



## Historical Society Newsletter

**OFFICERS:** President, Mary Vetter; Vice President, Joan Rowland;

Secretary, Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland;

**TRUSTEES:** Dan Chertok, Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, Katie Finnegan, John Greenwood, Mike Gymarthy, Louise Okoniewski, Robert Roeckle, and Patti Veitch

The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

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[www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com)

### OCTOBER NOTES 2020

by Mary Vetter

Hi everyone. I hope all of you and your friends and family are well.

We held our September meeting and it was gratifying to see familiar faces and even welcome a new one! We were able to attend to all of the business that would have been conducted in May. Officers were elected and we welcomed two new board members. Patti Veitch and John Greenwood. Both are thoughtful people who will bring a new perspective to our board and we welcome their help as we shape our future in this new environment we find ourselves in.

On October 3rd, we held a cleanup at the museum. Joan Rowland, Rob Roeckle, John Greenwood, and I tackled the vine and other weeds that were threatening to take over. Everyone did a great job. Joan also tackled the Christmas decorations from last year.

**We are canceling the October meeting and trying to decide how to hold meetings going forward.** We have considered video meetings and would like to know how you, the members, feel about that approach. Also, if anyone has experience with organizing and conducting video meetings such as Zoom, we would appreciate your help. Please email [toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:toghistsoc@gmail.com).

Plans to repair the carriage house roof are underway thanks to Mike Gymarthy. Jerry Weaver Enterprises will be handling the roof repair and Mike will be handling some structural repairs to make sure the building remains stable for years to come. The roof will be repaired with slate. Adam, who runs the business, made the repairs at the school house and did a great job.

As I write this, it is clear that summer is over and fall is in the air. This is my favorite time of year. Enjoy the fall. Immerse yourself in the colors, the sights, and the soft rustling of leaves. Happy Halloween to all.

### ***Donations to Fix the Carriage House Roof***

Thank you for all the donations that the Town of Greenfield Historical Society received; a total of \$11,443.36. We are very thankful for all your donations.

***JoAnn I. Rowland, Treasurer***

### SEPTEMBER'S MEETING



*Mary Vetter (president), JoAnn Rowland (treasurer), and Patty Schwartzbeck (secretary)*



*Back, l-r: Louise Okoniewski (trustee), Ginger Knight, Dan Chertok (trustee), Robert Roeckle (trustee), Lelah Cornell, Elizabeth Huntley. Front, l-r: Patti Veitch (trustee), Joan Rowland (vice president), and Mike Gymarthy (trustee)*

**Due to current state guidelines, we will be unable to open the Chatfield Museum this year.**

### **A Note to the Historical Society**

Thank you for doing such a great job with your newsletters and all that each of you do to keep your Society going and preserving history!! We very much enjoy the informative and interesting articles!

*Margaret Rowland, Historical Society Member*

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

As I began to research the Rowell Store building where the infamous Middle Grove fire of 1907 started, I found that I was dealing with a maze of store ownerships and postmasters in the hamlet of Middle Grove. For this reason, I quickly decided to concentrate on the several stores that occupied the area near the intersection of Middle Grove and Murray Roads (the general area now occupied by a Stewart's Shop). I ignored the several stores that came and went in other areas of the hamlet like Doc Lagalles' Store and Baugh's Store to mention two that once served the community.

What I discovered was that in the early days, Middle Grove was an economic hub for the many farms and lumbering operations thriving in the surrounding area. As a result, a number of stores sprung up to provide the required goods that these farmers, lumberman, and mill workers needed. Sometimes, these stores were erected almost side by side and competed with each other until one or the other failed.

Apparently, these early merchants discovered that if they applied for and became post master for the community, they could section off a small area in the corner of the store, add some pigeon hole cabinets, and have a little additional income, as well as increase the number of potential customers coming into their store giving them a competitive edge. As a result, the postmaster position shifted back and forth between merchants as they competed with one another.

My best sources of information concerning these early merchants came from postal records, newspaper articles, census data, and land deeds.

This is where Sandy Arnold and her husband Gary Bernhardt came into the picture. They did most of the online research for me. I could not have done this project without them, and they did it all for no payment other than their love of local history.

