



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President, Mary Vetter; Vice President, Joan E. Rowland;
Secretary, Patti Veitch; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland;

TRUSTEES: Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, John Greenwood, Mike Gymarthy,
Louise Okoniewski, Robert Roeckle, and Patty Schwartzbeck

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

Volume 22, Issue 6



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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

This newsletter is dedicated to our Dad (Earl Jones), he would have been 100 years old on February 11!

CALENDAR

February 15, 2022 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m.
at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Former Saratoga Springs police chief
Greg Veitch has written a book – *A Gangster's Paradise*. This is a history of the Gangsters of Saratoga Springs from the Prohibition era up through the Kefauver Committee hearings in the 1950s.

March 15, 2022 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at
the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

April 19, 2022 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at
the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

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

Meetings 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)

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

FEBRUARY NOTES 2022

by Joan E. Rowland, Acting President

We dodged a big one. A noreaster came up the east coast of U.S. (January 29) and dropped as much as 30 inches of snow on coastline cities. Anyone above Albany, NY had nothing to shovel. But our temps have been very cold – warming up to 20s in day and below zero at night. My friend who is visiting her daughter in CA has been sending me ocean photos of feet in the ocean waves. I sent her our beautiful icicle which was about 36 inches long. It has been replaced by one even longer and more beautiful. No, I did not knock it off – I know the folk lore of “if you knock it off, that is how much snow we will have next time.”

Canceling January meeting was a big decision. We had already had to reschedule Saratoga Plan from October 2021, so do we cancel the meeting and reschedule again or go with who can come? At the time of the newsletter development, it looked like we would be okay to have the meeting. By the time of the actual meeting, it was best for our health to cancel. We are still in a pandemic and after the holiday seasons this last Omicron variant was making more people ill than the other variants. Most are less sick than the other variants, but we do not need to put our members and guest in that situation. Thank you for understanding.

I, for one will be looking forward to seeing our members at the February 15, 2022 meeting. We have had former Saratoga Springs police chief Greg Veitch at our meetings before with his first book – but he has now written a new book – *A Gangster's Paradise*. This is a history of the Gangsters of Saratoga Springs from the Prohibition era up through the Kefauver Committee hearings in the 1950s. (I am sure he will have books for sale.)

We also have two books we will be selling that night (see ad on page 2). In the Saratoga County Stories, check out page 82 for John Greenwood's story. Hope to see you at the February Meeting.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

February 2022 — by Ron Feulner

Last month, I quoted Jennie Smith Rowell's description of her husband, Moses B. Rowell. The two of them had been the last to operate the old Rowell store in Middle Grove (located near the intersection of Middle Grove and Murray Roads) before Moses finally gave up and became a traveling salesman as well as Town of Greenfield Supervisor.

There is more to Jennie's writings, and I encourage anyone interested in Middle Grove history to read them in their entirety.

In summary, the Rowell store was one of the early stores in Middle Grove. I was not able to follow the ownership back to the origin of the store, but it certainly predated the store next door that would later be known as Roeckle's Store. That store would eventually put the Rowell store out of business and go on to become the longest running and possibly most successful store in Middle Grove, until it too burned in 1994.

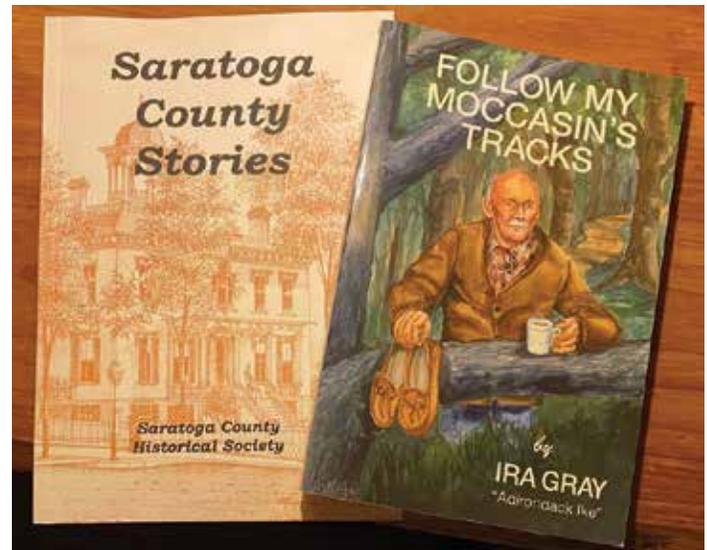
In summary, Moses D. Rowell purchased the Rowell Store and must have, for some time, had a very successful business which enabled him to donate land and help build the IOOF hall in Middle Grove (which is today the home of The Town of Greenfield Historical Society). It also allowed him to send a son to prep school and afterward to Hamilton College, and finally, the store allowed him to build one of the nicer homes in Middle Grove (1880) which still stands on the southeast corner of the intersection of Murray and Middle Grove Roads, diagonally across the road from the present day Stewart's Shop.

