



Historical Society Newsletter

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

Volume 17, Issue 2



501(c)(3)

www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

Oct. 18 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Jay Ellsworth* will speak about the **Greenfield Volunteer Fire Co.**, covering its history and what they are doing now.

Nov. 15 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Jim Richmond* will talk about his book that is coming out this fall, **War on the Middleline**. He will speak about the Revolutionary War in Saratoga County after the Battle of Saratoga, local militias and the British raid along the Middleline Road in Ballston in October 1780.

Dec. 11 – Sunday, Christmas Party, 1-3 p.m. at the IOOF Hall/Museum in Middle Grove. Please bring cookies/desserts to share/sell. **Theme:** Santa.

Jan. 17, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Andrea Mann* will speak about growing up in Greenfield and the children's book she wrote – **A Letter From Ginger Boy**, which is the true story of a girl and her horse growing up in the Adirondack foothills, circa 1964.

March 21, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Lauren Roberts*, our county historian, will do a presentation on **"The Homestead – Saratoga County's Tuberculosis Sanitarium."**

April, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Dave Fiske* will talk about a new book he has written, *Solomon Northup's Kindred: The Kidnapping of Free Citizens Before the Civil War*.

May 16, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Marty Podskoch* will speak about a book he wrote on **Fire Towers**.

**Everyone is welcome, admission is free,
you don't have to be a member to attend and
refreshments are served after all programs.**

*Thanks to every one that brought a dish to pass at our
September Pot Luck Dinner.*

*October refreshment volunteers are Susan Martin and
Nancy Homiak.*

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

Comment on the September Article "School Days" by Mary Vetter

Thanks Toni, it was great to see the following comment on our web page. We hope more of you will be inspired to write. You can view the articles online under the "Read This" tab.

You also can comment online or by mail. Please mail your comments to: Town of Green Historical Society, Attention: Mary Vetter, PO Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833.

Commenter: Toni L'Hommedieu – Sept. 21, 2016

Your school article brought back lots of memories. I remember listening to what was going on during the lesson of the other grade group in our room. It was more interesting than my own grade lessons.

I remember the last day of school each year; the Methodist ladies would bring a picnic for us. It was set up in the back of Porter's School. I looked forward to that for two reasons: school was over for the summer (more swimming at Sheep Dip) and their food was delicious.

I remembered the people I shared Frank Niznik's bus with like Mary Ann Bellon, Phyllis Wittiker, the Weirman kids, Wayne Middlebrook, Ralph Waite, Bobby Rhodes, Ellen and Patty Mousin, Mary Deucher, Harold Williams and others. I was on my way to see other friends at school like Carol Podwerny, the Foy kids, Donnie and Cliff (Cy) Young, Lisa Simmons, Warren Rodgers and lots of others. I wish I could spell their names correctly and remember all of them.

Lucy Ballou scared me. She would swat kids with a rubber fly swatter that was in strips. I didn't know why they were getting swatted or how the swatter was in tatters. I could only guess that I was next for some unknown reason and that the punishment would be so harsh as to ruin the fly swatter. I think I was the best I could be in her class and never got swatted. However, her class was the end of the "good kid" routine. I have to add that I never heard a description of the magnitude of the swatting from any of the swattees. So it couldn't have been all that bad – more scary.

At the end of my third grade, our district moved to Greenfield School. We moved because my mother, a very proper lady from Long Island yet, did not care for there being no doors on the girls bathroom stalls. Anyway that's the story I got.

Clayton Brown was the superintendent. Loreto Tempesta and Robert Sloane were my teachers.

Greenfield was a new and exciting adventure. I think it had four rooms while Porter's only had three. We hit the big time. New friends, new experiences.

I think that growing up country in small schools, tight knit communities, socializing with families at the firehouses, the grange, 4-H and church suppers was the absolute best time and prepared me well for my journeys. Every time I come home to be with my sister and her family in the foothills of the Adirondacks, I truly am home again.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

The Art of Storytelling

by Ron Feulner

I have been writing this article for so long, I can't remember what I have written about and what I have not, so there is a good chance that I will be repeating the same stories from time to time. However, because I can't always remember the details of a story, I have to embellish a little, and that means that each time I tell it, it may come out differently.

