

GENE STRATTON-PORTER MEMORIAL SOCIETY, INC.

FALL 2001

P.O. BOX 639 • ROME CITY, IN 46784



Front Row: Bud, Ed Cable, Nancy Schwartz, Betty Duty, Patrick Bolman. *2nd Row:* Carol Telshow, Linda (Bud's wife), Tona Halsey, Margie Sweeny - Curator, Bobby Cox, Martha Swartzlander, Eva Thompson, Cheryl Hite (Patrick's wife). *Back Row:* Guy (Martha's husband), Bob and Betty Egolf. Not pictured: Sharon Oliver and Ginny Spellman.

DECEMBER 2000 STAFF (with spouses) CHRISTMAS PARTY

We went to Geneva, to Gene's Limberlost Cabin South. Afterwards our "Christmas Feast" was held at a Restaurant in Decatur.



Saturday, November 10, 2001

9 am - 9 pm

Entertainment: **Brett Meyer**
The Spinster Sisters
The Major Chords

Candlelight Walk 6 pm - 9 pm

Sunday, November 11, 2001

12 Noon - 5 pm

Entertainment: **Brett Meyer**
The Spinster Sisters

Holiday Refreshments

Information: 219-854-3790

Sponsored by
Gene Stratton-Porter SHS
Gene Stratton-Porter Memorial Society, Inc.
Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites
Dept. of Natural Resources



Holiday Open House Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site

**Rome City, Indiana
46784**

From the President . . .

We've had another wonderful year. Now it's time for our beautiful Christmas Open House. Come see us on November 10th. We were happy that our first fall event went so well. The weather didn't cooperate but everyone else did. We had another elegant tea this past fall and are now hosting hundreds of students of Gene Stratton-Porter's life.

We appreciate all of you - our members - so it's with love we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you,
 Fran Umbaugh
 President

P.S. Don't forget to send in your GSP Stamp Petition Sheets.

TREASURER'S REPORT	
AS OF OCTOBER, 2001	
Operating Checking Account	\$ 2,412.20
Operating Savings Account	1,971.09
Program Savings Account	1,293.32
Land Acquisition	789.77
Operating CD #1	3,000.00
Operating CD #2	1,000.00
Society Monies	\$10,466.38
Gift Shop Checking	\$9,949.51
Gift Shop Money Market	Closed
Gift Shop CD #1	5,000.00
Gift Shop CD #2	2,500.00
Gift Shop CD #3	10,000.00
Gift Shop Monies	\$27,449.51
TOTAL FUNDS	\$37,915.89

Fall Family Fun Day at Gene Stratton-Porter

It was a first, it was a success and it rained. No dampened spirits around the grounds, just some dampened humans, llamas and horses. From the time it started, they came, little kids, big kids, parents, and grandparents. Everyone worked together to collect the items for the scavenger hunt and make the fall buttons. The girl scout troop was especially busy. The boys in particular, loved Pat's see, touch, feel bag, full of everything from red long johns to real dead animals. We talked a lot in the shed about night vision, how to study a jaw bone with teeth to determine what an animal eats, by examining skulls. We also studied leaves - many learned that acorns grow on an oak tree, not an acorn tree. Outside the 4-H group was having a llama walk which everyone was

enjoying. In the cabin, both GSP and her husband were greeting guests and giving tours. I even saw GSP outside under a tree pointing out something to a group of children around her. The hayride went through the grounds and it was full at all times - many just rode around and around. The bonfire blazed in the rain and for the faint hearted, hot dogs were served upstairs in the carriage house. A 5:30 special prize drawing kept people around and anticipating being a winner. The evening ended up at the bonfire after a very busy afternoon of activities.

Cheri Kessen
 Volunteer

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Gene Stratton-Porter Memorial Society, Inc.



P.O. Box 639
 Rome City, IN 46784
 1-219-854-3790

- Single \$10.00
- Family 15.00
- Sustaining 20.00
- Non-Profit Org. 25.00
- Business 25.00

Life (40 yrs. of age or older)

- Single 100.00
- Husband & Wife 150.00

Name _____

Business or Organization Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Third of a series of pages from the book *History of Orange Township* by M.F. Owen

GENE STRATTON PORTER

"This year I am writing each month in Good Housekeeping and I also enjoy this work. I have made a practice of doing a book every other year, and a year ago I began my own company, under my own supervision, to make pictures from my stories in order to get them on the screen with a fidelity to themselves and to my ideals of how a moving picture should be made."

Mr. Porter confessed to me that his first meeting with Miss Gene Stratton took place at Sylvan Lake. The first few years after their marriage were lean years. He asked me if I remember leasing them, the young married couple, for a season, one of the mainland cottages, during a session of the Island Park Assembly. He said that these early summers at the lake cottages, and at Triplett's Hotel, and the natural beauty of the surroundings of Sylvan Lake, not to detail a certain sentiment toward the place, caused them to purchase what was known at the Hoffman Cottage on the north side of the lake and make it their summer home.

