



Historical Society Newsletter

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

Volume 21, Issue 3



501(c)(3)

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NOVEMBER NOTES

by Mary Vetter

I hope this article finds all of you safe and well. COVID-19 continues to occupy our lives. Because of the uncertainty of where the pandemic will lead us this winter, the Board decided that it would be best if we cancelled meetings until March. We miss all of you but the health of our community is our first concern.

The Board met at the beginning of November to devise a plan for the spring and summer. Our first plan is to have a couple of general meetings. Then starting in June we are planning one event a month. We are researching events such as storytelling, local music, an auction and of course Caboose Day. They will be scheduled from June to September. If anyone would like to work on these events, please email us.

As we are trying to manage costs, we are going to roll out an emailed version of our monthly newsletter. If you would like to receive your newsletter by email, please let us know by contacting us at toghistsoc@gmail.com. If you do not specify an email address when you write, we will assume that the email address you used to contact us is the address you want the newsletter sent to.

Speaking of newsletters we would like you to share your experiences living in a pandemic. Let us know how it has shaped your holiday plans. We can't head out of state to visit family so our Thanksgiving will be a small gathering with friends and phones calls to those we cannot visit. All submissions can be sent to our email.

This may not be the holiday season we wanted but the efforts we make to share our holiday, in whatever way we can, will let those around us know just how much they matter. Eat too much on Turkey day, see those you can and chat with everyone you can't visit with.

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. 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 on all your Amazon shopping trips to support us. Thanks!

Halloween 2020 and Remembrances

by Joan E Rowland

How we miss the good ole days of Halloween (10/31) and Cabbage Night (10/30). When was the last time you saw the Porter Corners United Methodist Church's 2 holer out house in the intersection of Porter/Allen/North Greenfield/North Creek Roads?

2020 – No TP in the trees (would be too expensive – if you could find it at all with the Pandemic). No rotten eggs or rotten apples or smashed pumpkins at that intersection either.

When my sister JoAnn and I were kids, in mid to late 1960s, our mom Evelyn would drive us around to go Trick or Treating. We were also collecting change for UNICEF in a small box (the size of animal crackers) thru the Porters United Methodist Church Sunday School. We went to relatives and friends of our mom's. Our dad Myron, Aunt Gert and Gram (Florence) would stay home to greet any visitors.

We hopped into the station wagon and up the road we went (Ormsbee Rd.) to Aunt Frances Young, Aunt Bessie Ormsbee, cousins Don and Clifford Young. Then over to Fern Ballou and Lilah Ballou on Ballou Road. Back down Ormsbee Road to dad's cousin Millie Jordan. On down into town (Porter Corners) with a stop on Plank Rd. to Lil Ovitt and Aunt Pearl McKnights. We had to go on Porter Rd. to the Big White House which was next to the general store (a parking lot now). This couple had retired here from NYC where they had run a candy store – they made home-made candies. We went on down Porter Rd. to Margie Jones, Donna Middlebrook and Bessie Wadsley. We were not done yet, three more roads to hit. North Greenfield Rd. to our step grandmother Nellie Young, Mrs. Morris, Anne Wadsley, and Doris Pikes. Then to Allen Rd. to dad's cousin Ella White/ Aunt Mable Wadsley and Bev Sherman. And if we had time, on up to Medberry Rd. to Grace Williams and Ellen Mousin.

At each of our stops, we jumped out of the car, went to the door and rang our cow bell (most would have knocked on the door). Then the owner would have to guess who you were. [We had a cow bell – who are we?] Most had a list of who came, so your name was added by them to their list before we got candy. It was a slow process but when you got a homemade candy apple, homemade candy, or good chocolate it was worth the wait. Some gave apples, popcorn with candy corn added to the Halloween paper type bags.

JoAnn and I remember two places always gave out popcorn balls – one was better than the other, but we cannot remember now which houses we got them from.

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HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

In the last issue, I talked about researching the early days of store ownership in Middle Grove. Specifically, I wanted to determine the history of the Rowell Store building where the infamous 1907 Middle Grove fire started.

The earliest deed that we are fairly certain of for the Rowell Store was executed and recorded in 1873. It is written in longhand with the Victorian flourish commonly used in that time period and is difficult to read, but it states that Samuel Craig is selling to Moses D. Rowell a piece of land commencing at the east end of a store in Middle Grove (already being operated by Moses D. Rowell).

Because the store is already being operated by Mr. Rowell, this deed most likely is not the first which would have been to subdivide a larger parcel to build the store. This deed describes the parcel boundary running parallel with the east end of said store (so the store was already in existence) to the center of the highway in a southerly direction, thence westerly along the center of said highway, etc. thence along two more sides naming stakes and stones and stone wall fences to the place of beginning, and containing three-quarters of an acre of land. It is interesting to note that the easterly boundary of the parcel runs along the edge of the store with no setback. That of course would not be allowed in today's world and the closeness of these two structures (the store and adjacent hotel) may have contributed to the spread of the 1907 fire.