That reminds me of a story that Norma Hoffman (her husband, Gerald, built and ran the auto garage on Middle Grove Road diagonally across from the IOOF Hall) once told me. Her father, Roy Baugh, was a great storyteller and had one to fit every occasion. Norma said that she could remember the first time that she encountered the art of storytelling. She and her father experienced an event together (she didn't say what it was) and a couple of days later her father was talking to a friend of his while Norma hugged his pant leg and listened. As her father's story began to unfold, Norma realized that it was significantly different from her memory of how the event had occurred. From that day on she became aware of the art of storytelling and listened every time her father told another story.

My brother, Gene, remembers Roy Baugh from the time he came to a Boy Scout meeting in the late nineteen forties or early fifties. The boys were being taught the art of survival and their scout master decided to bring in an expert to give them some pointers. Since Roy was a well-known hunter and sportsman in Middle Grove, he was asked to speak to the boys. As a demonstration, Roy decided to show the boys how they could start a fire even during wet and rainy weather. He told them that birch bark could always be used as kindling to get the fire started, and to demonstrate, he had brought some with

him. He first soaked the bark in a pail of water to simulate a rainy day and then took out a book of matches and lit one and held it under a small cone of bark on the ground. The bark smoked a little but did not ignite, so Roy lit another match and repeated. After using up all his matches and not getting the bark to light, he made some lame excuses and the boy's leader changed the subject and the meeting went on.

Roy's mistake was soaking the bark in a pail of water instead of pouring some water over one side of it. In nature the bark is still attached to a tree and because it is impermeable, the water is shed from the surface while the underside next to the tree remains dry.

Had the demonstration gone as Roy thought it would, my brother probably would have forgotten it by now, but because of Roy's failure to light the fire and his resulting embarrassment, my brother never forgot.

In the days of my youth, storytelling (especially family related stories) was more popular than it is now. It may be because stories were a form of endless entertainment when we didn't have TV and Facebook, etc., to keep us occupied.

My grandfather died the year before I was born, but I grew up feeling as if I had known him and taking great pride in having his name as my middle name. I think that happened because I heard family stories about him almost daily when I was very young. Family members who had passed weren't really gone because their stories lived on. I don't observe this as often in today's world.

Story telling is an art like painting, wood carving, etc. and should be practiced to be good at. There are still some excellent storytellers around, and you know who they are once you have heard one of their stories. So be thankful for these artists, and the next time you sit down with friends or family members, try your own hand (or mouth) at the art of telling a story. You might surprise your listeners, especially the young ones who may not have experienced this form of art before.

Town of Greenfield Grange



*Grange members receiving awards for membership:
Dick Rowland 50 yrs., Earl Jones and Henry Rowland 75 yrs.
Lillian Bull 65 yrs., Margie Jones, Dorothy Rowland 75 yrs.*

HERITAGE HUNTERS

October Genealogy Conference

Dennis Hogan will be the speaker at the annual Heritage Hunters Genealogy Conference. The conference will be held on **Saturday, Oct. 15 at Saratoga Town Hall in Schuylerville**, at the corner of Rt. 4 and Rt. 29, (12 Spring St.). Dennis is a professional genealogist from Western New York, specializing in Irish Genealogy and New York Research. His volunteer activities include serving as Town of Gorham historian, webmaster for the Town of Gorham Historical Society and coordinator of the computer interest group for the Rochester Genealogical society. The conference topics are: United States Records for Your Foreign Ancestor; Getting the Most from Fulton History Website; Googling for Genealogy [Google Maps and Google Earth]; and Survey of Brick Wall Techniques.

