



## Historical Society Newsletter

**OFFICERS:** President, Mary Vetter; Vice President, Joan Rowland;

Secretary, Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland;

**TRUSTEES:** Dan Chertok, Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, Katie Finnegan, John Greenwood, Mike Gymarthy, Louise Okoniewski, Robert Roeckle, and Patti Veitch

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

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[www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com)

### JANUARY NOTES 2021

by Mary Vetter

Dear Members:

I sincerely hope that this New Year brings all of us much good health and cheer. We have all struggled with many challenges during 2020. The fact that we have pulled through is a sign of hope. Have faith that this long winter will end and a bright spring will follow.

Over the next month I will put together a list of our planned spring and summer events and give you all an update. Stay warm, stay safe.

### Town of Greenfield Volunteer Fire Departments

Ron Feulner and Louise Okoniewski have been working on collecting materials to celebrate the history of the Volunteer Fire Departments that have served our community with distinction. This is a huge undertaking and we want to create a display at the museum that will do justice to the men and women who have protected our town. So we need help.

We are looking for documents, photos, and other memorabilia that relates to the volunteer fire fighters/departments that serve or have served our town.

We need people to help manage the materials we receive and to help create the displays that will be installed at the museum. Our intent, at this point, is to create displays for The Lake Desolation Fire Company that recently disbanded and for each of the four fire houses that currently serve our town.

If you can help us out, it would be greatly appreciated. If you know anyone who might be interested in sharing materials and memories of our volunteer fire departments, or who may be interested in working on this project, please share this information with them.

You can express your interest by contacting me at [mvetter@nycap.rr.com](mailto:mvetter@nycap.rr.com).

*Mary Vetter, President TOGHS*

### Shop at Amazon Smile

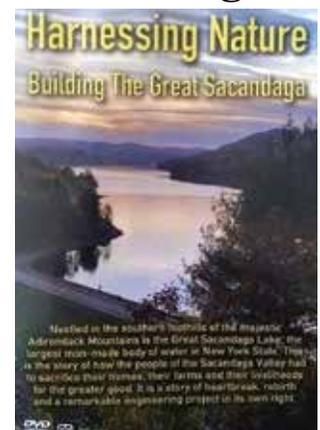
*Help support our historical society when you shop at Amazon. Amazon Smile, the charitable arm of Amazon, will make a donation to us on qualifying purchases when you sign into your Amazon account at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). The first time you do this, tap Accounts & Lists then tap Your Amazon Smile. On the right-hand side of the screen tap the change charity button and type in: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society.*

*Once you have saved us as your charity, start shopping. When you checkout, Amazon will let you know if any of your purchases qualify for a donation. Amazon then sends the donation to us. You do nothing more. Remember to sign in at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) on all your Amazon shopping trips to support us.*

*Thanks!*

### “Harnessing Nature: Building the Great Sacandaga”

This DVD is an 80-minute documentary telling the story of how the people of the Sacandaga Valley had to sacrifice their homes, their farms and their livelihoods for the greater good. It is a story of heartbreak, rebirth and a remarkable engineering project in its own right. This is the story of how the Great Sacandaga Lake, the largest man-made body of water in New York state, was made.



DVDs are available for \$20. They are at the Greenfield Town Hall, or by contacting the Historical Society at P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. (Please add \$3 if you want one mailed.) *Makes a great gift!*

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

As you probably remember, I am doing a series of articles about the history of the store in Middle Grove where the infamous Middle Grove fire of 1907 started. Moses Rowell was one of the early owners of the building where the fire started, and although the Rowell family no longer owned it at the time of the fire, it was still referred to as the Rowell Store.

