

Historical Society Newsletter

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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 6

This issue sponsored by Janet and Paul Koelbel and dedicated to the late Ezra Weed.

Calendar

Tuesday, February 20, 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. Our speaker will be Michael Russert, Director of the Oral Project at the Military Museum in Saratoga.

Tuesday, March 20, 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. Our speaker will be Jud Kilmer, owner of Kilmer's Sawmill on Lake Desolation Road. He will speak about the history of his family and the Town of Greenfield.

Winter Reminder: When the Greenfield Elementary School (Saratoga Springs School District) is closed because of bad weather, our meeting will also be canceled.

Coral's Calls

Well, for the second January in a row, we have 'lost' our program, opportunity to meet...which still restores to memory that chill gathering in '03 when the gentleman beside me brought out a bright hatchet, sitting in our sweet 'show 'n tell' circle where others displayed innocuous costumes from grandmotherly attics while Ron, clear across the center space and hinting at that 'darkness' which lends a superb quality to his storytelling penchant (*viz.*, **Adirondack Justice**), asked if I knew anything about 'the old well' into which a man's wife apparently disappeared at one (unidentified) time in Greenfield. As to this last item, despite my

best efforts, I have failed to unearth any thread of that tale in either print/oral history...

As for Joe Bruchac's 'miss' of a year ago: the event was highly publicized along with an early-in-the-day forecast promising 'freezing rain' by 7 p.m. My friend Carol was on top of it by late afternoon, suggesting we should perhaps cancel but I was hesitant... The meeting was postponed. With this year's Jan. 16 weather, it was a pretty clear-cut case: schools *closed*, no meeting – but as my Mom was once wont to say (are all mothers like this?) I had the 'gift' for converting the most facile of challenges into a major knuckle-cracker (at least, metaphorically) and so did not quite reach that conclusion until my land-line was restored and I was calling GHS folk. Nancy Homiak kindly reminded of that convention – which was, of course, not useful a year ago in that everything depended upon the forecast's 'precision' – that time, on target.

I had wanted to provide an 'update' on our charter process (as of 1/19), basically a 'replay' of about two years ago; that office must schedule a visit – apart from that, all our paperwork was in order. I resisted leaving another message for Parks & Recs. re: our "Farley Grant status," figuring the staff would be brave just to get to work... So with nothing more to 'write about', I'll just share a few words from my own 'take' on nature wreaking havoc... A part of it I blame on my bro's whimsy, celebrating his first birthday post-decease which finally aligned again precisely with Martin Luther King's and his penchant for enjoying variations on

weather – therefore so appropriate it should snow in East Texas where he died a year ago, be barren in the Northeast where he grew up, etc. But in reality, I was grateful for my ‘bird’s eye view’ of what was happening (which even induced me to restore food within the iced lilac branches that chickadee generations recall I once did, in bird life, many bird-babies back). I tuned in radio stations (notably WGY-AM and 101.3 FM) on my antique Walkman to keep up with outages – I’d expected (with dimming) electricity to go out early that day so didn’t start the washer...as my daughter called from Clifton Park so we could keep each other apprised. There was that unmistakable POW across the road of what the Natl. Grid lady I phoned by mistake (but it is not clear on the billing list) called a ‘fuse’ – in darkness there would have been light flashes but this was daylight. She didn’t seem too excited and I never got thru on the other line. My handyman and I debated whether it was time to install a generator, about which we talked after last year’s sudden blow that put me out for 26 hours although I was restored sooner than some.

I guess he hated the idea of showing up to find me frozen stiff so he brought the necessary equipment along and began the process of setting it up... when the sun shone on a *lit* colonial lamp mid-afternoon Tuesday as I walked in from another part of the house, I said (puzzled not to also hear the rumble of a furnace) “Guess what?” He did... The Jøtul, in the meanwhile, was abjectly boiling tea water... and keeping the thermostat in a range that precluded the oil burner’s kicking in. As I later returned to my news-junkie habits of the evening news, startled by how many customers were still out in the greater Capital region, I evoked (in comfort) a recall of peering out my ell door window up the road to see (by approaching New Moon black) only *darkness*, no streetlight illuminating the eastward curve, no neighbors’ lights, etc. This weekend I found my knitting, put away before grandkids’ arrival on Christmas, which I missed that candle-lit evening I looked briefly back at with sentimentality: rocking before the flickering woodfire ...angel candle and several others whisked out one by one. The land-line had returned before electricity but cable was last (confirmed by TV) and with it, the imperative to ‘go check my e-mail,’ so hurtled unsympathetically back into the second millennium.

