Town of Greenfield

Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President: Ron Feulner; Vice President: Louise Okoniewski; Secretary: Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer: JoAnn Rowland; Trustees: Skip Ballou, Coral Crosman, Ron Deutsch, Robert Roeckle, and Vince Walsh

> Janet Jones, Editor P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

Volume 11, Issue 9

www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

Calendar

- May 17, 2011: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program: Al Clarke talking about the Lincoln Family of Wilton.*
- June 24 Sept. 2, 2011: Farmer's Market starting Fridays at 4 p.m., Middle Grove Town Park, Middle Grove Road.
- August 13, 2011: Saturday, Caboose and King's Station Open House – located on NYS Route 9N in Greenfield Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

IOOF Hall Visitation Hours

The IOOF Hall will be open for visitors, please call ahead to make an appointment.

Joyce Woodard - 893-7638 or Ann Michel - 893-7052

Upcoming Heritage Hunters Meetings

- May 21, 2011, Saturday, 1 p.m. "Black Sheep in the Family Barnyard" by Steve Clarke
- June 18, 2011, Saturday, 1 p.m. "Finding A Place of Origin For Your Irish Ancestors Using Sources in the United States" by Lisa Dougherty

All programs will be at the Town of Saratoga Town Hall, 10 Spring St., Schuylerville. Free and open to the public.

Saturday, August 13, 2011

Second Porter Corners Elementary School Reunion

For anyone ever attending the Porter Corners School on North Creek Road. The reunion will be held at noon at the Middle Grove Park Pavilion. Please bring a dish to share, lawn chairs, your own place setting and drinks. Also be sure to bring any pictures, memorabilia and stories to share with everyone. Call Don Young at 893-2643, if you have any questions.

I NEED NEWSLETTER ARTICLES/ PHOTOS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR (STARTING IN SEPTEMBER).

Ron's Ramblings

by Ron Feulner

This issue will be the last for our membership year which ends on May 31. It also represents the last of my Ramblings for the foreseeable future, for I have decided not to run for president again. I will remain on the board and intend to remain active in the organization, but it is time to turn the president's job over to someone else with a fresh set of ideas. Since last July, I have served both as president of this organization and as town historian. Sometimes, it has seemed as if I am immersed in history seven days a week, and for someone who is supposed to be retired, it has been a bit too much. I do love history and will continue to be involved but at a somewhat slower pace. My wife, Alice, has often reminded me that we also have a family and other interests, which I will now have more time for.

Serving as your president has been a rewarding experience for me. There is a new documentary out that has as its basic premise the idea that it is human nature to cooperate and demonstrate a strong sense of community. That is what has always amazed me about our group. So many of you have stepped forward and offered your individual strengths and know-how to help build a strong and vibrant historical society. No one of us could have accomplished it on our own, but together we have done a truly awesome job.

I would like to name each of you, but that would take more than one newsletter, and space is limited, so I will name only a few who have and continue to give a great deal of themselves to this organization.

I will begin with our board. Louise Okoniewski, our vice president, has always been there, behind the scenes, ready to help me with anything that I needed done. She would make an outstanding president, but she is reluctant to take the position because of her job responsibilities.

JoAnn Rowland has done a great job as our treasurer. She has organized the books and set up electronic bookkeeping for us. From the moment that she took the position, I have been pleased with everything that she has done. She is honest and extremely conscientious: a perfect fit for a treasurer. Patty Swartzbeck has kept impeccable records as our secretary. A few days after each of our meetings, I receive an e-mail containing the minutes of the meeting, which I enter into my annual notebook. A historical society should be capable of recording and keeping its own history, and Patty has made this easy for me.

Each of the other five board members (Coral Crosman, Robert Roeckle, Ron Deutsch, Earl "Skip" Ballou, and Vince Walsh) helped us stay on course and operate within the boundaries of our stated purpose as listed in our constitution and by-laws. Our board meetings represent democracy in action. Seldom does a meeting go in the direction that I anticipate. All nine of us are strong minded and independent thinkers. By the time we hash an issue over, I think that we all feel that we have come to the best possible conclusion. What one of us might not think of, several others will, and that is why we have remained strong.