Toward the end of the deed it lists previous sales of the same parcel as sold by Daniel Coy to Lewis Wood in 1858; also the same premises, a portion of which was sold by Ambrose Hathorn to Samuel Craig in 1859. *(Note: The writing is very difficult to read so the names and dates may not be correct.)*

This is confusing because it suggests that the parcel was sectioned off from a larger parcel in 1859, which might suggest that it was the beginning of the separate store lot, but the date is one year later than that described as the single store parcel sold in 1858.

My best guess is that Hathorn, who is listed as owning surrounding acreage on other deeds, sold a parcel to Lewis Wood in 1858 and Wood built two structures close together, a hotel on the eastern end and a store on the western end. *(The Beers map of 1866 shows a hotel, store, and post office all appearing as one structure on the map with the name J.D. Ford adjacent to it. Since the two structures were very close together with a narrow alley between them. It is possible the map makers joined them. See map on page 3.)* Ford does not appear on the deeds nor is he listed as postmaster. He may have been simply the store clerk since the clerk did not always own the store. Early photographs do show the store and hotel as two distinctly separate buildings with different architectural styles and roof lines and separated by a narrow alley.

Based on the limited information above, I am assuming that the Rowell store may have originated in 1859 when Craig purchased property from Hathorn. Future researchers will have to prove me right or wrong.



Jamesville hotel on right and Rowell store on left.

(Note: While the need of a store to serve the area is evident, one might wonder why a hotel was needed in such a small community as Middle Grove. Research indicates that the main avenue of east west travel at the time passed through Middle Grove. A stage line ran south from Glens Falls following what is now NYS Route 9, then west on Wilton Road through Greenfield Center (which also had a hotel), then along South Greenfield and High Spot Roads (which had a hotel or inn), then to Middle Grove Road, through Middle Grove and then west to what is now NYS Route 29, and the Mohawk Valley. Every few miles along this route, there were hotels and taverns where travelers could stop for the night, or even stay a few days when the roads became impassable due to bad weather conditions. In addition, local residents used the hotels as cultural centers for meetings, dances, dinner celebrations, etc.)

It is difficult to tell who owned and operated the Rowell Store during these early years. What we do know is that Horatio Craig was appointed post master in Middle Grove in 1861. Whether or not the post office was in the store is unknown. In 1864, postal records indicate that Samuel Craig was appointed postmaster in Middle Grove.

The 1865 census lists Samuel Craig living in Middle Grove and lists his occupation as a 37 year-old merchant.

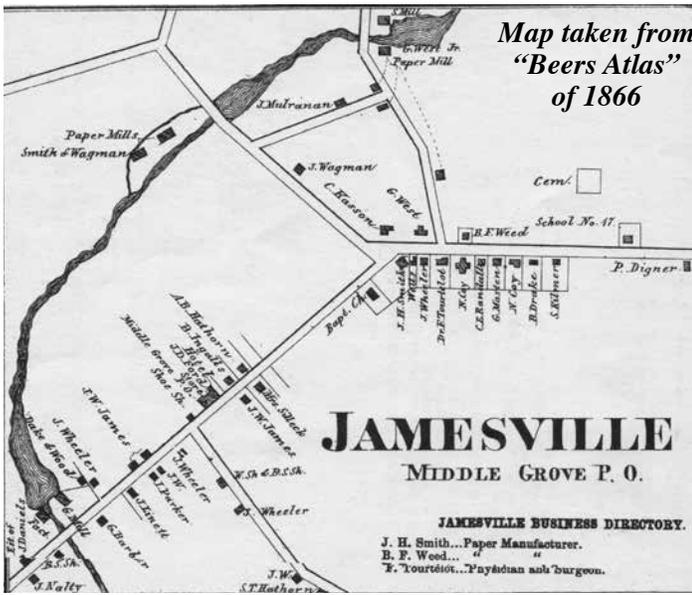
The March 24, 1870 issue of the Saratogian newspaper states that, "Mr. M.D. Rowell, who has had charge of the Union Store at Porter Corners for two years past, has purchased the interest of Mr. John Wagman of the firm Craig and Wagman, merchants, at Middle Grove, and hereafter the firm will be Craig and Rowell." Apparently, Craig took a partner, Wagman, whose partnership was purchased by M.D. Rowell.

The 1870 census lists both Samuel H. Craig (age 42) and John Wagman (age 34) as retired merchants. Craig's total worth is given at \$7,000 and Wagman's is \$10,000. Both men were reasonably well off financially, as \$10,000 in 1870 would be about \$195,700 in today's dollars.

