

Historical Society Newsletter

Janet Jones, Editor

P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

OFFICERS: Ron Feulner, President; Tom Siragusa, Vice President; Patty Schwartzbeck, Secretary; Robert Roeckle, Treasurer; Coral Crossman, Trustee; Vince Walsh, Trustee; JoAnn Rowland, Trustee

Volume 8, Issue 4

Calendar

December 15: Saturday, **Holiday Open House** (in place of December meeting) will be held at the IOOF Hall in Middle Grove, 2 to 4 p.m. *The theme will be old fashioned Christmas ornaments.*

January 15, 2008: Tuesday, meeting held at the Greenfield Community Center at 7 p.m. and program to follow (TBA).

We still need articles for the 2007-08 year. If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or if you type it using Microsoft Word, e-mail it to: aliron@localnet.com. Please type in upper and lower case, NOT ALL CAPS. Thank you.

Reminder that our year of meetings begins in September so everyone's membership renewal is due (unless you have recently paid). We have made it easy to renew your membership (or become a new member) by filling out our membership application contained in this newsletter and mailing it with your dues (if you prefer to keep your newsletter intact, you may copy the necessary information on another sheet and send it). We will also accept memberships at our meetings. The only requirement to become a member is an interest in local history (residency in the town is not required). We hope to have another good year, and we need you as a member to help it happen. **If you have already paid, and included a donation with your membership, we would like to Thank You!**

Ron's Ramblings

Although the weather was threatening with fog and freezing drizzle, we had a good turnout with 36 people attending the November meeting. Dorothy Rowland circulated a giant thank you card from the Greenfield fourth graders who visited the Daketown School last fall. The card was complete with photographs and personalized notes and signatures from the students and will become part of our archive collection. I think Dorothy and Henry Rowland and Joyce Woodard would all agree, it was the kind of thank you that makes giving up your day to host a group worthwhile.

We did pass a couple of important resolutions related to the grant applications that we are processing. The first grant of \$5,000 from the state should be nearing completion. Our past president, Coral Crossman is putting together the final touches on that one. The second grant worth \$7,500 needs more paper work. I asked the membership to pass a resolution giving Harold Jones, our Building and Grounds chairperson, the authority to continue with the application on behalf of the organization. This allows Harold to sign the appropriate papers without having to drive down to my house for my signature as president of the organization. We also passed a similar resolution allowing Ron Deutsch, a member of the Building and Grounds committee, to apply for documentation that illustrates our status as a non-profit organization. This is an IRS designation called a 501-C3. Ron is also going to see if he can get some designation from the chartering office of the state showing that we are nearing completion of our

permanent charter application. All this should make it easier for us to get local and state grant money for renovations on our buildings.

A part of me would like to keep our buildings going with local volunteer work and money, but I have come to the conclusion that a little organization like ours just does not have the resources to complete large projects like these. If we want to keep and maintain the buildings, we need to branch out and solicit financial help from the outside in addition to the volunteer work that we are capable of doing ourselves.

Work is progressing on our all volunteer project to convert the kitchen area of the IOOF hall into a heated office space where our archival workers, Joyce Woodard and Ann Michel, can work. I, along with Kevin Girvin, Harold Jones, and Michael Cinadr, completed the first phase of the project. Now, Harold and Vince Walsh are gearing up for the insulating phase. Winnie O'Connell is going to donate several bags of insulation. I passed around a sign-up sheet at the meeting, and several volunteers said they would help with the final phase, which will be painting.

We also discussed the December 15th Christmas program to be held at the IOOF hall this year. JoAnn Rowland has agreed to coordinate the program. The theme will be old fashioned Christmas ornaments. Please bring a Christmas ornament to display or Holiday goodies to share. The goodies should be placed on an attractive disposable plate because those not eaten during the afternoon will be re-wrapped and sold to members. If you have any questions, call JoAnn at 893-7786 (leave a message).

After the meeting, Marilyn Rothstein presented a slide show called, "Naughty Puritans and Saintly Sinners." We learned that the puritans were not as straight laced as we have been led to believe. They had a flair for colorful clothing and ribald and wanton behavior. Marilyn has written several novels using puritans as her main characters. She has done extensive research to make the novels as historically accurate as possible. After the slide presentation she sold and signed her books for those interested in purchasing copies.

Afterwards we all enjoyed home baked goodies provided by volunteers JoAnn Rowland, Alice Feulner, and Patty Schwartzbeck.