After the board members, come the many committee chairpersons. Katie Finnegan, program chairperson, always seems to come up with historically interesting and informative programs for each of our meetings.

Nancy Homiak is in charge of membership. With our membership hovering between 150 and 200 families, this has become a difficult job keeping track of who has paid their dues and what is the current address for each of our members. She also prepares the mailing labels and mails our newsletters.

Janet Jones, takes charge of editing and printing all our newsletters. She is also in charge of refreshments for each of our meetings. The social time after our programs, when members help themselves to beverages and home baked goodies and then seek out old and new friends to talk to, is a popular addition to our meetings, and Janet, with the help of others, is responsible for this.

Harold Jones, for many years was our building and grounds chairperson. He kept track of our two buildings (the Daketown one-room school and the IOOF hall), making minor repairs and improvements himself and supervising the work of professionals when more major work had to be done. During the last year, Mike Gyarmathy, has been serving in this capacity. Recently, when we experienced vandalism at the IOOF hall in the form of broken windows, it was Mike who went down and boarded them up.

Earl Jones sets up a video camera and tapes each of our meetings.

Joyce Woodard and Ann Michel have for a number of years kept track of our sizable archive collection housed primarily in the IOOF hall. When the weather permits, they are down at the hall in Middle Grove filing and organizing our collection and giving tours or answering the questions of folks who drop in out of curiosity or for the purpose of doing research.

Dorothy and Henry Rowland have been hosting an annual open house at the Daketown School.

Dan Chertoc and Thom Siragusa have organized and built a website for us that continues to grow in popularity.

Ron Deutsch, in addition to serving as a board member, has also been the prime organizer of our hugely successful farmer's market. This has grown to the point where it is like managing a small corporation. From organizing the food tent and weekly musical entertainment to seeing that all of our twenty-odd venders stay happy, it is no small task, but Ron, with the help of his family and friends, has pulled it off for several seasons.

Our caboose day open house last summer was a resounding success. Louise Okoniewski did most of the organizational work. The local fire police who volunteered their services estimated attendance approaching a thousand. So many of you volunteered your time and energy to make the day a success. Robert Roeckle donated all the meat that was sold at the food tent and brought his backyard grill on site to cook it. Karen Zanetti set her camera up in the hot sun and photographed individuals and groups who wanted their picture taken standing on the deck of the antique caboose. Robert and Karen are but two of the many who participated that day.

There are so many of you who have pitched in on our work days, or served in our tent at the farmer's market, or sent in some extra money as a donation with your dues. It is impossible for me to mention you all, but each of you has played an important part in making the society the success that it is.

This kind of volunteerism and community effort is not new in the Town of Greenfield, for when I was a wee lad growing up in Middle Grove during the forties and fifties, I saw local residents launch themselves into community projects like building our first firehouse and the three room school behind it. These men would assemble in the evening after their day's work somewhere else, and on weekends, to mix mortar and lay block until the projects were finished. Then, they and their families held square dances in the community room over the firehouse to celebrate what they had accomplished. Some of them may even have taken mortgages on their homes to front the money necessary to buy materials.

This was a community effort at its finest, and it makes my heart sing to know that we again have experienced the same community harmony and purpose in making our own historical society a similar success. Thank you all for helping to make my job as president an enjoyable experience over the past years, and I hope you will pitch in with the same fervor when our new president calls on you in the future.

Have a good summer and maybe I'll see you at the farmer's market.



WEEZIE'S WORDS by Louise Okoniewski

Hello Spring!! Hopefully these April showers will bring May flowers and some dry warm weather. Our April meeting brought out 31 members and guests on a damp rainy night. It was worth the trip to hear Jeremy Davis speak about the lost ski areas in our region. Jeremy was very well spoken and a pleasure to listen to. His main job is meteorologist for Cable News channel 508. He also works for a company in Glens Falls that gives weather forecasts to cargo ships and cruise lines, so you need to be clear in what you are saying.

