



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President, Joan E. Rowland; Vice President, Robert Roeckle;
Secretary, Patti Veitch; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland

TRUSTEES: Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, John Greenwood, Mike Gymarthy,
Patty Schwartzbeck, Dan Smith, and Mary Vetter

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

Volume 23, Issue 3



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, November 15, 2022 — Meeting 7 p.m.
at the Community Center, 25 Wilton Road,
Greenfield Center. **Program: Middle Grove
High School.** Corinth Town Historian and
Director of the Corinth Museum, Rachel Clothier,
will share her knowledge of the 1880s Middle
Grove High School. The school once occupied
the current Greenfield Historical Society's
Chatfield Museum.

Saturday, December 17, 2022 — IOOF Hall/
Chatfield Museum Holiday Party Open House
and Cookie Exchange, 1 to 3 p.m. This year's
theme will be *Holiday Greeting Cards*. Please
bring cookies/desserts to share.

*The Gala has been cancelled this year. We are
looking forward to trying again in 2023.*

**Everyone is welcome, admission is free, and
you don't have to be a member to attend.**

**Our membership year begins June 1
and ends May 31, dues are paid
annually. (\$10 per household or
\$100 for Lifetime Membership)**

Meeting Cancellations

*If schools are closed due to weather, our meeting
will be canceled. A message also will be posted on
our website and on our Facebook page.*

www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com
[www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=town of
greenfield historical society](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=town%20of%20greenfield%20historical%20society)

*Refreshment volunteers for October were Robert Roeckle and John
Greenwood. They served apple pie, cheesecake, cookies, Stewart's
ice cream and brownies (made by Patty Greenwood). November
refreshment volunteers are Patty Schwartzbeck and John Greenwood.*

Joan's Jabbering — November 2022

by Joan E. Rowland, President

October is my month, love the fall colors. The leaves
were beautiful this year. Lots of yellows, oranges, and
reds. In mid-October I went on the Saratoga, Corinth, and
Hudson Railway train. I was figuring it would be peak
season but with going along the swamps, many of the
leaves had already fallen after high winds and heavy rains.
It was still a nice ride. I would recommend it to everyone
who wants a laid-back adventure. My friend put on his
phone and GPS'ed us for the ride. I enjoyed guessing which
road we were crossing.

October's meetings program was with Town of
Greenfield Historical Society member, Justin Thomas.
He had stripped an old green door that was hanging in
his garage/shop. What he found under the many layers of
paint was very interesting. Pencil markings with names and
interesting messages. The one that I need to research could
be someone related to me. The message says (we are not
sure of first letter p or d) — "*P Hodges alias ears, the poor
boy is going to fly away someday if he don't cut some of
them off.*"

Many in Greenfield would have known George and Edna
May Hodges. They were my grandmother Florence Hodges
Rowland's cousins. George and Edna May's mom was
Luella but I never knew her husband Edson or anything
about that part of the family. I checked the Fulton History
website and could not find a P or D Hodges but did find
some with that as their middle initial. I may have to look
further into the Hodges family.

Many such statements were found all over this door.
Justin did a great job with the big reveal. After the program,
everyone circled around the door to read the messages.
Magnifying glasses were provided for a closer look. I loved
watching Justin's youngest child with the big magnifying
glass — checking it out.

November's program is what I have been waiting for.
How many times have you walked through the IOOF Hall
doors and noticed the lettering above the doors? When
was a school located at this hall? Well, it was in 1880 and
Rachel Clothier, Corinth's Town Historian will be telling us
all about it. Mark your calendars for November 15 at 7 p.m.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

November 2022

by Ron Feulner

In past issues, I have talked about the devastating fire that swept through Middle Grove in 1907. This month, I will continue with more detail.

The fire began, according to most sources, around 11 a.m. It began in the chimney of the tenement house or living quarters behind the Rowell Store building which was at the time being rented from the owner, Clifford Cady, by the family of Charles Morris Jr. It was a Monday morning in late April, and by all accounts, a cold windy day. The old building offered little protection from the cold as Jennie Rowell had described waiting up on cold nights for her husband to close the store with her, “... feet on the fender of the tall coal stove ... to keep them off the floor where the cold air played around them like a current of water, as there was no cellar and only a very imperfect foundation under the living rooms of the building.”

Since it was a mid-Monday morning, it is probable that Charles Morris Jr. was off to work in one of the area mills leaving his wife alone (or with a caregiver) with their new born baby that had arrived the day before.