All of this happened before Moses D.'s heart began to fail, and the store next door built by John W. Wait and son and later owned by Clifford Cady began to cut into his profits. It appears that by the time Moses turned the store over to his youngest son, Moses B. Rowell (Jennie's husband), the store was going downhill. It also appears that Clifford Cady was showing some interest in buying them out, but since the Rowell business appeared to be failing on its own, Cady had been in no hurry.

After building his new home on the corner opposite the Rowell store, Moses D. and his wife and epileptic son moved in. At the same time or soon after, his youngest son, Moses B. Rowell took over the store and eventually purchased it (1899) and moved his family (including his wife Jenny) into the living quarters attached to the back of the store.

Moses B. appeared to have struggled keeping the store open. Working long hours and suffering poor health, he was having difficulty collecting his debts from poor Middle Grove farmers and lumbermen whose families depended on the store for their basics even though they sometimes did not have the means to pay. This placed Moses B. in a bind when he had to replenish his supplies. Life for Moses B. and his wife must have been stressful even though he had inherited his father's estate (1903) worth \$4,500.

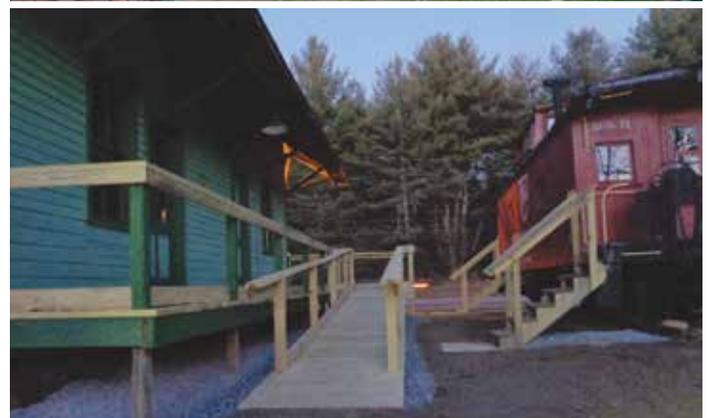
Books for Sale



We have both the "Saratoga County Stories" (\$18) and "Follow My Moccasin's Tracks" by Ira Gray (\$15.95) for sale at the February meeting.

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.

Order your copy through Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 with an additional \$3.50 postage and handling.



Work was done on the Caboose and Train Station in October and November 2021. The ramp was put in by the Boy Scouts.

BROOKSIDE DAIRY

by Sydney Homicz (Peysner)

I'm excited to share that I recently started a blog called @hillsandhearths (on Instagram), a place to ground yourself in nature.

I will be sharing a collection of photos and videos taken in nature on my family's land in Upstate New York, outside of Saratoga Springs. The land that I walk today is where my great-great-grandfather started a dairy farm in 1904 on 100 acres of land with two cows and two horses. It grew to be over 500 acres of land and over a 100 cattle. They processed and bottled their own dairy milk and made deliveries around town.

I'm inspired to share stories and photos of Brookside Dairy Farm, the same land that I walk today in 2022.

@hillsandhearths (on Instagram)



This is a photo of Brookside Dairy believed to be in the 1950s. In this photo you have the main white farmhouse, where my great great Grammy Gale also known as Millie cooked up a storm. Lunch was always at noon on the farm. The first building on the right was where the milk was pasteurized and bottled. The smaller barn in the middle was the horse barn that had beautiful hardwood floors and eventually had a basketball court in the hay mound for the kids to play. The longest red barn on the far right was the cow barn, where heifers gave birth to calves and then were milked. They had Guernsey cows on the farm. 30 cows on each side of the barn. There were two men milking the cows Herbie and Howard. Once the milk was pasteurized it had to cool overnight and then Sess who lived around the corner started bottling at 7am the next morning. Milk that was bottled the day before stored in a big cooler, was loaded onto 4 dairy delivery trucks and then driven at 3:30am into the city of Saratoga Springs for home deliveries. Sunday's were for store deliveries.

