

Historical Society Newsletter

Janet Jones, Editor

P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833

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

Volume 8, Issue 8

Calendar

April 15: Tuesday, meeting held at the Greenfield Community Center at 7 p.m. and program to follow: *Tracy Purcell reminiscing about the past in Greenfield.*

April 26: Field trip to Dake Cemetery, meet at IOOF Hall in Middle Grove at 1 p.m.

Rain Date: May 3.

May 20: Tuesday, meeting held at the Greenfield Community Center at 7 p.m. and program to follow: *Don Williams – “Past and Present Amusement Parks in the Adirondacks.”*

Ron's Ramblings

The weatherman did it to us again. The last forecast that I heard before leaving for our March 18th meeting said that a mixture of snow, sleet, and freezing rain would begin sometime during the evening and continue as rain on Wednesday. At that point, it would be more work to try and cancel the meeting than taking a chance, so that is what we did. It turned out well, we had twenty-six people show up, and Kristina Saddlemire, County Historian, gave a wonderful presentation.

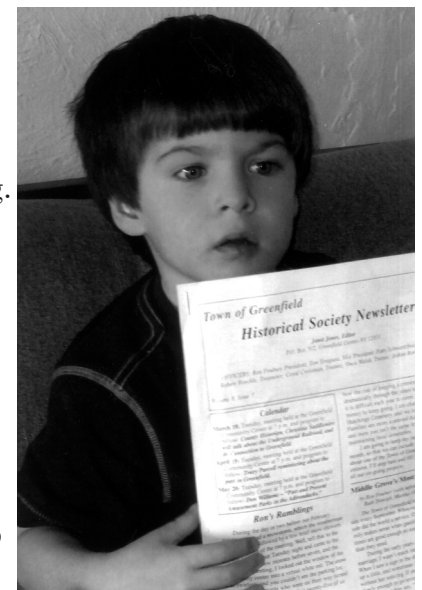
She talked about Greenfield's forgotten involvement in the abolition movement in general and the actual movement of families via the, "underground railroad," which involved a group of citizens that were willing to break the law and place their own financial wellbeing at stake to help others escape to freedom. We learned that the Quakers were active in this movement as they are today fighting against our involvement in Iraq.

Kristina is passionate about her research, and she urges everyone in Greenfield who has heard stories while growing up in the area to jot them down and send them to her at the County Historian's Office (or just call her). She said, "It doesn't matter if you think them important, or even question their truth,

because these stories often have at least some core of truth, and when added to an accumulation of other stories, they sometimes help to verify one another." This is the kind of puzzle work that Kristina is doing, and she admits that there is so much to do that the research may out last her. Her address and phone number are: Saratoga County Historian, 40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020; phone 518-884-4749.

Some of the other business discussed included the continuing project at the IOOF hall. Also the Dake Cemetery project chaired by Fran Lambert. Fran has communicated with Maurice Dake in Florida, and he is happy to have our help with the project. Coral Crosman, Katie Finnegan, and Jud Kilmer joined the committee in addition to Matt and Maureen Cinadr. The Dakes have indicated that they will provide the financing for the project. We are also planning another workday at the IOOF hall this spring. Everyone that I have talked to had a good time during our workday last fall and perhaps we can do it even better this spring.

I also wish to thank all of you who have given us money donations this year. Since we have not received any grant money from the state (although it is still being promised); we need all the local help that we can get. We have a lot to do on the buildings if we want to keep them in reasonable repair.



Ron and Alice Feulner's three-year old grandson, Quintin, who lives in Tucson, Arizona. "Even people who can't read, read the Town of Greenfield Historical Society's newsletter."

Memories Growing Up

By Mary Carlson

[daughter of Ernest and Zelda (Jones) Rhodes]

Walking a few steps, then running a few to grab hold of my father's hand is one of my first memories. We were going to the pasture to get the cows to bring them in for the night. We lived on North Creek Road between two blind corners. The cows were pastured in a far field about a quarter mile north of our house. The pasture itself was mostly woods and went from Mr. Bencze's property line back and extended to Kal Webb's field on Wilsey Road which was East Road to us.

A lot of our firewood was cut from this pasture, and the logs cut were hauled to Jack Feulner's, Guy Kilmer's, or Hoffman's sawmills. Most of the logs ended up being turned into the house that Dad built where his grandson Matt Sargen and family now live. Many times in the winter, I went with Dad to cut the logs. After morning chores, we took a lunch, an extra pair of mittens, and socks, and the horses, and we stayed until time for evening chores which was later afternoon. This was before day-light-savings-time, which meant that the chores had to be done before the sun went down so the big barn door could be shut before sundown and the temperature dropped.

The hemlock smell and tiny cones were my favorite things of the day. If it was really cold, Dad piled a couple large branches together, and I piled smaller ones on top of them for a nest that kept my feet off the cold ground and protected me from the wind. Sometimes, he even built a fire to warm some soup for us. It wasn't all fun and games. This was where I learned how to hook a chain, use a wood hook, pevie, and drive horses. Usually one horse was used to skid the logs to the sleigh, and two to pull the sleigh out to the roadside.