Sandy Arnold's research suggests that Charles Arthur Morris Jr. born in 1882, was 25 years old and married to Cora N. Wilday, aged 24, when the fire occurred. According to research, they had married on October 10, 1903 and had a daughter born in August 1904. That child died a year later in 1905 and was buried in Middle Grove Cemetery.

Cora no doubt had a hot fire burning in the stove that morning to keep her new born and herself warm as the cold April wind washed through the many cracks and crevices of the old building. Years of creosote accumulation in the old chimney probably heated to its ignition point and caught fire.

As a child, I witnessed a chimney fire in our home on Murray Road. I remember that once the creosote began to burn, the suction of air moving up the chimney caused a whirlwind of fire inside the chimney that howled like a jet engine. The creosote is high in condensed carbon and burns like fuel oil, and I can remember flames shooting out of the top of the chimney into the air. (We were lucky, as our chimney had a liner, and my father was able to choke the fire from its oxygen source by removing the stove pipe and stuffing a kettle into the chimney opening even before the fire company arrived.)

Older chimneys like the one that was probably in the Rowell building were usually made of brick with no liner and were not made to withstand or contain this type of heat. The wood framing of the building around the chimney often caught fire as a result.

One can only imagine what Cora must have experienced that morning when the chimney caught fire. She had given birth the day before, and therefore, had a newborn to protect even though she must have been in a much weakened condition. Several newspaper articles described her and the baby being removed from the house with considerable difficulty.

TOGHS Program October 2022



Justin Thomas and John Greenwood talking about the Mystery Door.



Everyone looking over the Mystery Door



Refreshments after the meeting: apple pie, cheesecake and cookies made by Robert Roeckle and John Greenwood brought Stewart's ice cream and brownies (made by Patty Greenwood)

Academy for Lifelong Learning Touring the TOGHS Museum

On Monday October 10, 2022, The Town of Greenfield Historical Society hosted a tour of their Chatfield Museum for a class from the Academy for Lifelong Learning. Greenfield Historical Society Board Members Robert Roeckle, Joan Rowland, and John Greenwood shared the various exhibits within the museum all while providing stories and history about the town, its historical residents, the Chatfield Museum (IOOF Hall), and the Daketown School. The tour ended with cider, doughnuts and plenty of good old fashioned story telling. We're

not sure who enjoyed the visit more, the hosts or the attendees.

Founded in 1992, the Academy for Lifelong Learning at Saratoga Springs (A.L.L.) is a nonprofit membership organization whose members share a love of learning and socializing. It is an independent entity, hosted by SUNY Empire State College who provides office and classroom space as well as advisory and administrative support. The 2022 Fall Sessions 1&2 were sponsored by Prestwick Chase. For more information on A.L.L., go to: www.esc.edu/all



Photo credit: Lora Brown

Cassie Hudson, Reporter for WTEN-TV Channel 10 Albany NY has met twice now with Robert Roeckle. They have taped the "Off the Beaten Path" segments. See the two below on the web:

<https://www.news10.com/off-the-beaten-path/off-the-beaten-path-greenfield-historic-caboose/>

<https://www.news10.com/off-the-beaten-path/off-the-beaten-path-chatfield-museum/>

Thank you Robert for sharing your knowledge with the TV reporter.

Shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/14-1766805 and AmazonSmile donates to "The Town of Greenfield Historical Society." Please check our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/Town-of-Greenfield-Historical-Society/ for up to date information regarding future meetings and events. You can also find us on Twitter: @TOGHistory



Middle Grove High School

The Greenfield Historical Society is excited to have Corinth Town Historian Rachel Clothier join us at our November Meeting to share what she has learned about the Middle Grove High School that once occupied our present-day Chatfield Museum. The school only operated for a short time, so little information is available. Rachel will tell us how she discovered the Middle Grove High School flier at Antiques at Packer's Pond at 7206 Barkersville Road, Middle Grove. Owners Bob and Sue Wemple, being history buffs themselves, were gracious enough to share a copy and additional history involving the Packer family and the school. Rachel will share some of that history and a few photos that tie directly to the school. As always, the public is welcome. If you enjoy local history, you'll want to add this month's meeting to your calendar.

