

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 Crosman, Trustee; Vince Walsh, Trustee; JoAnn Rowland, Trustee

Volume 8, Issue 9

Calendar

May 20: Tuesday, meeting held at the Greenfield Community Center at 7 p.m. – election of officers and program to follow.

Don Williams – “Past and Present Amusement Parks in the Adirondacks.”

June 7: Volunteer work day at the IOOF hall.

Rain date June 14.

Ron’s Ramblings

Finally, we had a meeting on a good weather night, and fifty of you came. Our last two monthly meetings were held on nights when the weather threatened, but the April meeting night could not have been more pleasant. To add to the evening, Tracy Purcell provided an excellent program. First, he talked about growing up in the Greenfield area during the depression years. He told us, “I was poor but didn’t know it until I got to high school because all our neighbors were the same.” Tracy went on to describe a life that would be the envy of Indiana Jones. It is difficult to imagine how one man could fit so many adventures into eighty-one years.

We also had a productive business meeting. We discussed the upcoming meetings and activities before our summer hiatus begins. We also passed a motion to increase our board by two members taking it from the present seven member board to a nine member board. Since it involves a constitution change, we will have to have another vote at the May meeting to make it final.

Another significant piece of business was the passing of a resolution to support the efforts of Jason Kilmer (and family) in their efforts to restore their historic waterwheel driven sawmill. The project will be a large one as the millpond dam will have to be rebuilt. This project will need the approval of agencies like the state department of environmental conservation. We decided to write a letter of support to Jason so that he will have it when he begins his application process.

Fran Lambert, chairperson of the Dake Cemetery Committee gave a brief summary of the committee’s activities, and we followed that with a field trip to the cemetery on April 26th, and a board meeting to discuss our involvement in the project on the 29th.

This year has flown by. Partly, I think, because of all the activities that our organization has been involved in. Sometimes, I feel as if I am the CEO of a small corporation, spending a lot of time e-mailing and talking on the telephone. Last fall, when I became your president, I briefly described my philosophy of leadership. I said that I viewed the organization as being yours. We would make it what you wanted. My job was simply to coordinate all of your activities, and, let me tell you, you kept me busy.

Many of you stepped up to the plate and offered your expertise in a wide range of skills and interests. I cannot do each of you justice in this limited space, but the efforts ranged from people like Harold Jones, who spent countless hours crawling underneath the IOOF hall helping

me string electrical conduit and later to install insulation, to those of you who gave us words of encouragement, telling us how much you enjoyed our newsletter. It never ceases to amaze me the number of you who have said that you keep every issue. My only fear in mentioning some of you is that others may feel left out, but all of you played an important role in making this year a success.

First, I would like to thank the board members who served with me this year. They are Tom Siragusa as vice-president; Patty Schwartzbeck, secretary; Robert Roeckle, treasurer; Coral Crosman, trustee, Vince Walsh, trustee; JoAnn Rowland, trustee.

Next, the standing committee chairpersons and their committee members: Lynn Wochinger for an excellent job with the Program Committee; Nancy Homiak, Membership Committee (Mary DeMarco for Stewart's Ice Cream coupon program for new members); Dorothy Rowland, Daketown School activity coordinator for the open house at the school and also the fourth grade class visitation day last fall (Henry Rowland and Joyce Woodard helped with the project); Harold Jones, Building and Grounds Committee chairman (members of committee were Vince Walsh, Joyce Woodard, Ron Deutsch, Louise Okoniewski, and Robert Roeckle); Coral Crosman for work on obtaining our \$5,000 state grant; Joyce Woodard, Research and Archives Committee (Ann Michel, assistant), also both served on the Nominating Committee; Janet Jones, Newsletter Committee and editor of newsletter plus Refreshment Committee; kitchen workers Nancy Homiak, Janet Jones, Earl and Margie Jones (plus all the individuals that brought delicious treats during the year); Harold Jones and Janet Jones for doing the annual audit of the treasurer's books; and Fran Lambert chairperson of the Dake Cemetery Committee.