Traveling about in the days immediately afterward, I was impressed by hordes of utility trucks in the area – one from ConEd following two predecessors into the Stewart’s on 9N as I yielded. They turned in and out and stopped at roadside as if they owned the region which as far I was concerned they did, trying to provide a grateful salute or wave of thanks whenever my hand might be visible through the windshield. Each of us has our own story and mine is, fortunately, on the “dull side” though I was thankful for a neighbor checking in Tuesday morning. My daughter (who frets) was again dismayed at my priority of keeping pipes intact through winter sieges. When the wind finally arrived on Saturday and little ice chunks tinkled down on Sand Hill Road as I jogged upward, across, down, I was reminded of a noontime Albany outing (where I once worked) after a freak, out-of-season early snowstorm that left wires down everywhere, puddled sidewalks between snowbanks as I scurried along thinking to myself, “Don’t put your foot in that wet section with the wire going under it.” And “Coral, this is *not* smart to be running in these conditions...” If requiring more agility than usual.

I look forward to seeing you all again, out of hibernation (realized Sunday morning as I learned I’d almost entirely missed the winter ice cream sale) on Tuesday, February 20, when we will hear from Michael Russert, director of the oral history project for the Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. It will also be time to start thinking about dates for coming hikes and outings for the real spring/summer – and our May (’07-08) slate of officers and trustees...
Ciao!

PS – I always enjoy reading *your* tales as they appear each month in this newsletter. I’d encourage anyone interested to consider this next round of the senior (50+) writers’ group where we meet weekly and do a magazine of our work: ’07 marks our fifth issue a-borning. The cost is the \$15 to join the Senior Citizens Center of Saratoga Springs and you also get one *free* issue of the magazine. With a few writers on board since ’01, I’m also asking willing participants to lead segments. We meet Tuesdays, 3-5 p.m. Call me at 587-9809 for further info. Or just come! No one is too timid for *this* well-intentioned and supportive group, believe me!

Message from the editor: I need more articles to finish out our newsletter year.

Ezra Weed

by Paul Koelbel

My wife and I recently purchased a house in Greenfield Center, NY, and as we walked around the property, we couldn't help but notice all the big trees and long piles of stones. One could tell by the hundreds of linear feet of stone walls that once upon a time there were fields here where two-foot diameter trees now stand. Oh, how they must have toiled! One may wonder who did all this work of clearing the land and hauling the stones to the edge of the field. They probably used horses or oxen and a device called a sledge.

Upon examination of our deed, it states that the five acres of land that our house now stands on was "land here to fore known as the Ezra Weed farm." This provided a basic answer to the question of who once owned the land, but now we wanted to know more about Ezra Weed. An inquiry at the Greenfield Town Hall revealed that he was buried at the Scott Cemetery on the corner of Wing Road and South Greenfield Road, opposite the Arnold farm. I stopped at the cemetery one day and walked around looking for his headstone, and sure enough, there it was. I felt as if I was actually meeting Ezra Weed for the first time. There were also other people buried in the Weed family plot, so I took photos and copied the inscriptions on their stones.

Ezra's wife, Rhoda Weed, is also listed as being buried in the Scott Cemetery, but at first, I could not find her stone. I had a shovel in the car, so I poked around, and under an inch or two of accumulated topsoil, I uncovered it. It was barely readable.

I then decided to research our deed by going to the County Court House Complex in Ballston Spa. The area where the deeds are kept is a very busy place with people going through ancient records (books called Grantee and Grantor). The people working there looked busy, and I didn't want to interrupt anyone. Fortunately, there was a sign that said "Need Help?" A young fellow named Tom explained where I would have to look in order to find who owned the property on Goosehollow Road after Ezra Weed. Tom said that Grantee meant buyer and Grantor meant seller, and then he showed

me where the deeds and maps were kept so I started to trace previous owners. Unfortunately, I really never found the original Ezra Weed deed, but it was very interesting coming up with the history of others who owned the land that our house is built on.

One interesting pair of owners were Lovina W. Sweeney and Mary Ambler who owned the property from 1873 to 1890. The names rang a bell, and then I remembered that there was a Lovina W. Sweeney and Mary Ambler buried next to Ezra Weed in the Scott Cemetery. These two owners were Ezra and Rhoda Weed's daughters. This may not seem like much of a discovery to you, but it took a real bit of sleuthing, marrying up a deed in the Ballston Spa County Building to headstones in the Scott Cemetery.

Of course, there is still the mystery of how the original Ezra Weed's 65 acre farm went from Ezra Weed and Rhoda Weed [his wife] to Seth and Charlotte Weed, and then to Lovina and Mary. Probably Seth Weed (possibly Ezra Weed's brother) inherited or purchased the property in 1859 upon Ezra Weed's death. But, why didn't the property go to Rhoda Weed (his wife) who lived until 1865? All three of their daughters, Lovina, Mary and Betsy were married. Rhoda Weed (Ezra Weed's wife) went to live with her daughter, Lovina Sweeney, and her husband, Herman Sweeney, per the 1860 census for Saratoga County. Then, Seth Weed passed away, and Charlotte inherited the property, and she sold to Lovina and Mary in 1873.

We also learned from the 1800 and 1860 censuses that Ezra had some kind of a doctor's degree, although his obituary only mentions that he was a deacon. This is also where we learned that Ezra Weed married Rhoda Ingerson and had a son, Issac, born in 1806 who sadly died in 1809. We also noted that the property was sold by Lovina Sweeney and Mary Ambler to William and Fanny Ingerson in 1890, and that Rhoda Weed's maiden name was Ingerson. Apparently the selling back and forth of property between family members was a common practice in the 1800's. Ezra and Rhoda Weed also had three daughters [mentioned above], Betsy born on July 25, 1800, had married Benjamin Hunt. Betsy died on April 4, 1835. Mary was born November 8, 1810, and married Jacob Ambler. Mary died April 3, 1886. Lovina was born May 20, 1812, and married Herman Sweeney. She died

November 30, 1890. All three daughters had a single headstone (Betsy also had a separate headstone) indicating that they were buried next to their parents and not with their husbands. Today most wives and husbands are buried together. I don't know if this was customary in order to indicate that these were Ezra and Rhoda's daughters or were the daughters really buried with their parents? Or [perhaps] they are buried somewhere else with their husbands [and only have stones next to their parents].

We also noted that in Clayton Brown's book titled *Greenfield Glimpses*, it states on page 68 that Ezra Weed was one of six trustees in the First Baptist Church in January 19, 1818. Ezra Weed was also involved in the sale of pews of the First Baptist Church.

A little more research in the January 27, 1859 issue of *The Saratogian* newspaper revealed the following obituary for Ezra Weed.

On Saturday the 22d instant, Deacon EZRA WEED, of Greenfield – aged about 86 years. He was born in North Stamford, Ct., February 17, 1773, emigrated with his father and family to Greenfield, in the spring of 1787, then 14 years old. He has ever since that date resided in Greenfield to the day of his decease. For about 50 years he was communicant of the Babtist church, and was ordained a Deacon of that church in the year 1810. As the fruit of a pious education and of a pure devotion to the christian faith, Mr. Weed sustained the unspotted reputation of an honest man, “the noblest work of God,” – Peace be to his ashes. A widow in the 84th year of her age, is bereft of a kind and affectionate companion, and four surviving children of a faithful and indulgent father. For a period of more than sixty-two years, Mr. And Mrs. Weed mutually shared sorrows and joys of an earthly pilgrimage, in a happy matrimonial union; the last half century of which they had mingled their devotion at the family alter, to Him who died to save the world.

Researching and trying to put together a small story about Ezra Weed was interesting, but I am sure there are many questions concerning his life and property that could yet be answered.

I would like to thank Vicky and others in the Saratoga Room, which is located in the Saratoga Springs Library, for their assistance and suggestions in researching Ezra Weed.

PS – I intend to eventually rehabilitate Rhoda Weed's headstone.

To join the Historical Society send \$6 individual or \$10 family along with your name and address to the address shown below.

If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to the address below or if you write it using Microsoft Word, you can e-mail it to me (the editor) at: aliron@localnet.com

To sponsor a newsletter send \$50 along with your name and address and the wording (please print) describing whom you would like the newsletter dedicated to.

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