To understand the evolution of land ownership in America as demonstrated by contracts called deeds, we have to go back to the very beginning. When white people first came to North America, all of the land now constituting the Town of Greenfield was controlled by the Mohawk Indians. It is doubtful that they had any permanent villages in the area as they preferred the richer bottom land near the Mohawk River where they could grow crops, fish, and use the river for transportation, but they did frequent these outlying areas (like the area now known as the Town of Greenfield) on hunting and fishing expeditions.

When the first Europeans arrived, they too favored the coastal areas, but as their populations grew, they began to migrate inland. At first, individuals obtained land directly from the Indians, but this led to misunderstandings and sometimes animosity, so the Queen of England mandated that a rather complicated approach, or plan, be followed. To obtain Indian lands became a complex process that had to be approved by the state governor and then sent to the Queen of England for her approval.

This plan made it nearly impossible for individuals to make deals with the Indians for farm sized parcels of land. Instead, land purchase from Native Americans became a costly but profitable endeavor for the wealthy. It became more like a corporate transaction in today's world as groups of wealthy investors pooled their money and hired professionals to purchase large tracts of lands from the natives.

In the case of the Town of Greenfield area, an investment group purchased a tract of land stretching from the Mohawk River on the south to the Hudson near Hadley on the north and east and called it the Kayaderosseras Patent (using the Native American name for the stream that drained a central portion of the land purchased).

The patent took six decades (1701 to 1761) to get final approval, and when it came, surveyors were sent into the wilderness to measure its boundaries and subdivide it into smaller parcels that could be divided up among the investors. These parcels were then further subdivided by their owners into smaller parcels (most around 100 acres in size which was, in that time period, approximately what one family could cultivate with horses and oxen). These parcels were then advertised for sale to the general public; however, by then the American Revolution was causing unrest in outlying areas and this newly purchased land was unsafe for settlers, so the land lay idle during the American Revolution.

After the war ended, there was a pent up demand for land. Coastal areas were becoming over crowded with farms and villages and the desire was to move north and west in search of cheaper land. This is when Gersham Morehouse (and others) moved to what would eventually be the Town of Greenfield from places like Connecticut and Rhode Island. As they cleared their land and started their businesses, they began to further subdivide their farm sized parcels into smaller pieces of land that a house could be built on for a laborer, or a blacksmith shop, or even a store which could sell supplies to others and several small communities were born.

Fortunately, most of these early land sales were clearly described on written contracts called deeds and recorded in the county clerk's office for future reference, however, a few individuals felt that keeping them in a metal box under their beds was sufficient safekeeping and never recorded them. Therefore, as we attempt to research early land owners, we can usually, but not always, find the transactions listed in the county clerk's office. It is frustrating to trace these land sales and owners back in time only to come to a dead-end because someone failed to record their sale.

This is what happened to Sandy, Gary, and I, as we attempted to trace the Rowell Store owners back to the origin of the store. I believe that this store may have been the first to serve the people in the general vicinity that the Stewart's Shop is now located, but because we came to a dead-end in our deed search, I cannot be certain and will have to leave the question to a future researcher.

## Work Day at IOOF Hall/Chatfield Museum on October 3, 2020



*Lots of fall clean up completed – Grapevines cut down so building is totally visible, the sign out front straight again, and Christmas tree and decorations put away from last year. Thanks to board members Joan, John, Mary, and Robert.*

*Photo credits: Joan Rowland and John Greenwood*



*John Greenwood (trustee), Mary Vetter (president), and Robert Roeckle (trustee)*



*Joan Rowland (vice president), Mary Vetter (president), and Robert Roeckle (trustee)*

## HERITAGE HUNTERS GENEALOGY PROGRAM Saturday, October 17, 2020

Instead of a full-day annual Heritage Hunters conference, this year's speaker, Dr. Thomas W. Jones, will deliver a presentation via Zoom. The one hour program will take place at 1 p.m. on Saturday, October 17. The topic will be "Out-of-State Workarounds for In-State Record Shortages." It features the case study of Thomas Greenfield, a man who owned no land, and left no record of heirs. Dr. Jones will take viewers through the reconstruction of Thomas Greenfield's family — two wives and 18 children — from direct and indirect evidence in DNA and in common and obscure records from national to local levels, mostly from states where Thomas never lived. HH members will receive the Zoom link in their emails. Non-members are invited and can request the link by emailing the organization's president, Dave Peck, at [davepeck208@hotmail.com](mailto:davepeck208@hotmail.com).