Volunteers Wanted, Room for 3 More



Joan Rowland, Ron Feulner (Town Historian), and Janet Jones working on the Historian's archives at the Town Hall

2022 MARKS THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF GREENFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY



30TH ANNIVERSARY – The 30th anniversary of the Greenfield Volunteer Fire Company was marked last week (Sept. 30, 1977) with a dinner at the Casino in Congress Park, Saratoga Springs. Among those in attendance were, from left, Paul Eddy, master of ceremonies; Clayton Brown, guest speaker; Emil Orisek, chairman of the board of fire commissioners; Father Lawrence Frank; and William Slater, fire chief.



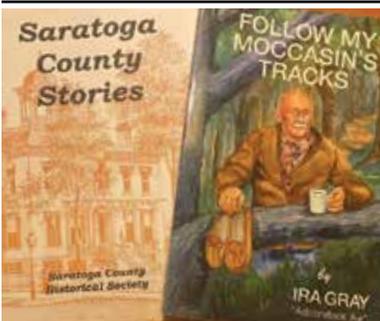
Blown Glass Pendant Raffle
Larry Rutland of North Creek Studio donated this beautiful blown glass, double drop, pendant to us for a raffle. We started selling tickets this past summer at the Greenfield Farmers Market.

We will be drawing the winner on Saturday, December 17, 2022 at the Holiday Open House at the Museum.

Tickets will be sold up until the drawing at 2:50 p.m.

Tickets are 1 for \$1 or 8 for \$5.

If you win, you could have a beautiful Christmas Gift to give (or keep for yourself).



BOOKS FOR SALE

We will have both the *Saratoga County Stories* (\$18) and *Follow My Moccasin's Tracks* by Ira Gray (\$15.95) for sale at the November and December meetings.

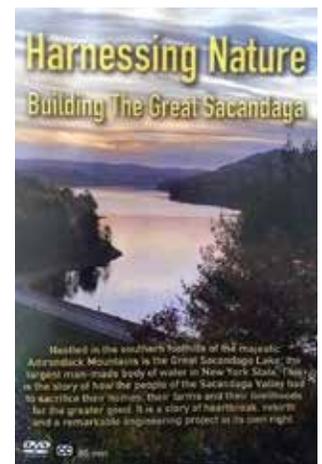
Thanks to the generosity Ira Gray's niece, Sandra Gray Loychik, we have

several copies of Ira Gray's (Adirondack Ike) *Follow My Moccasin's Tracks*. These were printed in 2002 and have become a rare keepsake for anyone who enjoys old stories of life in the Adirondacks.

Pick your copy up at the May Meeting or order through our P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 with an additional \$3.50 postage and handling.

“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 heart-break, 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 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.)



THE WEIBEL LEGACY — *by Fran Lambert*

Mary and George Weibel, brother and sister, farm residence on Weibel Avenue, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

I was introduced to Mary Weibel by Leo Hebert, my neighbor. (South Greenfield Road)

Mary took care of all the interior home, a wonderful cook, a careful homemaker. She loved to bake, and was always ready to entertain. Wearing simple floral cotton house dresses covered by a full apron, Mary always was a welcoming, smiling fine lady when greeting the occasional visitor at her kitchen door. Always ready to offer a cup of tea, or perhaps instant coffee, she, without fail was able to produce a 'treat' of cookies or cake. Mary was always up on the latest news that she felt concerned her, and had strong convictions about what was happening in Saratoga. She did not like change, and felt that the newer ideas were ruining society in general. Mary was very opinionated, and when she spoke of the way things seemed to her, she didn't care who knew about her views. A rather set in her ways type person who seemed to not be swayed easily, she voiced that things in society and everyday life had changed too swiftly, and were not to be trusted.

While conversing with us, her brother George occasionally would come inside to warm himself, as he was out in the barn doing some sort of 'work.' She introduced him to me, and after he left the room, stated that he spends most all of his time out in the barn fixing the tractor. He was slight of build, thin, slightly bent, coveralled, but very agile for his age (around mid 70s). Sometimes Mary would scold him for staying out there for so long of a time, but he always said that he was fine, even though it was cold.

Mary carried herself in a stately fashion, perhaps about 5'6", almost heavy set but very matronly. If she took a 'like'n' to you, you became a friend of hers for life. My neighbor, Leo Hebert lived across from me but next to Ruth and Bob Barss. (At times he asked me to chauffeur him to her home or go to the store.)