Looking Back While Looking Ahead!

By Fran Lambert

Time stood still for this lovely old home on South Greenfield Road in Greenfield Center, NY.

Lets take a walk through the inside first, and vicariously picture an era of new beginnings, hard work, clearing the land, and the raising up of a proud suitable home!

The windows, (nearly 20), had all the wavy original glass in their sturdy frames, the original plaster walls with the lathe underneath still intact, with very few age related problems.

The walls also boasted 17 layers of wallpaper, with the discovery of the very first one being made of cloth. The design was a feathery decoration and interspersed flowers of matching hues against a backdrop of darker forest green. Each room was entered with wonderful old inset panel doors. The first floor had somewhat narrow hardwood floors, with the upstairs constructed of wider pine floors.

The steep stairs leading downward to the low ceiling'd cellar were made of the original hardwood, and each worn-smooth riser had bowl-shaped indentations where each foot landed. These stairs were conveniently placed directly under the stairs that ascended to the second floor.

The home was heated by a very large wood stove in the cellar, with heavy tin circling the stove so that the heat could rise up through the floor above via a large fancy wrought iron floor grate. It was said this stove could also accommodate coal, as well as wood.

Now lets look back a little more ...

It was a large house, two story, with a summer kitchen in the back. There were two front entry doors, each welcoming the guest into the living room and the foyer. The room to the right had been a sitting room, the one behind it was the sewing/activity room. The two rooms had a sliding pocket door to gain entry into each other. Next to this centered door, was a brick chimney that was squirreled between the walls and found its way up to the top floor.

The basement, which remained a crawl space for many years, was soon dug out by removing the solid

petrified rock that the house rested on. An old round cistern or well was discovered under the porch of the back summer kitchen during construction.

Another area in later years was discovered when excavation for a needed tank for laundry water was needed. Many man hours were spent trying to dig down six feet, and when this was reached, the solid flat rock was swept off and it was discovered that the rock had all fossils embedded in it (many!) – from the ancient eons of time! This was considered so priceless a find that the hole was immediately re-closed with dirt, and the hunt for a more suitable spot began.

Greeting the guest on entry, were the sidefacing stairs up to the nursery and bedrooms. These stairs had a history of many a tumble by previous early owners. Near the bottom of stairs the steps took a sharp right turn to the floor into the foyer.

A fine gentleman, Bill Carlton and his sister lived there for many years. He helped in the transition when his sister's husband went away into the military up north, and saw to it that she and her four children were cared for.

Many times Bill Carlton would help his neighbor across the way at the Barss homestead, and give a hand with uprighting the stone fence that needed fixing around the peony and poppy flowerbed.

According to the original hand-written Indenture, this land was acquired from Lyman Nims, to David Kane and his wife Margaaret S. Kane, also mentioned within document was a certain John Hays, from the (state of what looks like Oresprd?) on March 30, 1861, for the sum of \$1,200. This land was considered part of the Kayaderofseros Patent (original spelling), Harvey St. John, and E. L. Darroue. This included many acres, was considered Lot 2 in the 17th Allotment.

This Lot began with 29 acres as H. Leofield's survey showed on February 13, 1857. There was a sawmill that was located to the rear of the property, owned by Elihu Wing II. Dunham Pond later being named and put on the map.

There is also a very large boulder that has a U.S. Geological Survey Benchmark (bronze) imbedded in it as to the elevation, and is located between the Dunham Pond Road and South

Greenfield Road RR tracks (within about 15 feet from tracks – easily seen if brush gets cleared away).

The Delaware and Hudson Railroad ran through the property, which actually split it into two parcels.

About 200 feet from South Greenfield Road there was a side stop off shanty for the railroad, where the engineer, and fellow workers could obtain hot coffee, and warm themselves in the winter months. Up until 1971, some of the logs for the walls could still be seen though now fallen and decomposed.

The outside of the lovely home had lush, thick grass, and on the barn side the lawn grew many beautiful perennial flowers, and a tall three trunk lilac bush/tree. This blossomed every year and was a wonderful sentinel.

A slight downward slope from the house introduced a large white barn still standing today. This great barn saw many useful years of hay storage by the earliest owners.

Directly behind the home the land sloped gradually and newer owners used this as a place to plant a wonderful 75' x 150' vegetable garden. The three acre (or so) field on the other side of the barn at one time boasted some of the sweetest butter and sugar corn ever grown there. A sign was planted in the ground one day, reading "Sweet Corn, A Dollar a Dozen!"