Jeremy's hobby is locating ski areas from years past. This may include hiking up an old slope with the hope of finding the remnants of an old tow rope tower or other clues from the ancient ski area. His program focused on the lost areas of the Adirondacks and Greenfield. New York state has 55 ski centers in operation today – more than any other state! These range from rope tows to the large centers.

These early areas offered a place to learn the art of skiing, and also had something for the intermediate to experienced skier. During the program, I found myself thinking about Beartown in Beekmantown, (near Plattsburgh) where I learned to ski. I was clearly the beginner in the group of folks I went with. Most grew up near Beekmantown or worked at Beartown. But I became good enough where they would take me along to Whiteface and Jay Peak in Vermont. I was comfortable on the baby to intermediate slopes, and became an expert on the art of "snowplowing."

Greenfield had Darrows on Locust Grove Road, which started as a hike up, ski down slope in the 1930's. Started by Ed Taylor, who owned the ski shop on Clinton Street now known as Alpine Sport Shop. They eventually put in a rope tow and became quite the meeting place on weekends. Ed Taylor eventually moved on and started Alpine Meadows Ski Center in Porter Corners which lasted about 45 years. Alpine Meadows boasted a vertical drop of 1,000 feet and many rope tows. Alpine became more modern by eliminating some of the rope tows and adding a platter pull in the late 50's. That led to the J-Bar in the early 60's which was replaced with T-Bars and new ownership in the 1960's.

Alpine Meadows was the place to be until it closed due to land disputes with new owners. If you Google <u>www.nelsap.org</u>, and go to the Lost Ski Areas New York State you will be amazed at the website that Jeremy Davis has put together. It covers all the ski areas in New York. Click on one of the ski areas, such as Darrows, Alpine Meadows, Skidmore, etc. and look at pictures and information and stories of the centers. Jeremy has written two books on lost ski areas of Vermont and New Hampshire. He is working on his third book about lost ski areas in the Adirondacks and New York state. Believe me you will be surprised.

Ann Michel and Joyce Woodard are anxiously waiting for the warmer weather, so they can continue the wonderful work at IOOF Hall. Ann would like the hall to be open a little more this year as they always have people stopping by. The goal is to turn the IOOF hall into a museum for all to enjoy. Unfortunately, we had eight window panes broken recently by vandals. That was heartbreaking, as we have been lucky with vandalism, but our luck ran out. If you happen to be driving by and see something out of the ordinary, please let someone know. We'll be having spring cleanup on May 7 from 9-12, at the IOOF hall.

Ron Feulner's volunteers seem to be having a great time on Wednesdays at Town Hall. Ron has taken his appointment as Town Historian by the horns and has a group of gals that are working on various projects. The girls bring goodies for lunch, and Ron makes coffee for them. The girls keep coming back, so the coffee must be good – and it's nice to hear laughter downstairs at the Town Hall.

Don't forget the Farmer's Market – June 24 to September 2. If you want to be a vendor, you'll need to fill out the application.

We will have the Caboose Open House August 13, from 11-3 rain or shine.

Don't forget that we always need stories – you may think of something about growing up in the Town of Greenfield – hunting, canning veggies, swimming holes, things you did or parents or grandparents before the days of TV and video games. The story doesn't need to be long, surprise yourself and write something for our newsletter. Til next month –

Our Web Site is Expanding

Take a look and contribute if you can.

- Explore the Interactive Map! Dan Chertok has been busy adding new sites to the Interactive Map. Please share with Dan. He needs your old photos. It's easy. Just call Dan or e-mail him at <u>bmmschertok@gmail.com</u>.
- Flip through historical photographs. You can now browse through our photo collection and please leave comments.
- Read past newsletters. They are now online in case you missed one.
- Browse our book recommendations. Look through listings of historical recommended reading and books by local authors.