Next, I would like to thank all of you who volunteered work on the IOOF hall and the Daketown School. I would especially like to thank Sabrina Carter who kept the IOOF lawn mowed last summer, and Dave Wardell for snow plowing. Also thanks to Vince Walsh and Andy Fyfe for organizing a fledgeling farmers market

last summer. We hope to continue it again this year. Also Joyce Woodard, Louise Okoniewski, and Chad Jorgensen for the garage sale held at our carriage sheds last summer. Both projects helped raise money and gained us a few members. Also JoAnn Rowland and her helpers for putting on our Christmas Open House and Dorothy Rowland for making her famous punch.

I would also like to thank all of you who sent extra money as donations during the year to help us finance our projects. Without you, we could not do as much. Also, Patty Schwartzbeck for donating a computer and monitor and Bob Dake for purchasing a printer/copier. Winnie O'Connell donated several bales of insulation, which we put to good use when we blew insulation in the walls and ceiling of the IOOF hall office project.

Probably, our biggest accomplishment this year was the renovation of the kitchen area in the IOOF hall. We wired it, insulated it, added electric heat, and gave it a new coat of paint making it into a year-round office space for our archive volunteers. A special thanks to all of you who participated in the project. The project included Kevin Girvin, Harold Jones, Michael Cinadr, and me on the wiring phase, Harold Jones, Vince Walsh, and me on the insulation phase, me cementing the joints and patching the insulation holes, Harold repairing the siding and floor. The painting phase is yet to be completed.

And, finally, I would like to say a very big thank you to Janet Jones, editor of the newsletter, for all her efforts making the newsletter what it is and all of you who wrote articles for us this year. We are using the last one in this issue, and we are hoping that some of you will use the summer break to write and send us more for next year.

We also have several on going projects like Ron Deutsch's application for our 501-C-3 status as a non-profit organization and our permanent charter application, which is complete except for a visit from a state representative.

This year, you have shown how a community effort can result in a success story for our organization. Have a good restful summer with family and friends, and I look forward to seeing you again in September.

Daketown School Greenfield #8

By Mary Carlson

Remembering Daketown School is like reliving eight years of my life. We didn't have kindergarten, just first through eighth grades, all in one room. Next to the long blackboard wall were the smaller desks. The center of the room had medium sized desks, and the window wall had the big desks for the big kids. Student enrollment was usually ten to thirteen kids. Any extra desks were stored in the loft space over the classroom area. This space was accessed through the wood storage area at the front of the building.

The mile plus walk to school made many memories. I started first grade when I was six-years old, walking to school with my cousins, George and Laura Potter. John and Chet were older and went earlier to fetch water from Arthur Jones's farm for the stoneware water jar that we used for drinking water. When the weather was cold John and Chet also built the fire in the big wood stove that was in the back of the room.

In the spring, we looked for Mayflowers, bloodroot, and trilliums. Bloodroot was great for trying to trick the teacher, or my mother, into thinking there was a cut on my finger. The trilliums (stink pots, as we called them) when presented to the teacher could really stink up the room.

The winter walks were the most fun for me, once I got used to those scratchy woolen pants and buckle boots. Pine tree hill had a great bank for a quick fast ride on the seat of our pants or lunch boxes. There was a trail along Mr. Vanna's pasture fence that went to the top of the hill to the specific place where we could begin that short quick slide down followed by the quick scramble up to do it over again. Of course the person who emptied the water jug at the end of the day during winter just had to pour it on the path leading up the hill toward the flag pole which was another good place to have a fast sled ride. Sometimes I stayed after school to sleigh ride, and I got in trouble for getting home late for my chores.

In the opposite direction from the school was Mr. Jones's hill where we could ride down, and by steering to the right, we could go all the way to the creek. The closer we got to the creek, the better. If we landed up on the on the ice edge even better.

Across from the school was Mr. Jones's pasture where we could ride our sleds down to the creek in a different direction. On a good sledding day, we started our ride in the field next to the school, crossed the road, went down across the field, ducked our heads going under Mr. Vanna's fence, and landed up onto the ice of the creek. That was a really great ride. Usually there was only time for two rides during a lunch hour.

During lunch hour, we frequently met Irene, Ed, Vernon, and Paul Palm, later to be joined by Rosemary, Joie, and Betty. They lived at the Dake farm. The Dake farm was where Dake Brothers Ice Cream started. This was according to my father, who turned the crank to make some of that first ice cream. Coming back to school from the Dake farm, past Fred Carp's place, there was another really good hill for sledding.