Follow along on Instagram at @hillsandhearths

Editor's Note: Sydney Homicz is the daughter of Cathy Hall, granddaughter of Sonny Hall, great-granddaughter of Harold L. Hall, and great-great-granddaughter of Clarence Hall, who started Brookside Dairy in 1904.



Earl Jones at one of our past Historical Society meetings.
[left: Nancy (Jones) Homiak and right: Lynn Wochinger]

Thanks John Greenwood for the photo.

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?

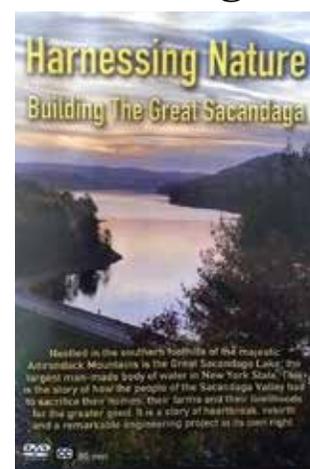
Do you like lawn and landscaping work?

We need your ideas and skills.

Please contact us at 518-322-5675 or
email us at toghistsoc@gmail.com

“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.)



Winter Memories Stream of Consciousness Thinking

by Robert Roeckle

Winter Memories, we all have them. I am sure our parents and grandparents also had many of those same memories. Snow. Playing in the snow, working in the snow and just living with the snow. Looking at old photos taken in winter, you can almost imagine what the people in the photos were thinking. Whether it is dealing with the weather and snow or having fun in the snow and cold weather.



Mabel Darrow on Locust Grove Road circa 1903

As with most photos, we often don't take a lot of photos of daily drudge and the sad times, we normally choose to preserve the important events in our lives which we often see as happy memories or unusual events. After all, who wants to document the everyday and the unfortunate moments we all have in our lives. There is sometimes photographic evidence of the everyday, but less so of the sad times. Unless you are a news photographer, who takes photos of a funeral. I have taken photos after fires and storm damage but more as a visual reminder of something to overcome. Of course, I am coming at this as a sixty-year-old who does not have a camera at the ready on a cell phone. Since I have retired, I seldom carry my cell phone, and since I do not have cell service at home I only have a flip phone.



Richard Potter shoveling garage roof

But memories cannot always be captured with a photo. The joy you felt when you received a hat, scarf and a pair of mittens knitted by your grandmother, or great-grandmother. Toys or other items made by a family member that you lovingly enjoyed for many years. You may still have one of these precious items or remember them fondly wishing you

still had them to help encourage those memories of the good times from your past. Now that we are older, sometimes looking back we may not like the reaction you may have had for these 'homemade' gifts when you received them. But now, half a century or more later, those 'things' remind you of the people that made them, the time, effort, and love they put into those things. Having been forced to learn how to sew, crochet, and embroider because 'you can do something while you are sitting watching television,' I learned to appreciate the time and effort needed to make certain items.

In addition to 'things,' most memories consist of time. The time we spent with family, friends, and those we often did not really know that well. Sometimes those people merge into the same people. For some reason, I fondly remember my mother's Aunt Helen and her husband Uncle Jim Mix. I doubt we hardly spent much time with them, I could probably count the times on one hand, but seeing them was always an event. They either joined us at a large family gathering, or we spent time to travel to Lake Placid where they lived in the cabin Jim built. Aunt Helen died when I was eight, but I still remember the long trip to her home. I am not sure if the northern end of the Northway was finished at the time, but we often took Route 9N and Route 9 to get to Lake Placid. Perhaps it was just the way my parents knew how to get there but there were things to see on the way and car games that we always took on long rides. I feel I need to remind the younger readers that there were multiple dude ranches and small theme parks on these Routes, as a child these were all fun to look at during the ride. That all day trip, meant we often spent the night, which was always an event in our home.

Aunt Helen and Uncle Jim lived at the foot of Mount Van Hoevenberg. Since memories sometimes play tricks on you, I 'think' I remember walking down the road in front of their house to the 1932 Olympic bobsled run to watch bobsledders. I also remember eating a meal at their kitchen table, and I was surprised when Helen reached around me and opened a drawer in the table to remove additional forks. Apparently, I had never seen a drawer in a table before that time or at least had never paid attention to it, so it is one of my most vivid memories of that house. I also remember the fireplace. A good-sized stone fireplace, but what I remember most is the glass bug on the hearth. It was a glass paperweight with a bug inside attached to the stonework, but to a little boy it was amazing and fascinating.

In childhood, winter is filled with fun times playing in the snow, snow days and winter vacations from school.