Attention Local Authors

We would love to put your book(s) or next event on our new Web site as a small thank you for speaking to our group. If you are interested, please contact Thom Siragusa at tsiragusa@gmail.com or 518-322-1486.

Thanks to the refreshment volunteers for April – JoAnn Rowland, Coral Crosman and Lelah Cornell. They served pistachio angel food cake, cupcakes and cookies. May refreshment volunteers are Katie Finnegan and Ann Michels.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson



Gert's Way: Remembering Gertrude Jones

By Mary Cuffe Perez (From conversations with Virginia Kulpa and Gertrude Jones)

Gertrude Jones died February 26, 2011, at her home in East Galway. The middle born of three children, she came into this world prematurely on March 11, 1925, and spent the first few months of her life in a dresser drawer on the back of the woodstove. It was a tenuous beginning in a hard season, but Gertrude thrived, developing as she grew a robust independence that her lifelong friend, Virginia Kulpa, calls "Gert's way."

Gertrude lived her entire life in the house where she was born, on what remained of the family farm on Antioch Road. Like most local farmers, Gertrude's family grew a little of a lot and kept a few cows and chickens. In addition to farming, Gertrude's father worked at the paper mill in Rock City Falls and her mother taught school and took care of the family. With the little free time they had, the Jones's went "up street" to visit neighbors or stopped by Fred Wolfe's store, owned by Gertrude's grandparents. Socializing was as much a part of life as hard work in the close knit community of East Galway.

The pace of life was slow but the pace of change was quickening. During her lifetime, Gertrude saw her small community change in ways that were unimaginable to the previous generation. The Rural Electrification Act brought electrical power to house and barn and the automobile gradually replaced horse and wagon. (The former proved more reliable than the fractious early machines. As Gertrude's mother wrote in her journal, "Car works good for a wonder.") Most importantly, Gertrude saw the decline of farms and the passing of a way of life. Only one thing was a constant in those 85 years: her friendship with Virginia.

But while they were children, life changed little for Gertrude and Virginia. East Galway was the center of their universe, and the rhythm of life was dictated by the cycle of seasons. Just as their parents got by with what they could grow or make, kids got by on their imaginations and good legs. On the two mile walk to and from their one room school house, Gertrude and Virginia found more adventure and mischief to get into than there was daylight. They were free to roam the neighborhood because someone always knew where they were ("They thought so anyway," Virginia says). The most fun were the dances that sprung up throughout Galway like mushrooms after a spring rain. There were fiddlers and guitars and dancing late into the night. Many times, the girls fell asleep on a pile of coats while the adults danced on.

During the long winters, they ice skated on Enos Pond and barreled sleds down Jockey Street. Virginia remembers one of those times as vividly as the flush of cold on Gertrude's cheek. She had instructed Gert to slide down the north hill and she would slide down the south hill at the same time. They would pass in the middle. "She was supposed to stay on her side," Virginia says. "But Gert being Gert didn't listen. We collided in the middle."

Any time of the year, there were the wonders of Fred Wolfe's store to explore. "An emporium of delights,"

Virginia remembers. Not only for the merchandise, but for the gossip as well. When they could slip close enough, the girls listened in on what was being said around the potbellied stove as the men played checkers. "We heard more than we were supposed to," Virginia laughs.

Eventually, the two went their separate ways. Virginia married and moved away. Gertrude became a nursery school teacher and in 1958, following the Korean War, surprised her family and all of East Galway by joining Dr. Reverend Weidt and his party on a humanitarian mission to Korea to bring back for adoption, unwanted children of American soldiers.

Years later, circumstances brought Virginia back to the house where she was born. Gert still lived down the street. Their hometown was not the same, but their friendship reconnected as if no years stood between. "I guess the only thing you can say that didn't change in all those years," says Virginia, "was our friendship."

