

CALENDAR

April 19, 2016 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM (LOCATION CHANGE) in Greenfield Center. Program: Ron and Theresa Alger of Saratoga Crackers.

May 14, 2016 – Saturday, 9 a.m. - noon Clean Up Day at Daketown School

May 17, 2016 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program:* Ellen Steinberger will speak about "*Down in the Valley: Exploring the Gut.*" This area in Saratoga Springs, east of Broadway, has been home to multiethnic working class families for over two centuries and also was important to the evolution of the Jewish community.

June 17 - Sept. 9, 2016 – Fridays, 4 - 7 p.m., Farmers Market at the Middle Grove Park

> Everyone is welcome; you don't have to be a member to attend.

TOWN OF GREENFIELD Town Environmental Commission Meeting

Residents are invited to our monthly meeting to share your knowledge and discuss various issues related to your surroundings within which people, animals and plants live. Please join our meeting at the Greenfield Community Center (across from the Town Hall) on Thursday, April 21, 2016, at 7 p.m.

LOCATION CHANGE Historical Society Meeting

Because Tuesday, April 19 is Primary Day, the Historical Society Meeting will be held at the TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM in Greenfield Center at 7 p.m.

CONSTITUTION VOTE

by Robert Roeckle

At the March 15 meeting of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society, Ron Feulner presented an amendment to our Constitution. Ron felt that the current Constitution limited the possibility of good people willing to serve as Board Members, so he suggested a change to allow for the increase of the total number of Board members. After some discussion it was determined that the requested change should be more specific outlining when such a change could be made. After the change was finalized, it was put to a vote of the membership present. The requested amendment passed that first vote. According to our Constitution, 'Amendments to this Constitution may be made after being approved by two-thirds vote of the members present at two consecutive general meetings.' So another vote on this amendment is scheduled for the upcoming meeting on April 19.

The following are the original text and the proposed amendment:

ORIGINAL:

Article IV Management

2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine (9) active members in good standing. This board shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five Trustees. The immediate past President of the Society may serve as one of the five Trustees without being elected for one year immediately following the termination of his/her presidency if he/she so desires. If the past President does not wish to serve, a replacement Trustee will be elected by the general membership as well as the four (4) additional Trustees who will be elected by the general membership.

As a condition of accepting their position as members of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society's Board, each of the nine officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and five Trustees) agree to abide by a code of ethics listed in the Bylaws.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER The Middle Grove Hotel by Ron Feulner



First Middle Grove Hotel

Recently, I wrote about the Greenfield Hotel in Greenfield Center. This month, I decided to write about the Middle Grove Hotel, both of which were, I believe, situated on a main travel route across the town at the time they were built. I have read of a historic east-west highway used primarily by individuals traveling from the North Country to the Mohawk Valley region. Although, I have not found a description of its exact path, snippets of information have led me to believe that the route may have passed from what is now NYS Route 9 on to Wilton Road (through Greenfield Center), then following South Greenfield Road to High Spot Road, then along Middle Grove Road, and (after passing through Middle

PROPOSED AMENDMENT: Article IV Management

2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than nine (9) active members in good standing. The Board shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and not less than five (5) Trustees, however the actual number may be more than five (as long as it remains an odd number for voting purposes) with the total number increasing or decreasing as interest and participation levels change from year to year at the annual meeting with the election of officers. As a condition of accepting their position as a member of the Board, each of the officers agree to abide by the Bylaws.

Please feel free to come to the meeting and voice your opinion about the proposed change. We look forward to seeing you and counting your vote.

Remember, April 19 is also Primary Day, so you have the opportunity to help determine a Presidential Candidate and vote on the Historical Society's Constitution change – democracy in action!

Grove) continuing along Middle Grove Road to NYS Route 29, and on to Johnstown and Fonda where it then followed the Mohawk West. I have also read of references that suggested that stagecoaches followed this route, so it would only make sense for hotels to exist at intervals along it.