During the spring and fall, we loved the grape arbor at the vacant Carp farm. I felt right at home there because we hayed those fields, and I remembered going with my father to visit Mr. and Mrs. Carp. The trees in the lower field were fun for playing hide and seek or just jumping over. The creek in the back was so beautiful and peaceful, a very special place. Following the creek down to the bridge was always a special time of discovery and tranquility.

The field next to the school with young flexible trees growing in the wet spot was another fun place to spend recess. The pasture where the old Dake homestead foundations were, was another favorite lunchtime place to play. I can remember playing hide and seek, jumping over the pine trees, dropping stones down the old well and trying to guess how far down the water was, and walking the lane through the big pines looking for lady slippers. These activities made our noon hour go by much too fast. Sometimes, we just didn't hear the teacher's bell calling us back, but we couldn't get away with that excuse too often.

During recess, and sometimes during lunch hour, we just played around the school house. On those occasions, we played kick the can, hide and seek (with the flag pole as our base), and Andy Over. These were our favorites. The side of the school where the trees were growing near the building made

it really hard for most of us to throw the ball over the roof.

Summer was for bike riding for the older kids. The bank in front of the school house was more defined than it is now. It was a great place to jump bikes. George was good at it, but I was too afraid of ruining my hard-earned bike to do it often.

Winter time brought snow tunnels, forts, and snowball fights, which were another matter. I really loved digging the snow tunnels and forts. There were big drifts from the bank in front of the school out into the road. When we could, we took advantage of those drifts to extend the tunnels. Roswell Barron was our mailman, and I was always sad to see his red car coming down the road because our drift would be ruined. Although, I must confess, it was very scary to be caught in a snowdrift that broke through and you were stuck up to your waist in snow.

Inside the school, the windows were always decorated at holidays. Usually the decorations were copies of drawings from *The Gray Teacher*, our teacher, Mary Chatfield's, magazine. This magazine, and a couple of others, were where we chose our Christmas recitations and plays from. Our teacher had hooks on each side of the room with wire and long dark curtains. The cloakroom was our backstage. How rewarding and heartwarming it was to learn our poems and play parts, then have the curtains open to see our parent's, and friends of our parent's, proud loving faces.

We started our school day with the flag salute then had our lessons and listened while the other grades had their fifteen-minute lessons. In winter, the heat that circulated around the metal jacket of the big wood stove was always pleasant. The smell of the drying wet woolen mittens lying around the bottom filled the air with a comforting smell never to be forgotten.

I'd like to thank last month's refreshment volunteers – Jane Potter and Katie Finnegan. They served cookies, biscotti and brownies.

Erika Burkowski and Lynn Wochinger volunteered to be on the May refreshment committee.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

Anonymous Letter to the Society Newsletter

From time to time, we have received letters and e-mails telling us how much some of you have enjoyed our newsletters, and we have included excerpts of many of them in our newsletters. In March, we received an anonymous letter critical of us. We decided that it was only fair that we react to it also.

The letter was filled with bitterness and dissatisfaction with our historical society and the way it is being run. Because it was unsigned, we shall only outline the letter's concerns. The letter opened with the following: "I've had occasion to read a few of your 'newsletters,' and frankly, it appears that you are a senior social club under the guise of historical society!"

The letter goes on to criticize us for not being involved in nor representing the history of our town. It is critical of our newsletter, our alleged lack of involvement in historical preservation type activities, and specifically of my writings in the newsletter. The writer says, "Ron's ramblings are just that: the ramblings of an old man, a would-be writer who likes to see his words in print to feed his ego."

It states that the letter writer is an aged life-long resident of the town who says, "As a young person, I was a regular at grange meetings, was often participant in Mary Sebasta's 'pagents.' That, too, was nothing more than ritual and social gatherings, some place to go. Nothing has changed."

The letter writer concludes with: "I'm sorry if I sound harsh and negative, but it's wrong to wear the label of something you are not. It would be more appropriate to call yourselves what you really are: Greenfield Old Folks Social Club."

I am sorry that the writer chose not to sign the letter, for we would then take it more seriously and would have included it in its entirety. Never the less, I think that, as president, I should address a few of the letter writer's concerns.