Historian's Corner by Ron Feulner

I will keep this section short this month as I do not want to overwhelm you with my words. I have added two new volunteers since I wrote last month's piece. Judy Supley has been volunteering with the ladies who are working on the scrapbook project. Judy told me from the beginning that she may not be able to volunteer long, for she is actively job hunting. She is a highly skilled and trained individual with a diverse background which includes project management and business analysis. We are fortunate to have her for however long she can stay. She has a Bachelor's degree in nursing from Villanova and a Masters in Business Administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Her last project was working as a business analyst for Flow Management Technologies, Inc. analyzing and streamlining the workflow for the lending department at a local community bank. She would really like to get involved with a project like the new medical complex planned for exit 12 on the Northway, or any other that would enlist her training and creativity regardless of how large or small the project may be. If any of you know of an employer looking for someone with her qualifications, please let me know as I would like to help her in her job search in payment for the volunteer technical help she has provided the historian's office (518-893-0620).

Our second new volunteer is Joan Bisso Rowland. I have wanted to tackle a new project in the historian's office involving vital statistics for the town. In 1882, the state mandated that all towns begin keeping records of births, deaths, and marriages within the town. Those records are now available in the town clerk's office. However, record keeping by the town prior to that date was spotty at best. The hodge-podge of data that is available is disorganized and in a number of different files in my office. When we receive requests for this kind of information, I often feel helpless and don't know where to look. This is the project that Joan is going to help me with, and her knowledge of Excel should expedite the work. She is going to help organize a computerized data base that will pull all our vital records together and make this information more accessible.

Summer Fun by Marie Willard

Florence Parrish held the Middle Grove Homemakers 4-H club in her home on Mill Road. Among the members were her daughter, Shirley, Eva Mae Older, Ruth Thibodeau, Bertha and Beverley Thompson, Beverly Lawler, Judy Baugh and me. We gathered in her small living room and learned to sew and do crafts. In her kitchen, we learned to cook and bake. We went on day trips and learned outdoor cookery – my favorite class. I still have my outdoor cookery 4-H book. We entered our projects in the County Fair and took a club field trip to the fair to see how we did. How she did this, by herself, I'll never know. When my girls were teens, I tried to be a leader – it only lasted two years.

I received a note from Billy Older. He now lives in Texas. He wrote me on his memories of Billy Reynolds, Butch Bunnell and him, being in Boy Scouts. He said they had a fort behind Butch's house and they used to camp out on the island at Lake Desolation. Bill also sent me a copy of his picture from 1946-47 of Middle Grove School, the class and Mrs. Johnson. Mine had gotten folded sometime ago and one or two of the students were missing.

Whenever we wanted to go somewhere, we had to walk. Our parents were either working or didn't drive. Second cars were almost unknown. When the County Fair came and we had gotten free tickets for children's days, we had to go. We would leave in the morning when it was cool. Most of us had our "passing" money that our parents, grandparents or aunts and uncles had given us for passing into the next grade. Most of us had between \$3 and \$5 to spend. For this we could ride all the rides and have something to eat. One of our fathers would pick us up on their way home from work. Of course it was better when someone had a car and we were allowed to go to the fair at night!

For the Fourth of July, we had small fireworks that we bought at the corner store. There were puffers, poppers, snakes, smoke bombs and sparkling sticks. My parents would take us to see the fireworks displays nearby. Sometimes we would go to town to see a Fourth of July parade and to watch our local firemen march.

Drive in theaters were a dollar a carload. Dad used to pack the car with snacks and blankets. One time, I remember Mom's brother, Uncle Leon and Aunt Marge came to visit. They pulled in right after the car was packed. Mom warned us to be quiet. After they had been there for a while and had their cup of coffee, I remember saying to Uncle Leon, "Are you going pretty soon? We want to go to the movies." My parents were furious with me. Uncle Leon laughed and said "Why didn't you tell me earlier? We've got to get going. We have a lot of running to do. Have fun."

