



## Historical Society Newsletter

**OFFICERS:** President, Joan E. Rowland; Vice President, Robert Roeckle;  
Secretary, Patti Veitch; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland  
**TRUSTEES:** Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, John Greenwood, Mike Gymarthy,  
Patty Schwartzbeck, Dan Smith, and Mary Vetter

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)

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022** — Meeting 7 p.m. at the Greenfield Community Center, 25 Wilton Road, Greenfield Center. **Program: *Mystery Door***. When Greenfield Historical Society member Justin Thomas stripped the paint from an old green door found in his garage/shop in Greenfield Center, he uncovered a collection of names, dates, and random writings dating through the decade of the 1920s. The pencil markings are a curious time-capsule that coincide with the years of prohibition. *Is there a connection?* Justin and his door will be present at the meeting in hopes the community can help solve this Greenfield mystery.

**Tuesday, November 15, 2022** — Meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program: TBD**

**Saturday, December 17, 2022** — **IIOF MUSEUM Open House**, 1 to 3 p.m. (More information to follow.)

*The Gala has been cancelled this year. We are looking forward to trying again in 2023.*

**Everyone is welcome, admission is free, and you don't have to be a member to attend.**

*Refreshment volunteers for September were Joan Rowland and John Greenwood. They served apple cake, ice cream and soda. October refreshment volunteers are Robert Roeckle and John Greenwood.*

#### Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS

Arlene Rhodes

Paula Shappy & Kathy Mensinger

Saratoga Corinth & Hudson Railway – Hal Raven

**Our membership year begins June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually. (\$10 per household or \$100 for Lifetime Membership)**

### Joan's Jabbering — October 2022

*by Joan E. Rowland, President*

September brings us to leaves falling, frost on the pumpkin, and kids back to school. It also brings me to harvesting the garden. Lots of nice Plum Tomatoes but the Prudence Purples do not seem to ripen. Why did I plant such a weird named plant? Because my cousin's name is Prudence. I wanted to see what they were like. Will bypass next year. (Hay, you don't know until you try.) Next will be harvesting all the weeds and I mean tons of them. Heat got the best of me this year.

The September meeting had lots of new people and a fun topic. Hal Raven from Saratoga, Corinth & Hudson Railway came and talked of his love for trains. He told us his full resume of schooling to working with trains to now owning a train and company. He told about the Alco 5 engine. Then someone asked about where this engine had been before here, and he talked about it being built in Schenectady (where Rivers Casino is now) and then it's entire working career and now it is here. It was renovated in Porter Corners at the location of the old Kings Station, painted back to its original colors. It sat there waiting for Covid to be over, just waiting to be a working engine again. Now it runs every weekend for usually 2 or 3 runs. During the summer there was also some weekday trips. Hal also mentioned that the next day they would be working on the lines down to Grange Road for a special run that Saturday to the winery.

Wednesday, I was on my way home going up Grange Road and there was Hal standing at the crossing. There was a train headlight coming down the tracks, so I pulled over and grabbed my phone. He had mentioned that someday there would be a small station at "Lamothe Landing." Greg Lamothe came out from his home and there was a photo op at the sign. Greg has given this green area to the railroad to allow for another station stop. The sign says A 42.6 N 52.0 (which is Albany 42.6 miles & North Creek 52.0 miles).

I would like to thank John Greenwood for his weekly mowing of the IIOF Museum lawn. It has looked wonderful again this summer. Hope to see you at the October 18th meeting. Looking forward to seeing this door.



## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

October 2022 — by Ron Feulner

In past issues, I have talked about the Rowell Family and the general store they operated in Middle Grove. Last month I wrote about the devastating fire that began in the back apartment of the old Rowell Store after it had been sold to Cady. This month, I shall continue with a description of the path taken by the fire as it ravaged the little hamlet of Middle Grove.