Moses D. Rowell, in addition to running his store, was a deacon in the Middle Grove Baptist Church. He was also active in an organization called the Independent Order of Odd Fellows or IOOF. As such, he donated land for the IOOF to build a new hall adjacent to the Baptist church and contributed toward the erection of the building. In 1878, the structure was completed and not only served the IOOF members in their upstairs meeting room, but the first floor was available for their sister organization, the Rebekas, to hold their meetings. In addition, other community events such as local court trials, suppers, and for a while, a high school were held on the first floor also. (The building is now owned by the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and is home to their museum.)

Rowell's store adjacent to the hotel in Middle Grove may have been the only store in town for a while, but by March 5, 1879, the *Saratoga Sentinel* (predecessor of the *Saratogian*) lists under Middle Grove news, that, "Small store near Kilmer blacksmith shop was burned Monday night – P. Naity sold groceries – recovered most stock, insurance \$300."

Samuel H. Craig, the man that Rowell had purchased the store from died on March 17, 1880. His obituary stated, "... an old resident of Jamesville, died yesterday afternoon. He was about 50 years, and was a brother-in-law of Capt. Lewis Wood of Saratoga Springs. (It is interesting to note that one of the early owners of the hotel in Middle Grove was E.O. Wood.)

According to the September 9, 1880 *Saratoga Sentinel* newspaper, "Mr. S. Early, formerly of this town [Greenfield] but lately of Batchlerville, has purchased the stock of goods in the store of M.D. Rowell and rented the store for three years. He has taken in as partner Frank Otton of Rensselaer County, they took possession September first."

Apparently Moses Rowell now owned the store in Middle Grove, but chose to rent it to Mr. Early while Moses pursued other business interests.

Before I close, this month, I would like to comment on the loss of one of the Town of Greenfield's longest and most active citizens. Dorothy Rowland died on November 29, 2020.

There are words that stick together in my brain like they belong together, words like apple and pie, blue and sky, etc. One of these word combinations that have been floating around in my gray matter for as long as I can remember is, "Dorothy and Henry." Dorothy and Henry Rowland have been a central part of the fabric of life here in the Town of Greenfield for me since I was a child. Both of them had good jobs in the area and raised a family, but they did so much more; they also gave back to the community.

A church dinner never seemed complete without seeing the two of them in the kitchen. Henry once taught me how to wash dishes after one of those suppers. He demonstrated to me that your fingers are much more sensitive to food still stuck to a plate than your eyes are. Your fingers can even pick up a thin film of oil or grease when your eyes can't detect it. Henry said he learned the art of dish washing in the service during World War Two.

My favorite pie is a lemon meringue, and Dorothy made one of the best. For years, I had a standard order in for one when the church had a pie sale, and Dorothy always set mine aside for me. Then, when they were unable to work the pie sales any more, Dorothy offered to make a lemon pie at her home any time I wished to order one. For a while this worked well until I realized that it was difficult for her to even do this.

My mouth still waters when I think of those pies, and they looked just as good as they tasted. Dorothy was certainly a master in the kitchen.

As town historian, I receive numerous requests (often out-of-state) for history of the area, and if I could not help the people, I often called Dorothy, and she would, more often than not, have the answers.

On so many levels, I, and the whole community, will miss Dorothy, and I can only imagine what Henry is feeling. I only hope that some of the younger people in the town will see Dorothy and Henry as role models and continue to make the Town of Greenfield as nice a place to live as it has been under their tenure.

*Photos and caption supplied by Robert Roeckle from Jane Potter's Collection*



*I think the ice skating is in Congress Park but not really sure. Probably late 1890s or early 1900s based on the other photos around them in the album. Have no clue who they are, but if you compare to the photos from the Blanchard party most likely some of the same people*



### **Updating Our Records**

We're asking every one that uses email to send us your email address in case we are unable to do a complete mailing in coming years. We will mail to members that don't use email or still want a hard copy.