The day begins with registration, exhibits and coffee at 8:45 a.m. and will conclude at 3:15 p.m. Registration is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Included is a hot lunch, breaks and exhibits. An option is offered for \$45 that would include HH 2016-2017 membership at \$15 and the conference at \$30. For information and registration, call 518-587-2978 or email: melfrejo@aol.com.

The Town of Greenfield Historical Society Gala – Oct. 1, 2016



PORTER CORNERS SCHOOL 1943

By Joyce (Burton) Woodard

I was born in 1938 and therefore when I became 5 years old I started first grade at the Porter Corners School on North Creek Road. I walked to school from my home on Porter Road with my older sister and the neighbor children. The school housed eight grades in one building. All of the students lived in Porter Corners. Some of the boys did ride bicycles to school.

The total number of students ranged from about 25-30 students in the eight grades and there were two teachers. In my first grade year, there were four of us in the grade, myself, Millicent Rowland, Bobby Kanar and Clifford Young.

We were in the “Little Room” which was separated from the “Big Room” by the girl’s bathroom. The boy’s room was in the basement and girls were not allowed down there. Our room was very comfortable with lots of windows with sunlight pouring in. There was a large blackboard behind the teacher’s desk. We had single desks in a row. I remember the bookcases along the wall by the windows full of books. I loved reading and became an avid reader reading and re-reading those books.

My first teacher was Mrs. Lucy Ballou. She taught there for 14 years. We were taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Later on in the other room we had social studies or history as it was called and some science. We had school parties and a school play at Christmas time. We did not have scheduled gym, music or art classes but we did drawing. A great advantage in my opinion was having three grades in the same room. When our teaching time was finished we were supposed to practice our letters or numbers. However, since the teacher was teaching in the same room we could hear her and certainly learn what she was teaching. We had a visiting school nurse a few times a year, checking our weight, eyes, ears and of course for “head lice.”

We had recess outside after lunch. We played Dodge Ball, Hide & Seek and Baseball. I was terrible at baseball.

We felt safe at school since we all knew each other and we were also playmates after school. We were too young to be affected by World War II which was going on, but we did have some drills both at school and at home. (blackouts at night). Most of us had a radio, a home telephone and automobiles in our families. There was no shortage of information among the community. We were a self-contained community having the store, church, post-office and school.

A few years after I started school the “Big Room” was divided in half and grades 4-6 were in one room and grades 7-8 were in the other. After grade 8, we rode the bus to Saratoga Springs High School on Lake Avenue in Saratoga.

I feel lucky to have lived in that time period. Maybe today’s students have more technology but we never lacked for companionship or loyalty and never felt deprived.

Our first articles were published on Sept. 20, 2016. So come back to read and enjoy. We also welcome your comments and hope you will share what you find here with your friends and family, particularly those who may not be online.

Thanks, Mary Vetter, President

September Pot Luck/Meeting/Program

by Joan Rowland

September brings cooler temps and the Town of Greenfield Historical Society back together with a wonderful Pot Luck Dinner. If you were looking for a ham, lasagna, eggplant parm., corn bread or a soup, or a reminder of the summer months of macaroni salad, potato salad and always great desserts – you would find it at the Sept. 20th Meeting.

After the meeting, run by our new president, Mary Vetter, we enjoyed the talks of Marty Podskoch and his slide presentation which included reminders of the “102 Club” and fire towers available to visit in the Adirondacks and Catskills. His main topic was his working with his friend, Sam Glanzman, to feed him information for his friend to set up cartoon type strips or one cartoon using these historical facts. Some of the etchings were amazing to see the detail. Marty being a retired teacher always gives us a history lesson when he comes to visit and always includes the group in his programs.



Marty Podskoch talking about his book on “Adirondack Stories.”

Mug Fund Raiser



A mug has been designed with the current Caboose/ Kings Station and previous station dating back to around 1900. They are for sale for \$10 each. Mugs are available by contacting Joan



Rowland at 518-893-7786 or email jrowland25@verizon.net. Please place your order by Nov. 1. They will be delivered to the Nov. 15 meeting. (Shipping by U.S. Mail will be \$8 extra.)



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