### Path of fire:

It has been difficult to establish a map showing exactly which houses were burned. In addition to errors in reporting, I was not aware of any 1907 map of Middle Grove, so I worked from the 1866 Beers Map and compared it to a 1947 USGS map. This allowed me to see which houses were missing from the 1866 map. I then compared this to a modern tax map showing property lines, and Sandy Arnold helped by providing several deeds from the properties in question, but it all boils down to the fact that there was still a considerable amount of guess work involved.

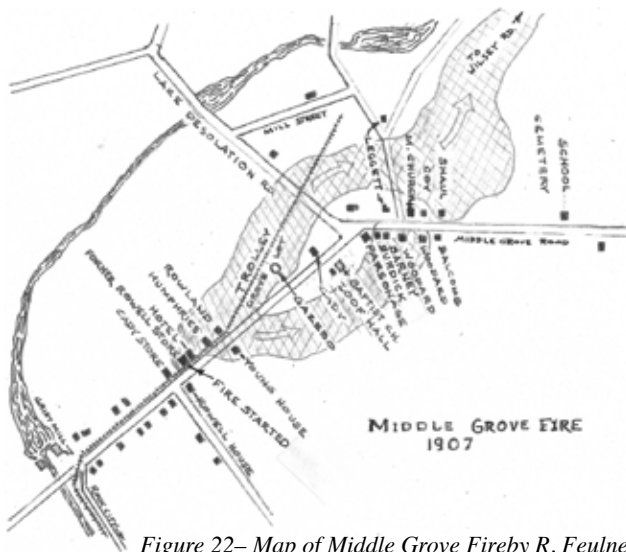


Figure 22– Map of Middle Grove Fire by R. Feulner 2020

The history of the buildings burned is still a little shaky, however, all sources agree that the fire started in a chimney in the Rowell building (which at the time of the fire had been sold to the owner of the store next door, Clifford Cady. This point is important to the members of the present day Rowell family, as they feel that their ancestors were somehow implicated in the fire but did not even own the building at the time.

This old Rowell building, as described above in Jennie Rowell's words, served for many years as a store. It also had living quarters added, apparently piece meal, to the side and back of the store. The old store, which appeared to be well built, was no doubt solid, but the living quarter additions may have been another matter. Jennie's description of the rooms and floors that did not match and were neither "level nor square" suggests rather shoddy construction, and her description of the kerosene soaked floors which in her words expressed a reason to worry, "Many times I thought what quick work fire would make in that kerosene soaked entry ..."

## TOGHS Program September 2022



Hal Raven, train conductor/owner, talking about the Saratoga, Corinth & Hudson Railway



Hal Raven giving our treasurer JoAnn Rowland half of the 50/50 Raffle from the train rides on Caboose Day — \$413

Photo credit: John Greenwood

# Saratoga, Corinth & Hudson Railway (June 2022)



*Conductor Hal Raven and Rachel Clothier, Corinth Historian*



*Caboose and Train Station*



*Melanie (Niznik) Hartman providing information about the train*



*Harold Jones walks to the railroad crossing from his home*



*Melanie (Niznik) Hartman and Nancy Homiak*

# More 2022 Caboose Day Photos



Top to bottom: Mike Gymarthy cooking the French Fries. Food and TOGHS booths and vendors. Robert Roeckle cooking hot dogs and hamburgers. Train Engineer Brad Peterson

Photo credit: John Greenwood

# Dakotown School

By Joan E. Rowland

What do you think you would find in your house if you had to clean it out top to bottom? Mary Carlson Rhodes found these schoolbooks. She remembered borrowing them from Dakotown School to help her foster child learn to read. She was the last trustee of Dakotown School and had attended a meeting there in early 1960s when there was talk of consolidation. Before the child was reading well enough to return them, the school had closed. She returned them to the historian's office and asked if they could be put back in the school. We will next time we have an open house.



### Maintenance:

We also have completed some maintenance at the school. The three trees were removed a few years ago but the stumps were not removed. Ron Feulner and John Greenwood worked on one a couple years ago using Ron's tractor. They said one and done. This summer, Steve Rowland ground out the remaining two stumps. Ron Deutsch leveled out the areas and reseeded. He said "now there will be 5 more minutes of mowing to d." (Ron D. and his wife Melissa do the mowing/weedwacking there.)