Dr. Jones has a bachelor's and master's degree from teaching colleges, and a doctorate in philosophy. In 1994, having pursued his own family history for over three

decades, he became a Certified Genealogist. He is a professor emeritus at Gallaudet University, where he retired after 30 years. Since 2002, he has co-edited the National Genealogical Society Quarterly. He has written two genealogical textbooks, over 40 articles, and is the recipient of several awards. He has been featured at many genealogical conferences and workshops.

Heritage Hunters of Saratoga County is an organization for people who are interested in genealogy and historical research. Meetings are the third Saturday of most months and are held at the Town Hall in Schuylerville. Members receive a bi-monthly newsletter, which features a variety of local records, articles, and announcements. Members can also submit family names they are researching, which is compiled into an annual index. Many of the members are volunteers in area historical groups and are willing to help others doing research. Membership dues of \$15 per person or \$20 per couple, for 2021, can be sent to Carol Waldron at 4 Patricia Lane, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Here are some photos from a party in 1902 or 1903 or 1904 (different dates on different photos). Many Greenfield residents. These are from photo albums in Jane Potter's house, were originally Mabel Darrow's (she married Frank Potter), Robert Roeckle's great grandmother. Also included is a copy of a Memoriam for Clara Chatfield. Not sure when she died, but based on the committee members probably '30s or '40s.

Supplied by Robert Roeckle



Party at the Blanchard's, 1903 or 1904

Back Row: Bessie Williams, Sally or Lillian Foote, Al Davis, Edith Davis, Arthur Darrow, Edith 'Tidie' Foote Darrow  
 Next Row: ? Star, Ezra Foote, Roy Foote, Suzie or Lizzie Blanchard, Suzie or Lizzie Spaulding, Ruth Morehouse, Clara Campbell, Len Campbell, Mabel Darrow, Frank Potter  
 Next Row: Lester Blanchard, Kitty Prior, Helen Blanchard, Ruth Douglas, Unknown, Jarvis Middlebrook  
 Sitting: G. Hart, Charles Spaulding, Frank Hinkle, Truman Middlebrook, Rosco Burdett  
 Laying: Clarke Thayer

Names taken from two different photos - very difficult to read!



Party at the Blanchard's, 1903 or 1904

Back Row: Mrs Bacon, William Darrow, Emma James, Rosco Bunstead, Alice Darrow  
 Middle Row: Lester Blanchard, Lilli Foote, Mabel Darrow, Marshall Potter, Lizzie Blanchard  
 Sitting: Frank Potter, Helen Blanchard, Edith Foote Darrow, Art Darrow



### IN MEMORIAM

The passing from our midst of Mrs. Clara D. Chatfield brings to our minds once more the fact, that "here we have no continuing city," and at best earth's dreams and air-castles can never be fully realized upon the shores of time.

The ending of this long and useful life, coming suddenly as it did, leaves somewhat of a shock to us — a cloud of depression — through which it is hard to see the ultimate result. But, we are sure that when the mists have rolled away our like will be brighter and richer because of her life. A living example of saintly devotion and service. In her tender years she became a follower of The Christ. A cynosure of home life which might well be an example for us in this day.

It would seem to us that the star of her life reached its Zenith; in her devotion to her God, and the Bride of Christ (The Church).

A few brief years of acquaintance convinces us more fully of the fact that "There are lights along the shore that never grow dim."

We shall miss her much. There will be a vacant chair in our Ladies Aid and we as a body extend our sympathy first to the bereaved family, second to the Church of her choice. Like a shock of corn fully ripe she came down to Heavens harvest and garnered into the bosom of God. She will ever be a blessing to that larger and better Kingdom. Yes, we shall miss her, but we have not lost her. Another treasure is laid up in Heaven to receive us when we too have completed our pilgrimage here.

Mrs. William Wilsey, Mrs. Reed Brown, Miss Gladys Blowers committee.  
 5-27,1t

# A Shed Named Shirley

by John R. Greenwood



There aren't many people who have backyard sheds dedicated to their memory. You may feel naming a shed after someone is not a fitting tribute. This story may change your mind.