When meeting Mary at first, one got the feeling of intimidation, and fearful of saying the wrong thing. After several visits of driving Leo Hebert to Mary's house, I finally felt comfortable in her presence. Leo knew Mary from the days when (during the war) she turned her large farmhouse into a boarding house and rented rooms out. There were many rooms upstairs, (which I never got to see), but I did take a peek into the hallway that had the stairs leading to the upper floor. Leo, also being in his mid 70s, knew her from long ago. He used to be the chief head herdsman for the Ashton Farms. (He knew all the Grande's of Saratoga.) They remained friends for all those years. He liked to speak with George when he got the chance. Leo was a Frenchman with strong French accent, who was born in Chateaugay, Canada. He lived on South Greenfield Road, Greenfield, N.Y. His home was across from where I lived.

After many visits to Mary and George, I grew accustomed to her ways, and found her to be such a sincere, honest, unaffected lady who hid behind her affront of austerity.

One day, as we were visiting, she mentioned that she needed a perm for her hair, but did not want to go to the hairdresser, as the girl did not do it the way she wanted. She then asked me if I would be interested in helping her with her hair. I accepted. She gave me money to go and purchase a home perm from a drug store, and what a time I had trying to find a drug store that still carried home perms in that time frame! This was in the 1970s, but I did get an idea to try Menges & Curtis drug store on Broadway in Saratoga. They stocked them! I was able to return with the prize! Mary again had to state how things have changed.

I carefully did her hair, and followed her instructions as she held the mirror in her hand and explained her way to wind the curlers,



Mary and George Weibel's father's handcarved chair. Father was cabinet maker. (I gave the chair to Nick.)

and where she wanted a bit of hair snipped away to make it even. After her perm, I related to her that she should have it immediately set on rollers so as to train her hair in the way she liked it. This went well. She then sat under the hair dryer I brought along, (the kind that looks like the beauty shop dryers, but is portable) and when it was dry, she wanted to comb it out herself, and it looked great! Her hair was a mix of brown and silver, and looked very fashionable, even for this fine lady in her mid to late 70s.

I once asked her if she had any other family besides her brother, and her reply was that she had family in Saratoga, but it seemed that this was the end of the conversation. If she did not want you to know something, she had a certain way of ending the conversation that left no doubt to the inquisitor.

During the summer months Mary would be so upset about the dump that was across the street from her farm. It was true, papers would fly all over her property making it a mess. Papers would line the bottom of the porch, decorate the edges of the barn, fly into her flower garden, (she loved flowers). Every time Leo and I would visit there, it would be the same gripe over and over. Mary even called the Mayor of Saratoga to see if anything could be done about the trash blowing over into her yard. Time went by, and eventually more dirt was brought in to cover up the (stinking, blowing mess).

At least twice I remember, George had to go to the hospital for something. I don't remember what. When Mary one day mentioned to Leo that she was going to try and sell some of her things to make a little 'extra,' he said he would ask around to people he knew. This was in the summer.

She brought Leo over to the door off the living room/dining room to where the stairs were, that went upstairs. They went up, I stayed down, I was not invited. I did peek into the partially opened door, and saw this gorgeous rocker that just sat there looking all prim and pretty. They came downstairs after a few minutes, and we had to leave, as Leo had an appointment that I had to bring him to. While driving in the car, I mentioned to him about what I saw in the hallway about the chair. I must have raved over it and he took note.

A few months later, as my birthday is in November, I received a phone call from him to pick him up and bring him over to Mary Weibel's. I did so. When we got there she had coffee ready (perked this time), and then Leo took Mary aside and whispered. He came back with a cat ate the mouse grin on his face. She came back and wished me a happy birthday! How did she know? Those two schemed before I got there, and they told me to go and look in the hallway, and there was the chair. I didn't see anything different from the summer, and wondered what was the idea?

They then both wished me a happy birthday at the same time, and told me to take the chair home with me. Wow! What a birthday present! Evidentially Leo had paid Mary for the chair (which I later found out he did), and this was their secret surprise for me.

Mary then related that this chair was totally hand made by her father in Switzerland. He was a cabinetmaker, and made many beautiful pieces in his lifetime. It was fashioned for his wife, and when she passed it went to Mary. She loved this chair, and was happy to see that it found a good home to someone who really loved and appreciated it. The workmanship is exquisite, solid prime oak, and still solid after more than a century.

And now the rest of the story. My oldest son, Nick, married and discovered that her family was related to Mary Weibel on Weibel Avenue in Saratoga Springs. (The above written in the late 1990s).

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



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