My dad was a fisherman – first and foremost. He fished every chance he got. His favorite place was Archers Fly. When one of us had to go with him in his boat, I was usually elected because I was the oldest. Mom didn't want him out in the boondocks alone. For a while, I didn't mind the black flies and the mosquitoes. Later I learned that if I took a pocket full of pebbles with me and tossed them in the water, they would chase the fish away and Dad would leave. He caught on to my tricks and to my joy started taking my sister, Shirley. She loved it. We had five great swimming spots. When we were small, we swam under the bridge on Lake Desolation Road. The bottom of the creek was lined with large slabs from the old mills. One of the formations we called "the Bathtub" we could sit in the enclosure and the stream would pour over our backs. The water was barely deep enough to swim in. We learned that if we crossed the bridge and walked along the old mill site we would come to a nice sandy beach area. The bottom of the creek was sandy also. It was deeper than the bridge and the little kids didn't know how to get there. It had a serious drawback. The pathway was filled with poison ivy and we took our chances.

When we were a little older and could go to the other end of town, we swam to the right of the Main Street bridge. We would walk along side of Menshousen's house and the gristmill to a very nice place to swim. There were a few bloodsuckers but we lived. Some people went to the Sheep Dip on Daketown Road but I never did.

Lastly, we walked to the lake, swam all day, danced over the lake at the bar and walked back home. One time, Tommy Foy stamped his foot so hard during a square dance that he put a hole in the floor and we could see the water.

We played baseball and kickball in Thibodeau's field. They had baseball games in the field by Kilmers. Sometimes they played donkey baseball. That was fun. Summer nights were great for a group of us to play hide and go seek. We picked different places to play. We didn't have video games or computers. We were never bored and always found something that we could do.



The 4-H girls at the fair. Leader, Florence Parrish, Marie Barnes, Judy Baugh, Shirley Parrish and Ruth Thibodeau.



Middle Grove Home Makers, 4-H Club.

<u>It's Back! Better and Bigger than Ever!</u>

Town of Greenfield Historical Society proudly presents:

Greenfield Farmers Market Middle Grove Park, Middle Grove Road Every Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. June 24 - Sept. 2, 2011

Save the World - Shop at the Market:

Locally grown vegetables/plants

- Locally made crafts
- Yummy baked goods
- Locally raised/free range meats
- Local authors and artists tables
- Local maple syrup, honey, eggs, jams and more ...
 - Plenty of Parking, bathrooms and places for the kids to play while you shop and meet your neighbors and friends

Sponsored by the:

TOWN OF GREENFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Supported by the:







GCBA Mission Statement To raise swarcoess of local businesses and service groups, NA while promoting community spirit is the Town of Greenfield GREENFIELD COMMUNITY & BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

To become a vendor or for more information, please call Ron Deutsch at 469-6769 or go to our website and click on Farmers Market for a weekly update on new produce and products: <u>www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com</u>

CAS CAS CAS CA



Name:

Name of business:

Do you have the proper certifications to sell your products (circle one): Yes No Don't Know (Please attach a copy of inspection certificate or permits)

7:	
7:	
Zip:	
:	
	:

I would like to sell the following items (please be very specific and list all items you wish to sell – the committee has the right to reject individual items to ensure a proper mix of products):

I will be able to attend the following markets (please circle all that you will attend):

6/24, 7/1, 7/8, 7/15, 7/22, 7/29, 8/5, 8/12, 8/19, 8/26, 9/2

Please return to: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, and send c/o Ron Deutsch, 17 Lester Lane, Middle Grove, NY 12850 or email to <u>mkd67@aol.com</u>. Application should be received before May 30, 2011 to be considered for the market.

Vendors are responsible for complying with all local, state and federal regulations that apply to their products.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Send \$10 per **household** 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 June 1, 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 Print – Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household).

Name	 	 	
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 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 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: <u>aliron@nycap.rr.com</u>.

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

If you have any information, e-mail Dan Chertok at <u>bmmschertok@gmail.com</u> or <u>dgclawoffices@csdsl.net</u>. You may also call (518-893-2268) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859

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