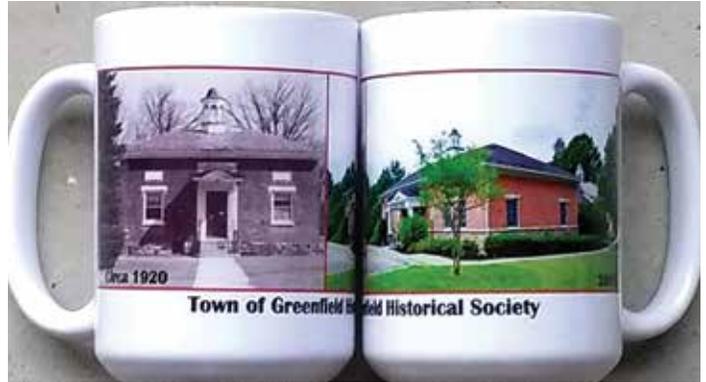
In 1874, Moses D. Rowell was appointed postmaster in Middle Grove.

The 1875 census lists Moses D. Rowell as a 38 year-old merchant in Middle Grove. His wife, Harriet was 38, and he had three children; the oldest, Havens at 12; Fenton 8; and Moses B. Rowell, the youngest at three months.

Next month, I will provide more information about this family.



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.

Daketown School in 2020



Ron Feulner and John Greenwood were at Daketown School taking the stumps out from the trees that were cut years ago. 100 year old stumps are no match for Ron and his Kubota.



The stump was right where the tractor is.

Photos supplied by John Greenwood

Below: Daketown School – Inside and Outside



Continued from page 1

Later when we were not going out, we would hand out candy at home. We would have up to 20 come to our house in the country and that included the driver too. Some were neighbors' kids, 4-H families, relatives.

Our dad would make many trips from his living room chair to the kitchen table to get one more piece of candy. Our last person of the night would always be Lucy Ballou's grandson Billy who lived up the road.

As young adults, we have gone trick or treating for shots (but that's a whole other story).

The local firehouses used to have Halloween Parties for the kids. They would play games, have the famous parade of ghost, gremlins, princess to scary Halloween music. Prizes were given and candy, cake was eaten.

Now days, every year we purchase a bag of candy just in case someone stops in. We are at about 15 years now of eating our own candy because no one comes.

Today is a different time.

Why don't mom's drive their kids around to their relatives and friends' homes? When I was talking to Rebecca Sewell from Parks and Recreation at the Greenfield Town Hall she enlightened me on this. Today, the kids are all buckled in and on every stop, the driver has to get out, open the door for the kids because they have safety locks on them, and unsecure all the kids from their car seats/booster seats, to make one stop. Then rebuckle them all to move to the next house. In the country, this could be done 20 times. Also, we went to relatives – how many parents have relative like we did living near them?

Rebecca said that last year Kayla Davis, a mother of 5 asked if the town would be interested in having an event that they could do one stop fun. However, the idea was presented to close to Halloween. Rebecca created a committee and worked on this idea and then tweaked it to make it safe since we are in a Pandemic. They sent out flyers via Facebook, sent the message to the Greenfield School's HSA and it was posted on their website. She also notified a couple teachers in the Corinth School District since part of our town is in Corinth School District.

Halloween Night 2020, at the Brookhaven Golf Course. 39 golf carts were transformed into fun, scary, exciting Halloween displays. They were reserved by camp counselors, local businesses, civic organizations, senior high school students, grandmas, people wanting to support the community. The volunteer fire police helped park cars and keep people safe. Volunteers helped families stay together and social distance (6 ft.) from other groups/families.

The event was to run from 4-6 p.m. but by 5:15 most carts had run out of candy and were calling friends to go get them more. As the sun went down, some of the carts turned on their strings of ghoulish lights. Most were getting very cold and visitors went home. Rebecca believes that there were around 400 kids in attendance, 70% from Greenfield, 30% from Corinth.

Rebecca's Parks and Recreation Cart was the last in the lineup and they suggested that the visitors go to Porter Corners United Methodist Church parking lot for their Trunk N Treat.

At the Porter Corners United Methodist Church, there were 7 cars with church members and their trunks all dressed giving out candy from the back of their cars. They had over 100 kids attend this event and they too shut down before 6 p.m. because they ran out of candy. This was the churches third time having this event and was the largest attended.

Due to the pandemic, it was recommended that Halloween be canceled but people found a way to social distance and

give the kids some fun. Most are doing school from home, not seeing people other than over zoom. They needed to get out. Some people in cities had created a shoot so they could send the candy down from their porch into the kids bags.

People will make things work, given the time and drive to do it. Just like Rebecca's Carts of Halloween and the church's Trunks N Treat – we make things happen.

Hope you have great Halloween memories – do tell your story.