Both in Greenfield and in Middle Grove, hotels appear on the earliest detailed maps that we have of the area (the 1856 Geil Map and the 1866 Beers Map). They appear near or at the same locations that the later hotels occupied, but there is no way of knowing if they were the same structures that we find later references to.

Those of you who are familiar with Middle Grove know that there is a single story home just east of the Stewart's shop and just west of the concrete block building which once was the firehouse. (It is now owned by Zanetti Woodworkers.) This single story home sits where the Middle Grove Hotel once stood.

The first newspaper reference that I found was in the Saratogian, in 1871, advertising a Thanksgiving Ball with the Lockwood's band playing music at the O.C. Vanderburgh's Middle Grove Hotel.

In 1872 and in 1881, there were additional references to balls being held at the hotel with one suggesting that it would be the event of the season. On Feb. 2, 1883, the Saratoga Sentinel advertised St. Paul's Catholic Church in Rock City Falls holding their Festival at the hotel. "Supper and dancing for \$1.50. Sleighs will run from Rock City."

In 1902, the Saratogian listed the sale of the hotel from Anne A. Thompson to Roxa Fulton. In 1903, the Saratogian advertised that a "trout dinner will be served at the Middle Grove Hotel." Then on April 22, 1907, the Saratogian carried a story of the great Middle Grove fire. "Fire started in Rowell's tenement house, a frame house standing on the north side of the street and formerly used as a store." High winds spread the flame resulting in much of the village being destroyed, including the hotel next door. The fire spread in an erratic fashion skipping some dwellings while burning others.

Another article in 1907, suggests that Roxie Fulton received \$2,000 in insurance. On June 5, 1907, the Saratogian states that "George Fulton, proprietor of the Middle Grove Hotel, expects his new building to be completed by July 1. The hotel was burned at the recent fire that destroyed half of the village."

In 1915, the Saratogian describes a sale of the hotel from Roxa Fulton to Mary B. Winter. Also in 1915, the Ballston Journal describes the indictment of Henry Platter, proprietor of the Middle Grove Hotel, for maintaining a "public nuisance." He was arraigned because on the date of Nov. 10, 1914, and at other times keeping a quantity of liquor in Greenfield (a no-license town during prohibition) for sale at the hotel where a crowd had assembled which was boisterous and disturbed the peace of the community.

On March 25, 1921, the Saratogian describes the sale of the hotel to Frank Mac Cauley. Although I wasn't born yet when the sale took place, a dear friend of mine, Helen Callenius (now deceased), once told me a story about Frank Mac Cauley. Helen grew up in the store next door to the hotel (the store later owned by the Roeckles and now the location of the Stewart's Shop). Helen said that her parents had bought the store (not the hotel) from Frank Mac Cauley. When they inspected the store, Frank Mac Cauley was running the post office in the store, and her parents assumed that it would remain as part of the purchase. As soon as the sale was complete, Mac Cauley moved the post office next door to the hotel and also started a store on the first floor of the hotel in direct competition with the Callenius's. Helen remembered her parents being very upset over this. Both businesses survived, because, as a child, I can remember going to both stores, although by then, Jesse Blowers was running Mac Cauley's store.

Helen also told me another story about her parents and the store. After running the store for many years with Helen and her sisters growing up and one by one leaving home, her parents decided to sell the store and retire. They sold the store to Mr. and Mrs. Roeckle, however the Roeckles were not interested in buying their customer's debt. (It was common at that time for general store owners to extend credit to their customers especially farmers whose crops hadn't been harvested yet or others who might experience temporary financial hardship.) The Calleniuses were holding a considerable amount of debt from individuals in the community at the time of the sale, and the Roeckles were not interested in buying it.