Then when other cottages began to fill up the north shores, this place became too congested and she bought, in or about the year 1909, the present site of Limberlost Cabin from D.L. Sowers. There she constructed "Limberlost Cabin" at a contract cost of 17 thousand dollars. Later, as his books came out, she purchased additional woodlands, altogether farming the 120 acre estate.

It seems she did not improve her little mountain purchase that she mentions, but she did erect a beautiful home on Catalina Islands.

Her death is certainly to be regretted, while at the height of her popularity; the blow was certainly hard on Charlie Porter, her husband, who did not long survive her.

The Limberlost Cottage was the scene of the filming of several reels of motion pictures in connection with the adoption of the book, "The Harvester" for the screen.

The book was one of the most popular of Mrs. Porter's writings. Leo Meehan, Mrs. Porter's son-in-law, and movie producer of Hollywood, California, with a company of about forty persons, and two car loads of supplies and equipment, arrived in Rome City about May 30th, 1927. They stayed at the Triplett Hotel while working on the film. The leads in the silent picture were taken by Natalie Kingston and Orville Caldwell. The cast included Will R. Walling and Jay Hunt, both well known characters of the Hollywood film colony.

Following the photographing of the exterior scenes at the Limberlost, the company returned to Hollywood where the interior settings were filmed.

The following was printed in the Kendallville News-Sun during the filming of the picture at Rome City:

"Swelling the ranks of motion picture players at work at Limberlost Cabin, Will Walling, well-known character actor of the Hollywood Film Company arrived at Rome City yesterday to join the F.O.B. producing unit which is making the screen version of Gene Stratton Porter's "The Harvester."

Mr. Walling is a very likable gentleman and talked interestingly of the film industry. After making up, and donning various costumes for inspection by Director Leo Meehan, Walling prepared to start work today in scenes with Orville Caldwell and Natalie Kingston. In "The Harvester" he plays the role of Jami-son, the brutal uncle of Ruth. Following 30 years on the legiti-

mate stage, he has spent the last seven years in motion pictures. He has appeared in many prominent roles including leading ones in "The Iron Horse" and the "King of Kings".

One of the most interesting afternoons one could spend on a balmy June day is now possible at Wildflower Woods. Transferring the story to the screen, the picture is being filmed in the exact locale of the book, which makes the picture all the more unique.

It was noted with keen interest and appreciation the great amount of preparation, detail and essential work required, as well as the many tedious, hard working moments of the players that are required to produce the picture.

One of the most elaborate scenes taken recreates the vision of the 'harvester' as he sits in the cabin door and sees his dream girl walking on the placid waters of Sylvan Lake. Considerable difficulty as well as exploration was required in filming this scene. They built a platform just under the water and Miss Kingston was forced to walk through the cold water many times before Mr. Meehan was satisfied with the results. Belshazzler, the Canine companion of the Harvester, worked in a series of pictures and with human like intelligence under the stern command of his French master and played the role with precision.

The closing scene of the picture was also filmed Thursday afternoon. Miss Kingston, as Ruth, looked lovely with her beautiful sparkling blue eyes as she slowly wended her way along the path near the water's edge, shrouded by the towering trees, and was met and embraced by the Harvester. This same scene was taken over and over again from various angles and distances, the photography requiring several hours, but when thrown on the screen will require but a minute or two."

In 1929 the Limberlost Cabin was taken over by the Boy Scouts of the Anthony Wayne Area of Ft. Wayne. For several years, Limberlost Cabin, and the surrounding lake front, was the happy summer home of the Boy Scouts. They purchased Big Island and in the last few years the Scouts have built several buildings and have a lovely camp on the island where each year hundreds of boys come to enjoy the boating, swimming, and fishing of Sylvan Lake.

The Limberlost Cabin and grounds are now owned and maintained by the state of Indiana as a State Memorial which is open to the public. Each year thousands avail themselves of this privilege.

CONCLUSION

The writer has pictured the life of this community during the past century. It was a gay and colorful era of which the present generation knows but little. We hope the reader has enjoyed the many experiences and happenings as recorded by the author.

When we look back and realize that, measuring time by the span of the average man's life, all the happenings related herein cover a period of time equivalent to twice the years of a normal life. Then we can only ponder on what the future may hold in store for our children and grandchildren.

May the same spirit of progress and initiative guide them to greater accomplishments.



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P.O. BOX 639 • ROME CITY, IN 46784
(219) 854-3790

Gene Stratton-Porter
STATE HISTORIC SITE
Limberlost North, Rome City, Indiana
EVENTS 2001



Holiday Open House

Music and entertainment. ~ Holiday refreshments served.

Saturday, November 10, 9 am ~ 9 pm

Candlelight Walk 6 pm ~ 9 pm

Sunday, November 11, 12 noon - 5 pm

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR