

Historical Society Newsletter

Ron Feulner, Editor
PO Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

OFFICERS: Coral Crosman, President; Tom Siragusa, Vice President; Patty Schwartzbeck, Secretary; Alice Feulner, Treasurer; Robert Roeckle, Trustee; Ron Feulner, Trustee; JoAnn Rowland, Trustee.

Volume 7, Issue 2

This issue sponsored by Betty and Sonny Hall in memory of Sonny's parents, Harold and Emily Hall.

Calendar

Tuesday, October 17, 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. Our speaker will be Bruce Hiscock, local author and illustrator of many children's books.

Tuesday, November 21, 7 p.m., program to be determined.

Reminder that our year of meetings begins in September so everyone's membership renewal is due (unless you have recently paid). We have made it easy to renew your membership (or become a new member) by filling out our membership application contained in this newsletter and mailing it with your dues (if you prefer to keep your newsletter intact, you may copy the necessary information on another sheet and send it). We will also accept memberships at our meetings. The only requirement to become a member is an interest in local history (residency in the town is not required). We hope to have another good year, and we need you as a member to help it happen.

I just wish to say thank you to our members who have so promptly paid their dues and a special thank you to those who have chosen to add a little extra as a donation. Every little bit helps us accomplish our goals. Alice Feulner (Treas.)

Coral's Calls

Another grand opening to a 'new year' for our Historical Society, now up to about 22 and our 'permanent' charter perhaps not far off...at least that is my hope – and since I seem to have *lived* this long (despite recurring pessimism) I expect it can and will happen...just as a 'goal' I encountered from a two-year-old *cahier* (as I call my self-serving written monologues) that the front of the Pvt. Benedict House might be done by '06... and it *is*, at the moment, discounting neighbors' pyrotechnic blazes, bang-ups at the intersection (not to mention low-flying aircraft which this Chicken Little also takes periodically into account...)

But back to the subject at hand – our proud organization, with more than 40 on board for Jack Freeman's seasoned overlook of the fire towers' presence in this state – their utility, their superannuation as technological advance made them redundant and – ultimately, their restoration where possible to provide new views for present and subsequent generations of all-age hikers and outdoors-seekers. With the 'new' national emphasis on the human species perhaps being designed for more than just a sedentary office chair/school desk existence, who knows what forests and lakesides we may yet discover? In addition to excellent slides of structures past and present, his paperback, *Views From On High*, also appeared popular. ADKer Freeman is still seeking support among folk who

can help ‘clear the way’ (literally) for a permanent trail and restoration of the Spruce Mountain tower, at 73’, the highest remaining in the Adirondack-Catskill region. His presentation was preceded by a fine pot luck – a feast for eyes and palates as we Greenfielders modestly acknowledged we had the best recipes about, mine (being an historian at heart) from my c. 1961 *Better Homes & Gardens New Cook Book*, pages appropriately bespattered w/ everything I ever learned to make from it...

During this past summer, limited tours have been conducted to our sites through the gracious guidance of Mary DeMarco, knowledgeable and stalwart town historian, as well as author-board member Ron Feulner who invited me along on a contingent from the Smith-Dake family reunion branch where I was privileged to see at last such mythic sites as the foundation of the old Dake homestead off Old Daketown Road (which reminded of one of Bob Jones’ digital projections last spring of an earlier settler’s site on Skidmore property) as well as the touching and fragile Dake graveyard that overlooks the Kayaderosseras (creek, that is.) For my part, I got to do an ‘impromptu’ review of recent enhancements to the Middle Grove Methodist Church for a captive congregation of Dakes, Rowells and Smiths...followed by photo op. I wondered afterward why my audience was so attentive and then identified that latent ‘respect’ for the interior of a religious sanctuary... While I couldn’t quite intertwine my genealogy with theirs, I was gifted by meeting two siblings who knew my Dad as teacher and coach in Schenectady...so that was serendipitous, at least.

As this column goes to press, we are anticipating, with many thanks to newly-elected vice president Tom Siragusa and Greenfield Elementary School 4th grader teacher, David Shippee, a tour of some 80+ 4th graders that will include the one-room schoolhouse, the former IOOF Hall, with the nearby Middle Grove Town Park also on our schedule – here’s hoping for a sunny day! I’ll try to report back in November.

Mark **TUESDAY** (after two variant months) on your October schedule, the 17th for longtime resident artist/children’s author **Bruce Hiscock** (who came to the area for the horses but that is

another tale, no pun intended). His beautifully-illustrated children’s books draw heavily on his surroundings and we are blessed to have him with us as he, not unlike his peer, Joe Bruchac, is so frequently galavanting about the countryside that it is difficult to even ‘catch him at home’ long enough to invite him down the street... He tells me he’s more used to talking to youngsters than adults so you can be sure you won’t have to parse your way through any superannuated vocabulary from him! I look forward to seeing all our faithful members and friends in October.

Just one last note of *thanks* to the Joneses for helping set up for the supper (& afterward clean-up, while Janet was off dancing, I understand), to the town for providing table set-up, and to past vice president, Deb Dittner, who brought with her the special announcement of the purpose for which the historic building (former Masonic Lodge) on the northwest corner at Greenfield, is being “restored” – to serve as family practice medical offices with another Greenfielder which I’m sure you’ll be reading/hearing more about in the media soon, if not already.

Brookside Dairy

By Betty and Sonny Hall

Brookside Dairy, in Greenfield Center, was originally started in 1904 by Clarence Hall, grandfather of Sonny Hall. Clarence operated the farm on 100 acres of land with two cows and two horses. During his term of town supervisor he fought hard for the train overpass on Route 9N and later was killed after being hit by a train in that very section of Greenfield in 1924. At this time, Clarence’s son, Harold, took over the business and operated it until the early 1970’s along with his son Harold C.

The attractive farm on Wilton Road grew to over 500 acres, 100 head of cattle, and employed 10 men. The dairy processed and bottled their own farm milk along with milk from several small area farms that produced Gurnsey Milk. There were five delivery milk trucks.



One of the Brookside Dairy trucks.

The Hall Farm was located at what is known as St. Johns Corners [the first intersection as you drive east from the light in Greenfield on Wilton Road]. It was owned by John St. John, who came with a colony of settlers from Connecticut in 1788 and settled there. The plot was first used as St. Johns Tavern. At this tavern, St. John's lodge, F and AM [Masonic Lodge] is said to have begun. The tavern was the rendezvous of British officers during the war of 1812. It further claims to have been one of



Sonny and his sister, Jean, and their horses.

the stations on the "underground railroad" in the days of slavery. Only the old well now remains of a historic tavern located in Greenfield. The dairy was in operation for 66 years. The farm is now a Bed and Breakfast owned by Dale and Karen Schook.

In 1950, Harold Sr. decided to surprise the family and purchased some palomino horses. A gentleman named Tom Hunt from Pennsylvania trained them. He also trained Roy Rogers' horse Trigger. Sonny and his sister, Jean, performed tricks with their horses at the Painted Pony Rodeo and other horse shows around the state.

My Last Hunting Trip

By Frank Max

After leaving the Porter Corners area and moving to Saratoga, I still returned to hunt deer near the graphite mine. When my son got old enough, he wanted to join me so I took him over to the Spa Rod and Gun Club to take his hunting test so he could get his big game license. Paul Sukala was giving the instruction and test, and he asked me what I was doing there since we had hunted together many times. I told Paul that I was there for my son's moral support. We both took the test and my son, Butch, got 100, but I missed one question. So much for the support idea.

Butch and I headed for the side of the mountain one day when Saratoga had just a little snow, but when we got to the mine area it was a foot or more with a thick crust on top. The crust would hold Butch, but because I was heavier, I cut through with every step. After walking up the mountainside for a while, I was getting tired so I told Butch to go ahead without me. I said that I would sit there and still-watch for deer.

After a while Butch came back. He had seen a couple of does but no bucks. So back to cutting through the crust again for me on the way out. I can remember each step thinking there has to be an easier way to get a steak. That thought just kept running through my mind all the way home. When I got up the next morning my legs wouldn't work. They hurt bad for quite a while, and that was my last hunt.

*Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Fill out this form and enclose \$6.00 for individual membership or \$10.00 for household. **If you send more it will be considered a donation.** Other types of memberships are also available (lifetime, corporate, etc.) just call and ask (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.

Type of membership: Individual_____ Household_____ (please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in the household). _____

Name (please print)_____

Street _____

City_____ **State**_____ **Zip Code**_____

Amount enclosed_____ **(\$6 individual or \$10 household) Date** _____

Areas of interest to you_____

Note: 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_____

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