Helen Potter on Middle Grove Road near Pages Corners, her home in the background



Helen Potter Mix and James Mix on a snowmobile

But memories cannot always be captured with a photo. The joy you felt when you received a hat, scarf and a pair of mittens knitted by your grandmother, or great-grandmother. Toys or other items made by a family member that you lovingly enjoyed for many years. You may still have one of these precious items or remember them fondly wishing you

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Sometimes our Spring vacation in March or April was still filled with snow so winter seemed to last longer than it does now. Although as I get older it sometimes lasts too long since I must do all the fun things like shoveling and ice removal by myself instead of having children to do it for me.



*Potter Children Winter 1933
R. Chester, baby George, Dorothy, John, Frances*

Maybe it is because it is winter, but for some reason my winter memories seem to focus on the things I did outside. Does the introduction of the cold weather, jog the mind to think of the things we did outside in the cold? Perhaps similarly we tend to think of Thanksgivings and Christmases past during the holiday season, and our summer adventures and family picnics during the summer season. Of course, everything no matter the time of year tends to come flooding back when we sit with our old photo albums, or when we gather with family and friends just remembering the shared times and those no longer with us. Even talking with someone about their family or childhood brings our memories alive again like dusting off a favorite toy, vacation souvenir, Christmas decoration or rereading a favorite book. Even the act of preparing a meal while using a certain dish can reawaken those memories. When I use a certain PYREX dish, I remember my mother making scalloped potatoes and onions, sometimes with sliced ham, in this dish. As a picky kid, I never liked this dish but would enjoy eating it now, even though it would be considered very unhealthy. Of course, this one memory gets me thinking about everything she made to go with this dish, sometimes taking me down a rabbit hole of meals my mother made. Of course, we have all sat at a holiday table with family members and started talking about the meals we grew up with and which we did and did not like. But I digress.

However, pictorial reminders often bring back our memories, even if we are not in the photo.



Skating Party in what appears to be Congress Park, circa 1900

Looking at a photo of skating around 1900, I find myself remembering ice skating at the skating rink the Middle Grove

Fire Department created behind the old Middle Grove school, now Zanetti Architectural Millwork, on what was their property in the 1970s. With lights from the building flooding the rink at night for evening skating, many people skated there for several years. The firemen would flood or spray the area with water to create the skating rink and they provided a monitor on evenings when it was officially open. Depending on the weather, the rink could be bumpy, and we often had to push the snow off the ice, but it was fun, and we learned how to skate.

Around that same time, for some reason we got into cross-country skiing. I think the high school had cross-country skis as part of the physical education program. I do remember a group borrowing skis to take Canadian exchange students cross-country skiing at Crandall Park in Glens Falls. As someone who could barely ski, the trails in the park could be harrowing, like going down a hill quite fast to cross a very narrow bridge



Frances Potter not quite standing while cross country skiing

across a stream. I also brought up the rear of the group by following and waiting for those who were even worse than me on skis. It got quite dark by the time we got back to the warming hut and bus, even at the time I found it odd that the teachers in charge did not come looking for us slowpokes, but another student met us on the way back.

My sisters and I actually bought boots and skis, and at some point, attempted to teach Aunt Fran to ski. Or did she try to teach us? Aunt Fran enjoyed trekking out on her bearpaw snowshoes, sometimes followed by us kids. I now live on the land where we used to have some of these winter outings and remember going out on these winter treks when I walk out behind my house. The trees are much larger now and the field is not as free from undergrowth as it used to be. In summer, when I was old enough, I used to drive our '48 Ford tractor with a brush-hog attachment up to the property and mow everything back. There was about 20-25 years of not mowing everything back to the tree lines.

I am amazed that we thought the slope of the back field was actually a 'hill' large enough for skiing and sledding. We were kids, so things were bigger, taller and more impressive. Thinking of this reminds me of a winter memory I helped to create with the young daughters of friends from California. While their



Jane Potter tobogganing with a nephew

parents were in the house talking with my partner Jim, we spent time attempting to 'sled' on a very small slope in my backyard. Not having a sled, we used cardboard and a plastic box/bag that a bedspread came in to sled on the 'hill.' These little girls are now in high school and college and I have heard from their parents that they still remember sledding at our house, with me pushing them all the way down the hill and pulling them up the hill. To me this serves as a reminder to take the time to make memories that will last a lifetime and our friends and family can remember after we are gone. Sometimes the seemingly small things, like spending time with someone, can create a cherished memory and impact.

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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