham of Hector as treasurer.

Membership today ranges from double to three times that number. The Society is registered as a non-profit 501c(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. Its Board of Trustees includes elected officers, representatives from each of the eight townships of the county and the county legislature, some at-large trustees, and the county historian. The Board meets monthly.

The Society is supported by funds from the county legislature, village and town municipal governments, membership dues, donations, benefits, fund drives, and occasional grants. It provides several free public programs annually and, when asked, participates in local history studies at area schools. There are increasing requests

from authors of both the written word and video reports about local history.

Less than two months after being formed, the Society purchased from the Odessa-Montour School, for one dollar, the Lee School, located about a mile south of Montour Falls on Route 14. The 1884 one-room schoolhouse has served as both a museum and meeting place besides being open to the public upon request.



In 1964, the “Schuyler County Historical Society Journal” was published in an 8-page experimental version. It was quickly adopted and extended to 16 pages, mailed quarterly to all members, Schuyler municipalities, schools, libraries, and other venues. “Journal” back issues and complete sets on cd-rom are available.

In 1968, the County Board granted the use of two adjoining rooms at the newly-opened county office complex, the Rural-Urban Center in Montour Falls, for the Society’s exhibit spaces to replace display cases which had previously been in the county courthouse in Watkins Glen.

In 1974, the Society received an estate bequest from Mrs. Dorothy Longnecker and son Frank of Ithaca, which facilitated the purchase of the Montour Falls home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lattin to be used as a museum. Erected in 1828 as a stagecoach stop and tavern, our Brick Tavern Museum is the oldest brick building still in existence in Schuyler County. There are nine exhibit rooms open at no charge four days a week plus a library/research room. Both the Brick Tavern and Lee School are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Recently, the Society received from the town of Dix the former Wedgwood School, a one-room schoolhouse. When ready for occupancy, it is expected to offer exhibits demonstrating Schuyler County’s extensive agricultural background, to be open at specific times or upon request.

The Society, online at [www.schuylerhistory.org](http://www.schuylerhistory.org), hires a museum executive director and, when grant money is available, other staff workers. Numerous volunteers have worked in its buildings over the years and still do. The staff is consistently called upon for genealogical and other research, sometimes in person, often by mail or e-mail.

Society membership may be justifiably proud of the achievements made during its first 50 years in Schuyler County, which has yet to achieve as many as 20,000 residents.

~Barbara Bell~