The neighborhood was delightful! The outlying areas were fields of corn for the dairy cows. Most of the older homes still remain today. There were times friends went to the Arnold farm up the street to get some milk, and make it into butter or cheese. Many wonderful country-style friendships were developed and are still treasured!

LOOKING AHEAD ...

The place is Moody Hill Road. The name no longer existing on the newer maps of today, but still in the memories of many people.

This road is at the very top of Ormsbee Road, a road with a spectacular view of the distant Vermont mountains. While traveling up the Ormsbee Road section, one is greeted with an enormous vista of beauty! First are the rolling fields of hay grasses, and forests edging the fields like a frame. On a very clear day it has been said that one can see far into the distance and see Vermont from this vantage point.

As far as I'm concerned, this is one of Greenfields best-kept secrets. If many newcomers knew of this area, the traffic would be overwhelming. But what keeps this so beautiful and pristine is the good conscience of many of the chosen guardians of the Town of Greenfield.

Progressing upward one reaches the intersection of Ormsbee and Ballou Road – greeted with a dead end sign. This is the section that was considered and named Moody Hill Road.

As I've been told, the Moody family lived at the very end of this road many years ago, about 1920ish. A large family was raised there, and was a farm. They had farm animals, and everything else expected for farm life in those days. Times were hard, very difficult, but the family managed to see their children grow and go off to school almost every day. Local neighbors living on Alpine Meadows Road occasionally gave a hand to help with the children.

As the children grew old enough for school, they would travel over the mountain on the singular foot path that wound down to where the school was located on Alpine Meadow Road about a mile or so (one way). It was told that the mother would pack a lunch for the children, which consisted of hard boiled eggs and stuff them in their pockets while yet hot. This ensured that the children could warm their hands on their trek down the mountain in the cold winter months.

Today, the road is paved all the way up to where the farmhouse still exists. When I moved into this area, (not so long ago) the road was still one of the last three or so remaining dirt roads still left in Greenfield. I can remember driving up Moody Hill Road when it was just easily passable for one car, the trees lining the dirt road and was quite dense (lots of foliage). Further on up past the high point of this section, private trails continue onward, and a real sense of mountain beauty and freshness unfolds.

Gatekeep On The Mountain

Fall Rabbit Hunting

By Greg Schwartz

Usually a couple days after Labor Day, it was time to clean up and get back to school. Up to that time I was thinking about all that had transpired over the summer vacation. Now it was time to settle down and look forward to the future. Arithmetic, history, science???? I think not. We are talking about a 14 year-old peach-fuzz faced boy with rabbit hunting on his mind. This was no idle thinking the way some city kid would think about such an important sport. Those poor souls could only wish about having shotguns, dogs and access to land overrun with rabbits. Truth was, I had all those things and more. First, I had a Dad that liked rabbit hunting. Second, we had a basset-beagle mix hound named Jip that dreamed rabbits. And third, I had a Mom that would cook just about anything that Dad cleaned. I got pretty deadly with Dad's .22 on squirrels but usually they provided Jip with dinner so Mom never did develop any good squirrel recipes for the supper table. Rabbit was a whole 'nother story. Once cleaned, she cooked them up in a pot with some mystery ingredients and created something Dad called "Paprikash." Ladled over rice, even picky brothers and sisters cleaned plates. Except Jeff and he had his usual bowl of Cherrios.

One did not just "go rabbit hunting." First, the weather had to be correct. Every rabbit hunter knew that all rabbits had some gland inside that was green and caused the meat to go bad once rabbit was shot. The only thing that got rid of the green gland was a late September frost. So no sense even bothering Dad about going until a good hard frost was seen on the front lawn. However, there was always preparation before that was almost as good as rabbit hunting. Shotguns had to be cleaned. And nothing cleaned shotguns better than rubbing down the blued steel with Hoppe's #9 Solvent. About six applications with an old pair of clean underwear applied in your bedroom with all the windows closed. For those not familiar with old #9 Solvent, the main ingredients were banana oil, nitromethane and some other flammable petroleum products. Better yet, when all this scrubbing and rubbing was done, the shotguns were stored in the gun cabinet which was located

in the bedroom. Funny, but I remember that I never had any trouble sleeping during rabbit hunting season. Another “chore” was ammunition inspection. These were the days before plastic shotgun hulls and shell hulls were made of paper which over a period of time would swell up from moisture and not chamber. Once the swollen hulls were discarded, the organization of placement of shells on the belt began. I would start by having the #6’s on the far left, then the #4’s. Then a couple #1 buckshot and finishing up with about six or seven slugs in the event one of the normal two pound bunnies mutated into a raging 450 pound rabbit-bear crossbreed.