Halloween 2020 at the Brookhaven Golf Course



Channon Emigh and the Town of Greenfield Parks and Rec Cart



*Trunk N Treat at the Porter Corners United Methodist Church
Carrie Howe and Grandsons.*

COVER-UP (A Greenfield Memory)

by John R. Greenwood

I want to share a father/son moment that took place in 1968. I was 13 and had saved enough money for a new bicycle. I bought my Raleigh Rodeo 3+2 at Globe Supply (presently Soave Faire) on Broadway in Saratoga Springs. It was a stingray bike styled like the muscle cars of that era. It had a Hurst-like, 3-speed shifter on the frame in front of the seat. Next to it was a smaller shift knob, which gave you two more pedaling speeds. It was gold in color and my pride and joy. I parked it on its kickstand every night in the garage. Saturday mornings, while dad washed our International Scout, I would wash my Raleigh next to him.



My father instilled the importance of taking care of your things. The better the care, the longer they will last. I came up short a few times because I remember being on the receiving end of “That Look” after I misplaced

or broke one of his tools. Parents hope that if a child buys something with their own money, they will take better care of it. Hope is just that. The chances of your child having the conscientious-trait is a crapshoot. Some get it; some don't. Most kids fall somewhere in between. I probably leaned more to the caring side because I feared “That Look” worse than a kick in the shins.

In the 1960s, it was popular to ride your friends on the handlebars. They would rest their feet precariously on the small bit of threaded axle sticking out from the front tire. The other option was to let your legs swing free, which was much more difficult for both rider and the one pedaling the bike. It was also an excellent way to get run over by a car. My father was adamant that I do not try this with my bike or with anyone else's. I was a compliant son, and I was also much too afraid of my father to break that rule — that is until Glen came along. Glen was older, bigger, and wanted to get from point A to point B one day. He insisted that I provide a taxi service from the Greenfield General Store to his friend Tom's house at the bottom of Cemetery Hill about a quarter-mile away. Glen was the Eddy Haskell of our neighborhood. He was an instigator and possessed a larger than life personality. He was the type of kid that could get you in trouble quicker than a wink, but at the same time, his presence helped you remember those events with overwhelming fondness. On this particular summer day in 1968, everything above fell into place.

Because Glen was too big to ride on my handlebars, he strong-armed me into the role of hood ornament. Boys at 13 are about as coordinated as a giraffe on skates, and I was no exception. A few hundred feet up the road, my sneakers slipped off the axle bolts, and my toes got caught in the spokes. Glen, the Raleigh Rodeo, and I went ass over tea kettle. When the dust settled, a friendship and a brand-new bike were in a bit of a pickle. I remember

having to push my bike a mile back to my house, the whole time thinking about was how mad my father was going to be. He would be upset about the bike, but even more so because I disobeyed him. The front wheel was a bent mess. The spokes had a pretzel quality to them.

What do I do?

You do what any red-blooded 13-year-old would do — cover it up! This virtual cover-up included an old blanket. Like a reprieve from the governor, it would buy me time to devise a brilliant scheme. The words “brilliant scheme” and “teenagers” mix like oil and water. It did take a couple of days for my father to decipher why I was walking the mile up the road to the village versus riding my brand new \$70 bike. Fathers are more observant than we think. My teenage sons learned this factoid about the same time their father did.

“Why is there a blanket over your bicycle?”

Here's where you begin to weigh your options heavily. I didn't have enough time to concoct a viable lie. Even if I had (my wife will confirm this), I'm a terrible liar — especially if she or my father are involved. It was time to plead for mercy.

“Um, I, I, well, uh, I messed up.” (*add tears here*)

Here's where parenthood takes a moment of silence. It's a silence that doesn't pay dividends until your grown children recognize the honesty you instilled in them. In my case, it took a couple of days and an eagle-eyed father to bring it to the surface, but it proved that honesty is the best policy no matter what the outcome.

The following Saturday, Dad loaded my Raleigh Rodeo, with the crumpled front wheel, into the back of our Scout. The two of us took it down to Globe Supply and dropped it off for repair. A week later, after putting several miles on my Converse, we returned to pick it up. I'm not sure who paid the bill, but my parental guts tell me it was the man whose “look” is all I ever needed. It was all that was necessary.

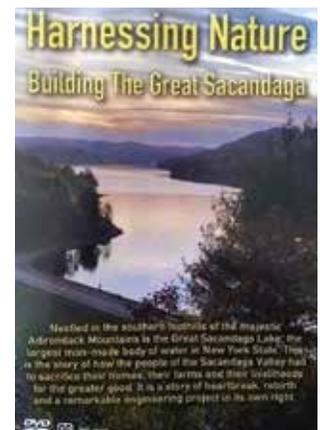
Stories like this filled my teens and my life.

Man, I miss my father.

“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 Christmas gift!**



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.** Email 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.

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 Chertok@lcyllaw.com, call his cell phone (518-321-0330), or text him.



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