Thank you — [toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:toghistsoc@gmail.com)

### **Donation to the Historical Society**

*The Historical society received a check from the distribution of the Estate of Jane C. Potter for \$5,761.92.*



**Latham's Pond**, Porter Road, Porter Corners, 1939 or 1940. My aunt, Stell McLaren, told us that they usually skated after dark (no photos), but she did find this one taken during the day. She said when they heard a train coming, they would skate under the trestle. Sometimes, the ice wasn't always frozen under there, but she never fell through. (Notice that there isn't any snow and only a few trees.)

Photo provided by Estella (Jones) McLaren



**Bucket's Pond** in 1982, taken by a member of the Earl and Margie Jones family. Our whole family skated on the pond for many years. This was one of those winter days when it was cold, but no snow. We didn't have to shovel before we skated. Pictured is Nancy (Jones) Homiak and her family on the ice.



PORTER CORNERS, N. Y., IN WINTER.  
LOOKING NORTH.



Above: This is now a private home located at the four corners of Porter Road, North Creek Road, Allen Road, and North Greenfield Road.

Left: Taken from Porter Road (called Maple Avenue when this picture was taken) looking toward Allen Road and the four corners.

## THE TOWN OF GREENFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is still looking for a few good bodies (and minds)!

*Are you good at planning social events?*

*Are you good at working with people?*

*Do you have carpentry skills?*

*Are you good at organizing collections?*

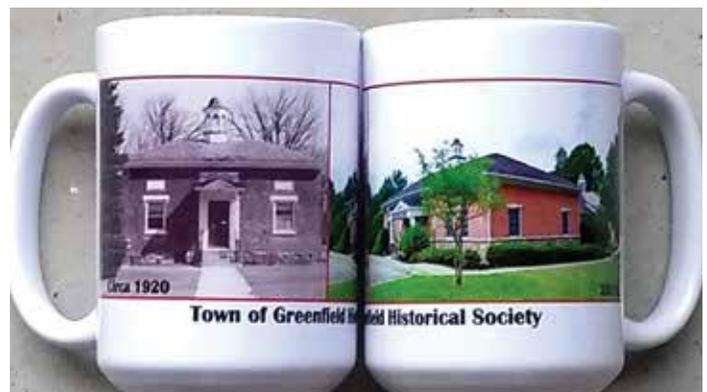
*Do you have computer skills?*

*Do you like lawn and landscaping work?*

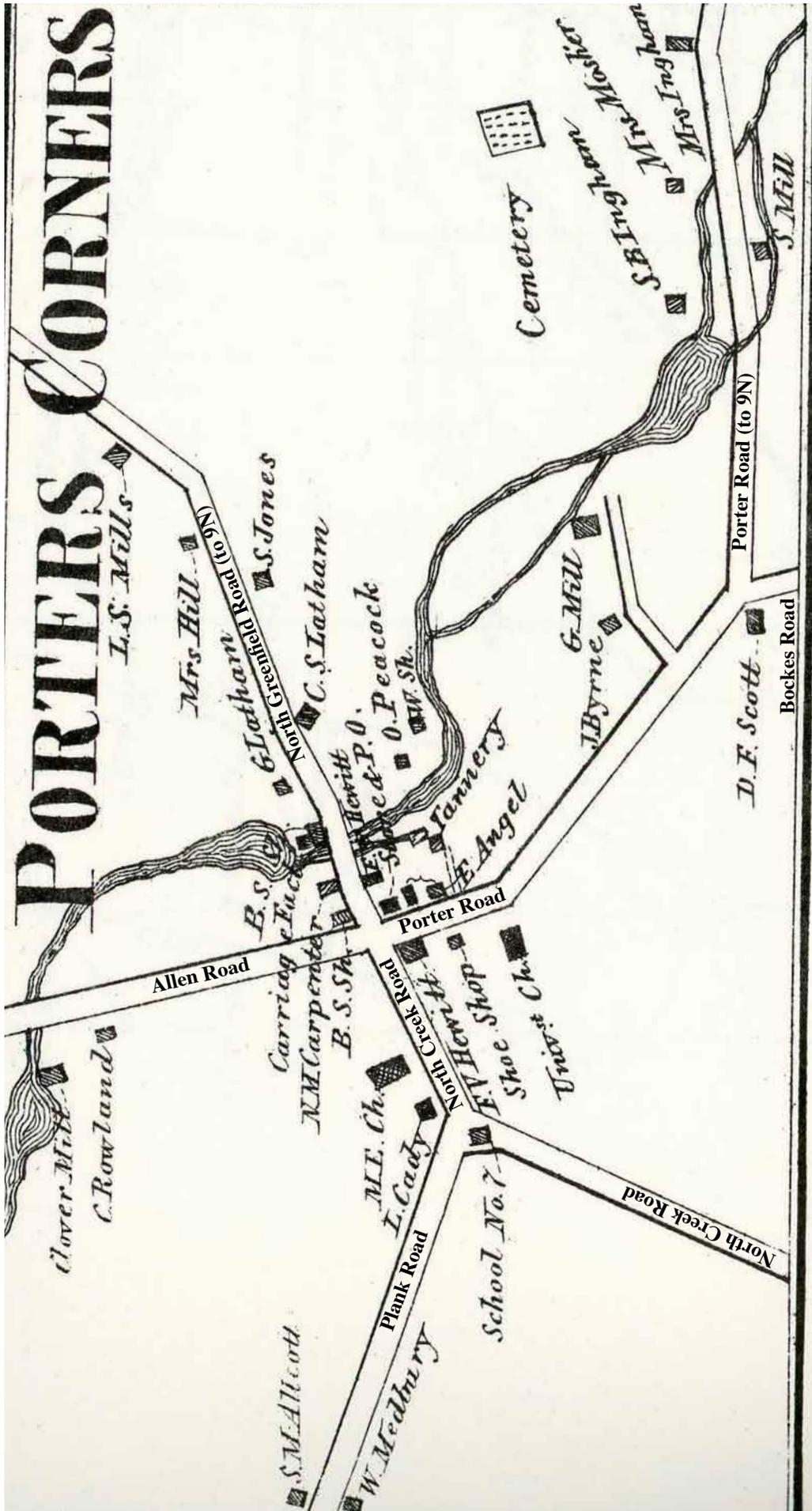
**We need your ideas and skills.**

**Please contact us at 518-322-5675 or email us at [toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:toghistsoc@gmail.com)**

## Greenfield Town Hall Mug



Cost is \$10. To place your order, contact Joan Rowland at 518-893-7786 or mail your check and request to The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. To have the mug mailed to you, please add shipping cost of \$8.