After the sale, the Calleniuses retired to a smaller home on the corner of Middle Grove and Sandhill Roads (the one with a historical marker in front of it). Helen said that the only person who came to pay their store debt was a Mr. Palm who lived on Daketown Road. Mr. Palm was blind and had a large family to support, but he made small payments until his debt was cancelled, while the rest of the debtors ignored their obligation.

I can still remember the hotel when I was growing up in Middle Grove, however, it was no longer being used or referred to as a hotel at that time. In fact, about a month before I was born, the Saratogian described the sale of the building from Mac Cauley to a Mr. and Mrs. Emerson from Hadley. The article went on to say that the Emersons intended to operate it as a boarding house and ice cream parlor. I don't remember the Emersons running it. My only memory is of Jessie Blowers (an elderly woman) running the store. I can still close my eyes and picture the potbellied stove with wooden chairs and shelving with boots and shoes on one end and, on the other end, the meat counter and cash register. I seem to have a fuzzy memory of a side entrance that led to apartments upstairs, but I never knew anyone who lived there except Jessie Blowers.

We can get a better indication of what the second hotel building was like from the few rare photographs that still exist, and also, a 1926 Saratogian ad that listed the property for sale. It read, "Middle Grove Hotel or Boarding House- newly decorated and painted fourteen rooms, baths, hot and cold running water, electric lights, hardwood floors, two big garages, large barn, hen houses, ice house full, gas station, store...."

The hotel was torn down in the mid-1950s by the Roeckles. Richard and Anna Roeckle, following their retirement from the store next door, decided to build a home on the hotel property, which, at some point, they had purchased. To do so, they tore down the hotel and used a good deal of its lumber to build the onestory home that fit inside the footprint of the old hotel foundation (this home is still there just east of the Stewart's Shop). Their grandson, Robert Roeckle, who is current president of our historical society, said that some of the building materials from the old hotel were used on a number of area building projects. In fact, they recently used the last two pillars from the front porch on an area porch construction project. These were the last pieces left from the old hotel.



Second Middle Grove Hotel

Robert A. Dake

by Karl Zeh



Robert A. Dake, past president of the GHS, and long-time devotee to the history of the Town of Greenfield and its preservation, passed recently a few days short of his 95th birthday.

Bob was born in 1921 and, in his early years, lived with his parents in a homestead near the Daketown School House off the old dirt section of Daketown Road. Ron Feulner, my brothers, and I once accompanied Bob on a

Bob Dake – 1921 - 2016 Photo credit: Alice Feulner

walk up the lane that leads over to Coy Road to explore the old homestead. The old foundation, well-head, and at least one of the stone impoundments that held-back one of the many ponds that used to exist there, were easily found that day and are still visible to this day.

While still in grade school, his parents, Avard S. and Eunice, moved Robert and the family from the Daketown homestead to 162 Lake Ave. in Saratoga Springs, where he lived most of his life with his sister, Beatrice, and parents; all who pre-deceased him. Both of his parents lived a few years past 100. According to the 1940 Census, Bob's grandmother was Mary Jones, age 85, and was living with them at that time.

Like my father, Walter E. Zeh, during WWII, Bob served as a Corporal in the Army Air Corps in the South Pacific campaign, stationed in the Philippines. My father spent his tour in the Air Corps in Alaska and the Yukon Territory, and mustered-out in 1945 as a Staff Sargent. He passed on Veteran's Day in 1999. Oddly enough, my dad several times recounted the story, and Bob confirmed, of how he and Bob crossed-paths somewhere right after boot camp, despite being stationed in far distant places.

After the war, Bob went on to pursue his education in History at Columbia University in NYC. Bob worked most of his life with his father, and retired from Avard's Feed Store on Henry St. in Saratoga Springs, where my father also worked for a time during the '50s.

Bob was a past president, and long-time active member of the Greenfield Historical Society. He played a key role in securing the organization's acquisition of the Daketown oneroom school and the Odd Fellow's Hall that currently houses the Historical Society Museum. He often participated in open house events at the school and contributed some furnishings to help recreate its history. As president, he once arranged to have county convicts paint the Odd Fellow's Hall.