In 1961, Ron "Pete" Bishop and his wife Shirley opened a hot dog stand on West Avenue in Saratoga Springs. It later became a restaurant. You'd be correct if you guessed where they derived the name. \*The couple's son Lee took over the reins in 1968 and over the next several decades grew a successful business with a dedicated staff and loyal customers. There were no frills or fancy menus. What you could depend on were good homemade meals at a fair price. The portions were as big as the hearts of the people who worked and ate there.

As the owner of Price's Dairy in the '80s, I delivered milk to Shirley's three days a week for ten years. It was during those years I became familiar with Lee's parents, Pete and Shirley. They were in the restaurant regularly, sharing stories and laughter with everyone who walked in the door. Their outgoing personalities and blue-collar work ethic permeated the place. It infected their families. It even seemed to be a common quality of their customers. Right next door and only a few feet away, Pete and Shirley's son Ron operated Humpty Dumpty Ice Cream in the same vein. I was honored to service both businesses all those years.

Now, back to the shed.

Pete was a retired builder. He'd built his home and the homes of his grown children. After retirement, he downsized and began building backyard storage sheds for friends and neighbors. I'm guessing it was more a hobby than a necessity. He did not work alone. Never known to sit idle, Shirley was the second half of their two-person crew. At the time, I had a growing family and a need for more storage. I remember approaching the Pete and Shirley construction crew at the restaurant one morning and asking if they would build me a shed. A price was quoted and agreed upon. A firm handshake was the only contract needed.

Pete's experience securing supplies made it easy for me. All I had to do was stake out the location. After two full days, the two-person construction crew had completed

the shed from floor joists to roof shingles. 35 years later, Pete and Shirley would be pleased to know their craftsmanship has stood the test of time.

In the spring of 2020, we had a new roof put on our house and garage. As the contractor was writing up the estimate, I asked him to include the shed. Its roof was as old as the others, it deserved a little TLC too.

Now that the old shed had a new hat, maybe a new coat was in order, so out came the painting supplies. A fresh layer of Drizzling Mist Grey was a start, but it didn't seem to be enough. I replaced all the old trim and added new door hardware. Now the old girl looked like she just rolled off the new-shed lot. I think we both felt ready for another 35 years.

Since 1985, every time I open those shed doors to pull out a rake or shovel, I think of Pete and Shirley, and my milk delivery days. All three have passed on, but they left me a rich man. No amount of money could replace the memories and friendships I collected during those days as a Saratoga milkman.

I think Shirley would enjoy knowing a little backyard shed in Wilton has been named and dedicated to her memory and more ...



\* Lee Bishop sold Shirley's Restaurant in 2011. The current owner retained the Shirley's name.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL AVAILABLE ONLINE

Become a member of The Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. **Our membership year begins June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually. Send \$10 per household (or \$100 for Lifetime Membership)** along with your name and address to the address shown below. **If you send more than \$10 for your household, the balance will be considered a donation.** You also may join at one of our meetings. Send this application form and fee to The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make checks payable to: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society. **YOU CAN PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE! [www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com).** Email [toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:toghistsoc@gmail.com) for more information.

Click on “Store,” “Membership” then click either “Annual Membership – Household” or “Lifetime Membership.”

**Please Print** – Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_  I am interested in volunteering.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of interest to you \_\_\_\_\_

To sponsor a newsletter send \$50 along with your name and address and the wording describing whom you would like it dedicated to.

If you know someone whom you think might want to become a member, send us their name and address, and we will send them a copy of our newsletter along with information on how they can join.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**If you'd like to dedicate and/or sponsor a newsletter, send \$50 to *The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833*, include your name, address and the wording describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by. Please send articles and/or photos to: [JJones18215@roadrunner.com](mailto:JJones18215@roadrunner.com).**

### Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

We invite our membership and readers of this newsletter to share with Dan any historical information about an interesting person, place, structure, or event within our town. Dan reserves the right to proofread and edit submissions, but he will be very happy to add your information to our map. We are always looking for historical information to add to and enhance the map, which we consider to be an ongoing work in progress. Please email Dan Chertok at [Chertok@lcyllaw.com](mailto:Chertok@lcyllaw.com), call his cell phone (518-321-0330), or text him.



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