**PORTERS CORNERS BUSINESS DIRECTORY.**

- C. S. Latham... Carriage Manufacturer.
- S. B. Ingham... Justice of the Peace and Lumber Dealer.
- S. Allen... Clerk.
- C. Rowland... Carpenter and Joiner.
- L. S. Mills... " "
- J. L. Rowland... Surveyor.
- U. Allen... Millwright.

Map of Porter Corners 1866. Thanks to Rachel Clothier for posting this on Facebook. (Editor added current names of roads, they aren't on the original map.)

## 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 \$10 for your household, 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](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com).** Email [toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:toghistsoc@gmail.com) for more information.

Click on “Store,” “Membership” then click either “Annual Membership – Household” or “Lifetime Membership.”

**Please Print** – Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_  I am interested in volunteering.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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 the wording describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by. Please send articles and/or photos to: [JJones18215@roadrunner.com](mailto:JJones18215@roadrunner.com).**

### Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

We invite our membership and readers of this newsletter to share with Dan any historical information about an interesting person, place, structure, or event within our town. Dan reserves the right to proofread and edit submissions, but he will be very happy to add your information to our map. We are always looking for historical information to add to and enhance the map, which we consider to be an ongoing work in progress. Please email Dan Chertok at [Dgchertok@gmail.com](mailto:Dgchertok@gmail.com), call his cell phone (518-321-0330), or text him.



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