Bob was well known around Saratoga Springs for his long-time work and leadership as a coordinator in several charities related to world hunger, such as the United Methodist Church Global Ministries Bread for the World Program. As part of that dedication, he organized and led many fund-raising Crop Walks around Saratoga Springs, for which I and other Zeh's, such as my mom, Gretchen, were often recruited.

Bob was a long-time member of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) and avid outdoors enthusiast who enjoyed hiking and cross-country skiing well into his 80s. My brothers, Art, Stan, and I personally accompanied him on too many hikes and ski-trips to remember. I personally watched him take some serious falls on his skis and we were always amazed at how he would bounce right back up. He was one tough guy. He would go on at least two dozen hikes per year, including most of the high peaks of the Adirondacks.

My brother, Art, recounts the tale of how Bob one day, in the middle of a hot summer, on an impulse, suddenly decided he just HAD to go hike and find Manville Rock along the old Plank Road which ends-up near Archer's Vly on its southern end on Lake Desolation Road. Somehow, he roped my brother into going with him. Despite his best efforts, much sweat, and agitated hunting and stomping around through the brush, they never did find it that day.

Bob was an avid attendee of the Saratoga Flat Track throughout his life and loved devouring all the racing programs and betting on the horses; yet another activity the Zeh boys were often known to accompany him on. Year after year, several days a week during the racing season, he would walk a dozen blocks or more from his home on Lake Avenue all the way over to Union Avenue carrying a folding lawn chair with all of his guides, pink sheet and newspapers folded-up inside it. He liked to set up his chair against the fence next to the Big Red Spring so he also could enjoy the spring water during his stay. It is my favorite spot at which to enjoy the venue and, along with Bob, I highly recommend it. It was my brother, Stan, who was with Bob one day when he won \$800 on a race. Winning was not so rare an event for him; and when he hit a horse like that, he would not stop grinning for the rest of the day.

I also recall quite fondly Bob's participation in organizing several Greenfield Heritage Day parades during the '80s and '90s. His black 1958 Chevy Impala convertible (purchased new and owned for something like 50 years), freshly washed, waxed, top down and gleaming in the sun, was always a prominent entry in the parade along with other classic and vintage cars. I got to drive the Impala during one of those parades and enjoyed it immensely. The one and only time I ever drove a convertible. It truly was fun.

For the past five years, Bob was a resident of the Home of the Good Shephard at 390 Church St. (Route 9N), in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Mr. Robert A. Dake was like an uncle to my brothers and I, and a long-time friend of my father. He was best man at my parent's wedding in 1958. His dry wit and wry smile will be greatly missed.



Bob Dake showing his tin-plate toy train at one of our Historical Society "Show and Tell Programs" where members brought in their childhood toys and shared their memories.

> Photo credit: Coral Crosman, Jan. 18, 2005, published in the February 2005, Town of Greenfield Historical Society Newsletter

Fifty Years Later By John R. Greenwood



I took the photograph above as I entered the long driveway leading to my mother's childhood home. She grew up there with her mother and father, three sisters and two brothers. It had been 50 years since I'd been there. I was around 10 when my grandfather died. The property was sold and my grandmother who moved next door to my parents but passed away a short time later. The house and property were purchased by Ray and Carolyn Bouchard in the mid '60s. I didn't know who lived in the home until several years after the Bouchard's purchased it. Mr. Bouchard was one of my high school teachers in the early '70s. At the time I had no idea he was raising a family in the same home where many of my fondest childhood memories were made.

With my mother having five siblings, I was fortunate to have several cousins. There were many family gatherings in the late '50s and early '60s at the old farm. There were lots of children with no television, Play Station or cell phones. We spent hours playing Simon Says or Hide and Seek. Kids with skinned knees and dirty faces playing together. Imaginations running wild. Aunts and uncles laughing, telling stories, sharing food and drink, enjoying life in its simplest form. How lucky I was to have those experiences in my life. There was a huge flood of emotion as I approached my grandparents old home.