Robert Roeckle was asked to take photos of the inside of the school and discovered a hole in the wall behind the teacher's desk. Mike Gymarthy to the rescue with steel wool to fill the hole and a foaming filler that is critter resistant. What did I do while they were working Saturday? What all good bosses do, I directed them to another hole and another hole. We need to use this building more to keep the critters out.



# You Can Go Home Again

By John R. Greenwood

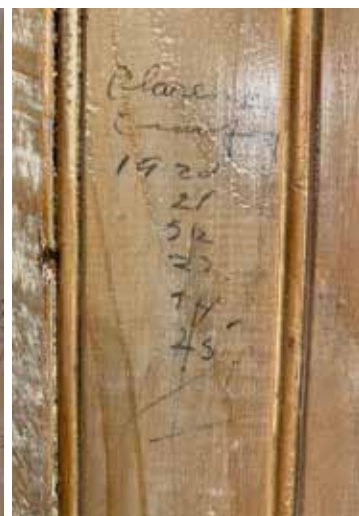
You can go home again, Mr. Wolfe, and I can prove it. I've been fortunate to revisit all the homes in Greenfield where I once lived, starting with the Community Center, where the Town of Greenfield Historical Society meets. My parents lived there with my aunt and uncle when I was a toddler. Then we moved to 3108 Rt. 9N, the second house up from the current Greenfield Animal Hospital. Charlie and Beverly Blodgett, who have both since passed, opened their home to me back in 2012 for a visit. Their hospitality and welcoming demeanor were as warm as the joy I got walking through the pine grove where I built my first tree-fort. My most recent visit was to the home where I went from single digits to adult. That home is also on Rt. 9N, about a mile south of the traffic light.

The current owner, Justin Thomas, had invited me to come and see what he and his wife had done on the property. It took a couple of years into my retirement to finally drop in for an impromptu visit. It was good to see a young family turning our old house into their new home. The most enjoyable part was seeing what Justin had done to my father's workshop. "The Shop" as my father called it, was where I first learned to use a bandsaw, radial arm saw, and a good old-fashioned handsaw. Justin doubled the size of the work area when he took out a door connecting

the old shop to the garage. I'm certain dad would have been thrilled to see how the space was being used today.

The door that Justin removed is the impetus of this little story. As far as I remember, that old door had never been opened. It was at the back of the shop and led to the garage half of the building. There were always old boards and miscellaneous items stacked against it. It was covered with dark green paint and barely visible. Justin said the door intrigued him, so he decided to refinish it. He spent hours stripping off the paint. What he found is where this chapter ends and the next chapter begins. You can see what lay beneath those thick layers of green paint by coming to the Town of Greenfield Historical Society meeting on October 18, 2022, at the Greenfield Community Center. You might even be the one to complete the story of the "Mystery Door."

This is the joy of staying in the area where you grew up. So many people I know seem to be searching for greener pastures in faraway places. You can say, "Home is where the heart is," but for me, home is where my roots are, where I learned to ride a bike and throw a football. I can summon a memory from every backroad in Saratoga County. It might be an old swimming hole or grove of pine trees I helped plant as a Boy Scout. Around every bend, I can play back a movie clip of my life. That is the treasure of living here; I simply like being home.



## I Finally Retired — August 30, 2022!



I started work at Empire State College on September 21, 1972, as a stenographer in the stenopool. (I took the summer off after I graduated from high school.) After six months, they moved me to the Print Shop and I became a "typesetter."



### Editor's Note

I want to send a big **Thank You** to all the people that sent me "Get Well Wishes" while I was in the hospital. They really meant a lot to me.

I also want to thank Joan Rowland, our president, for doing last month's newsletter; she did a great job.

Janet Jones

## 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.

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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 [Dgchertok@gmail.com](mailto:Dgchertok@gmail.com), call his cell phone (518-321-0330), or text him.



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