First, our organization was formed many years ago at which time our constitution was written. Article II of the constitution outlines our objectives and the kinds of projects that we should be involved in. We take this seriously and review our projects periodically to make certain they conform.

Secondly, much of what we do (and have done in the past) involves projects on historic buildings that we are trying to preserve. One of our very first projects was helping to restore the old rail road

station on Route 9N (our organization installed the metal roof). More recently, we finished a complete restoration of the Daketown one-room school house at a cost of nearly \$10,000. Currently, we have been working diligently on the IOOF hall in Middle Grove and the carriage house (one of the few remaining) behind it that once belonged to the Middle Grove Baptist Church (which burned many years ago). Restoration projects are long term and take a great deal of time, money, and effort and therefore must be chosen carefully.

Thirdly, it appears that one man's history is another man's folly. We believe that collecting and preserving stories about past life in Greenfield in our newsletter is one of the most important historical projects that we are involved in. This seems to be verified by the fact that other historical organizations have asked to be included on our mailing list. These include the Saratoga Room in the Saratoga Springs Library, the Brookside Museum in Ballston Spa, and the County Historian's Office in Ballston Spa. In the case of the Saratoga Room, I have been told that they are archiving all of our issues.

The letter writer's last point was a criticism of us because we enjoy ourselves. He/she called us a social club. We are kind of proud of that. After our volunteer work sessions, many have said how much they enjoyed themselves. Following our monthly meetings, we share great home baked desserts (made by member volunteers) and good conversation. I think some of our members look forward to that part of the evening as much as the meeting itself – I know that I do. Some of us feel that the regulars at our meetings have become like an extended family, and we look forward to a reunion with them every month. Who is to say that we can't accomplish our goals as a historical society and still enjoy ourselves?

Finally, I would like to extend a personal invitation to the letter writer to come and join us. Perhaps, if he/she were to attend a few of our meetings, they might find us a pleasant group to spend an evening with. The writer might find a little communion and festivity refreshing. Also, we are in serious need of articles for our newsletter. Perhaps this individual could write something of historic value for one of our upcoming issues or, at the very least, join us for our volunteer work day (June 7th) when we will be doing restoration work on the IOOF hall and carriage sheds.

Best wishes for a pleasant summer.

Ron Feulner

Memories

By Alice Feulner

As our May meeting brings a close to our Historical Society's calendar year, I started thinking about members who haven't been able to attend for various reasons. They were members long before I was. Jim and Rosemary Smith – he who brought music and wonderful stories to our gatherings. Jack and Miriam Ellsworth, Bob Dake, Evelyn Feulner, Bessie Thibideau, and Gertrude and Ernie Chamberlain. She gave me my first Christmas story way back when I was editor of the newsletter. Every time I drive past their house, I look for the lamp in the window. There's Bill Wilsey who has lots of knowledge on area history. I miss you all and hope it will be a good summer for everyone.



*The Dake Cemetery
Field Trip – April 26, 2008*

Below is a listing of names copied from the following web site (http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nysarato/Bixby_Greenfield.html), compiled by Dave Bixby, per C. Durkee's 1878 cemetery report – "The Dake Cemetery is situated on the west side of the road leading from West Greenfield in a northerly direction, near and on the south bank of the Kayaderosseras Creek."

Bentley, Anna	wife of Abraham Bentley
Dake, Abigail	wife of Charles Dake
Dake, Anna	wife of Benjamin Dake
Dake, Benjamin	husband of Anna Dake
Dake, Charles	b: 1805 d: 10/03/1850
Dake, Tompkins	b: 1814 d: 11/15/1858
Dake, Warren	b: 1808 d: 07/24/1833
Day, Oliva E.	daughter of Timothy & Sarah Day
Day, Sarah	consort of Rev. Timothy Day
Day, Timothy, Rev.	husband of Sarah Day
Deake, Anna Gould	consort of Charles Deake, Sr.
Deake, Charles, Jr.	husband of Abigail Dake?
Deake, Charles, Sr.	husband of Anna Gould Deake
Hanford, Polly	consort of John Hanford

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 _____

We still need articles for the 2008-09 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.

**Town of Greenfield Historical Society
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