These little stories come from various connections. Today's visit was the result of a connection made at work when a coworker asked me about a family video I had posted online. It was a video collection of photographs from my mother's side of the family. The connection was made when she saw the photos and recognized they were taken on her in-laws property. It was an ah-ha moment when we both realized her children had many of the same fond memories growing up on their grandparents property as I did with mine. Moments later I was in possession of her father-in-law's phone number. She said, "Call him. He would love to talk to you about the farm." A couple days later I did call and we did talk. A week later I was headed there for a visit.

There is another twist to this story. My grandparents last name was Kubish. The name of the family who originally settled the land and built the home in the 1800s was Cronkhite. Cronkhite's were one of the first families to settle the town of Greenfield Center, N.Y. There are four Cronkhite homes remaining within a few miles of each other on Wilton Rd. *The stone home of Rueben Cronkhite circa 1833 is one of the oldest homes in Greenfield. The Cronkhite house the Bouchard's live in is just east of the stone house; back at the end of the long driveway pictured in the first photo.

I remembered an old cemetery in the woods behind my grandparents house. I had a fairly good recollection of it's approximate location. Mr. Bouchard confirmed its existence. My hope for the day was to revisit the cemetery. My grandparents weren't related to the people buried there, they were simply the landowners for the first half of the 1900s. I've lived within 5 miles of the old farm all my life. When I called the Bouchard home to see if they would mind me taking a walk in the woods behind their home, Carolyn answered. She said Ray would be home shortly and I was welcome to come and walk the property. When I arrived there was only one set of car tracks in the snow so I knew Ray wasn't back yet. I drove in to the end of the driveway parked my truck and headed into the woods. It was early afternoon, the sun was out, but it was bitter cold. The whistling wind and creaking trees added to the aura of looking for an old cemetery nestled deep in the woods. I walked slowly trying to transport myself back to the 1960s. It wasn't hard. The solitude soaked into my skin like a sponge. Off in the distant trees I noticed some high ground with a wall of stone around it. My pulse spiked but at the same time a calm fell over me. I was grateful for the opportunity to return here. I weaved through the crusty snow and approached the old iron gate leading into the cemetery enclosure. What a beautiful place to be laid to rest. The plot was in some disrepair but for something that had stood untouched and strong through two centuries it was in amazing shape. It was more pristine than I'd remembered. I've included a few photos. I'd like to have the opportunity to return some day and possibly neaten things up. It seemed like the right thing to do; not to disturb or disrupt, but to simply pay some respect to the settlers buried there.

I stood looking at the land surrounding me. I tried to imagine it as the farmland it once was some 200 years ago. In my mind I removed the trees and pictured hayfilled fields encased by freshly stacked stonewalls. Without



leaves, and with just a few inches of snow cover, it felt as though you could see for miles. It was a soothing feeling.

I headed back toward the house but I didn't retrace my steps. I climbed to the top of the large hill that stretched along the backside of the old farm. The hill stood like a giant guardian protecting the house, outbuildings and garden. Dozens of children from past generations had used that hill as their playground. As I walked along the ridge of the hill and looked down on my grandparents old home I was suddenly a little boy playing army again. Memories flooded back. The hill was like a giant time machine.

The Bouchard's did a wonderful job preserving the home and several out buildings. I'm grateful for the years of hard work they've done there. I'm sure my grandparents would be pleased to see their home had been well cared for. I felt fortunate to be able to revisit it in person.