Finally, the weather cooperated with a good hard frost. This event immediately was followed by subtle hints to Dad at the supper table that the upcoming Saturday would be a good day for rabbit hunting. And hopefully, Mom would pick up on these hints and gather up the mystery ingredients for the “Paprikash.” This would be followed up by his asking if the shotguns were properly cleaned and if we had any shotgun shells.

Shotgun shells are like money; one can never have enough of either. A trip up to Atwell’s General Store would cure that deficiency. Up on the top shelf behind the counter, Harry had exactly the brand and shot size needed. A couple well crumpled dollars on the counter resulted in a new box of shells ... and change. No paperwork, no ID check, no nothing!!!!!!

The Saturday morning dawned cold and crispy. Once Jip saw the shotguns and ammunition belts being handled, he would not let me or Dad out of his sight. This was what he waited for every year; to show us his “stuff” and he wasn’t about to be left out as when deer hunting season commenced. There were a couple of areas that harbored rabbits. One was down on Grange Road past Wing Road. The other was land that was real familiar to Dad. It consisted of woods and fields up on Locust Grove Road past Brigham Road, on land that once belonged to the Paseks, Cheresniks, and Dad’s family.

Hunting rabbits with Jip was textbook although I didn’t know what hunting rabbits according to a text was back then. It was fairly simple. Dad started in a section of land, and I followed about 30 yards to either his left or right. The idea was to stay in line with him; not forward and not behind. Jip then worked the brush in between. In the event Dad or I

jumped a rabbit and shot and missed, we would call Jip over to the spot we last saw “supper.” From then on Jip put his nose to the ground, and started barking. Dad and I simply waited for him to scent the rabbit out and run it past one of us for a second shot. Many was the time that Jip would almost go out of hearing range, only to run him back for the “finale.” Once in a while, he would run the rabbit into a hole or stonewall. Then he would start a different bark, which we seemed to understand. Then, we would either dig the rabbit out of the stonewall, and the hunt would be on again or have to drag Jip away from the hole.

It seemed some years were better than others in terms of numbers. Now hunters consult DEC charts and web sites; back then, we knew about “cycles.” If we got a lot of rabbits it was a good cycle, and if not it was a lousy cycle. Usually, we got at least two or three rabbits, even in the lousy cycles. Then the messy work commenced. Dad and I would start the cleaning out back with Jip at full attention. What wasn’t allocated for the table was Jip’s supper that night.

Contrary to what you might think, Jip wasn’t an unmanageable rabbit chasing canine. Once Dad got home late with a rabbit, left the carcass on the back step, and got involved in some other project. Jip spent most every night outside, and one would think that he had one fine supper. Not the case. The next morning, Mom found him laying next to the carcass; having not touched so much as a foot or ear. A call to Dad at work resulted in Jip having one of the best breakfasts in his 12 years. I’d like to see the “Dog Whisperer” teach that kind of calm submissive behavior to one of today’s pampered pooches.

I wasn’t involved in the cooking phase of rabbit hunting back then. This was Mom’s total domain. Only in the past couple years have I got the “Paprikash” recipe from Mom, which I found can be used with chicken if one cannot requisition the proper number of rabbits. Seems the “Paprikash” was always served over rice, but in retrospect, mashed potatoes would serve just as nice. Or noodles. Or air. Or anything. One thing that was always on the table for “Paprikash” was some sort of small bowl. And usually it would contain by supper’s end at least three or four #6 bird shot. Maybe it wasn’t the red gravy, or the rice, or the tender meat that made the meal so filling. Maybe it was all that #6 shot that never made it to the bowl.

Membership Application/Renewal

Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Send \$10 along with your name and address to the address shown below. If you send more it will be considered a donation. Other types of memberships are also available (lifetime, corporate, etc.), just call and ask (518 893-0620). Our membership year begins in September, and dues are paid annually. You may also join at one of our meetings.

Send this application form and fee to Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make checks payable to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society.

Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). _____

Name (please print)_____

Address _____

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 the newsletter dedicated to (please print):

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 free copy of our newsletter along with information on how they can join.

Name (please print)_____

Address _____

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