The Bouchard's are bird lover's. The well stocked feeders and trees filled with bluebirds, finches, and other songbirds made that abundantly clear. I felt obligated to share a less than proud story of my youth with Ray while we walked around the snow covered yard. I confessed that when I was around 9, I had a BB-gun, as many kids my age did. I had it with me one day when we were visiting my grandparents. I had asked my mother and father if I could take it out in the yard. I'm sure I crossed my heart and hoped to die promising to be careful. I did the unthinkable that day. I shot an innocent bird sitting on a telephone wire. That same wire stills runs across the yard just as it did back in 1964. This time the wire's residents were safe and sound. I told Ray that the experience defined me as an adult. The sick feeling I got shooting that little bird stuck with me the rest of my life. It triggered something within me that made me a more compassionate person. One small bird gave me the gift of a lifetime.





It has nothing to do with hunting. It has everything to do with not wanting to hurt anyone or anything. The yard around that home today was brimming with good karma. Somehow I felt I'd been forgiven.

We walked around to the back of the house where some of the many outbuildings I'd remembered were still standing. There were some vacant spots but Ray had salvaged and preserved a few of the vintage sheds we used to play in as children. He'd replaced and repaired siding, roofs, and windows. The patina on them was as pure as you can get. As Ray was describing some of the past and future plans he had for some of the sheds I noticed a piece of framed lumber with hinges on it laying on some stones behind one of the buildings. I was drawn to it like a moth to a July porch light. At first glance I thought it was a part of a wheelbarrow. As I got closer I realized it was the small door with hinges on the top. I believe it was the door into the old chicken coop. I suddenly had flashbacks of crawling in and out of it. I'm sure we used the old chicken coop as a fort or playhouse and that little door was our escape hatch. I asked Ray a couple days after our visit if there was a chance I could have that simple piece of family history so I could preserve it somehow. He never balked. He sent me a message telling me he would put in a safe place until my next visit. I can't wait.

The Bouchard's opened their home and heart to me on that visit. They invited me inside and walked me through the home showing me the work and changes they'd made. I stood in the middle of their living room and rotated slowly like the beacon in a Maine lighthouse. I could picture everything the way it was. I could smell the wood stove and hear the pendulum clocks ticking away. Behind me the living room wall was lined with the Bouchard's family photos. You could feel a sense of family swirling about.

The three of us gathered at the dining room table. Carolyn brought out coffee, crackers and homemade wine jelly. We sat there and recounted story after story about the experiences we'd enjoyed there. They ranged from the 1950s to 2016. It was a wonderful visit and I'm truly thankful for the Bouchard's daughter-in-law Rhonda for rekindling the connection between the two families.

Below are several old family photographs of mine taken in and around my grandparents home. I also included a link to the video I made that helped make my visit a reality. If you have ever have an opportunity to revisit an old family home that holds happy memories but a different family you might consider knocking on the door. You might get lucky like I did and find the caretakers of a lifetime.

This post is dedicated to the entire Bouchard Family with gratitude and appreciation.

Sincerely, John R. Greenwood January 23, 2016



Author Ray O'Conor speaking about his book, "She Called Him Raymond," at the March 15 meeting.

The Town of Greenfield Historical Society's Farmers Market at the Middle Grove Park will start Friday, June 17 through Sept. 9, 2016 – every Friday, 4 - 7 p.m.

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

If you have any information, email Dan Chertok at BMMSCHERTOK@GMAIL.COM. You also may call (518-321-0330) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859

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 a note describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by.

PLEASE SEND ARTICLES AND/OR PHOTOS FOR OUR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS. Mail to: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or email to: JJones18215@roadrunner.com.

Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS Karl and Wendy Zeh

March refreshment volunteers, Nancy Homiak and Jane Potter, served biscotti, chocolate peanut butter bars and cookies; congo bars and sour cream coffee cake; and JoAnn Rowland brought cookies from the Christmas Party. One of our new members, John Greenwood, brought Stewart's ice cream.

April refreshment volunteers are Coral Crosman and Alice Feulner.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

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 ONE YEARS DUES, 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

CLICK ON:	Start or renew your membership today	AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.
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Please Print – Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household).

Name	
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____



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