In summer, part of this winter wonderland turned into a swampy jungle, at least it seemed like this to a small girl.

When a cow wasn't waiting at the gate in the afternoon, we had to go look for her. They had a habit of having babies back in the woods. My job was to follow the fence to a certain place then follow our wood skidding trails back to the gate.

Dad did the center and really brushy areas. This was always an adrenaline rush for me because Gramp, Joe Rhodes, and my father frequently told stories about a snake that Gramp encountered and killed that was, "as big as your wrist," and it was gone when they went back later to get it.

Driving the cows along the road was not bad while it was dirt, but after it was paved, we had problems with increasing and faster traffic. We eventually needed one person in front of the cows to slow traffic down, and one behind to protect them and move them along. Especially the ones who just had to stop for those extra few mouthfuls of grass.

Before we were forced to change our pasture area there were some scary incidents. The cows were not only our main source of income, but all were raised from babies and dear to us, heightening our sense of protection of them.

So many drivers just hit the horn and expected twenty-some cows to instantly part and make way so they could drive through the herd without slowing down. It didn't happen! There were many instances of hand waving, yelling, walking stick being raised to hood level, and even cows being hit.

As Gramp grew older, he had less patience with drivers who had no respect for the animals. Gramp had never driven himself, so he did not comprehend that cars could not stop on a dime. Now Gramp wasn't very tall, but he did not lack for courage. When he came out to watch the curve by the barnyard gate, there was double fear that he would step out too far in front of a vehicle trying to protect the animals. My heart still races when I think about that.

Our dog, Tippie, was the greatest help with the cows. I think he knew every cow by name and could bring whatever one you wanted back next to the barn. He was a light brown medium-sized mixed breed with a few white hairs at the end of his tail thus the name, Tippie. Tippie came into our family as a pup soon after I did. About that same time, Gramp's cousin, Gus Partridge, (whose home is now family home of L'Hommedieus) had just returned and was missing his family. Training Tippie became his mission, and what a great job he did.

Tippie was not only a great farm dog, he was also a great winter foot warmer at the end of my bed, and he watched over the whole community. At least the places my Dad frequently visited.

Every morning while Dad was milking, Tippie visited Bill Wilsey, Art and Grace Perry [Jim Older's place], Mr. and Mrs. Vanna [Alden's place], Arthur and Nina Jones [Keith Wozniak's place], and Aunt Lizzie Dake [now Chandler's place].

Aunt Lizzie was a very old lady. She was Valdie Chatfield's sister, and Mary Chatfield's (the school teacher) aunt, who lived in a very old house on Sandhill Road. It was a large house built into a hill. She lived in the bottom level with her many cats. When Dad went to tell her, that Tippie, while walking the side of the road where he had herded cows so often, was hit by a hit-and-run driver while we were haying in the field, she cried. She had lost her only every-day visitor.

Tippie was a great hunter getting many woodchucks which helped reduce the number of holes in the fields that could cause injury to farm animal's legs. Almost every year, he came home with quills. Of course, Dad always stopped everything to get the quills out as quickly as possible. The dog would never hurt anyone, but the quills were painful. I remember getting hysterical the first time I saw Dad running with a pitchfork in his hands toward the poor dog, his mouth full of quills. Thank God, Gramma was there to explain to me that they used the fork to hold the dogs neck to the ground, so he couldn't hurt himself or anyone trying to help him.

Another time, everyone ran to take out quills while Ma was canning peas. She left the pan on the back of the woodstove with the jars in it. Wanting to be helpful, I pulled a chair up to the stove, filled the jars, and sealed them. I can't imagine now how I didn't burn myself. Well, one of the many old sayings I grew up with was, God watches out for fools and children.

Don't Miss the Field Trip

***April 26: Field trip to Dake Cemetery,
meet at IOOF Hall in Middle Grove
at 1 p.m. Rain Date: May 3.***

Fred Johnson – 1913-2008

By Ron Feulner

Fred Johnson, a long time member of our historical society and former resident of Middle Grove passed away on March 8th, and I thought it fitting that we reprint a portion of an article that we did about him and Middle Grove baseball in the April, 05 issue.

The boys from Middle Grove might never have had a real baseball team without the efforts of one man, Fred Johnson. Fred wasn't a local boy; he had, a few years earlier, made a brief visit to his sister, who was married to the post-master, Alfred Steadman, in Middle Grove, but something occurred that caused him to stay longer. Ruth Menshausen lived a few doors down from the post office, and that was all it took.

Fred was born on 10/26/1913. Fred's parents had met while working at a summer camp near Loon Lake, NY. Fred's mother continued to work in hotels as a maid, and his father was a painter who painted fancy buggies and put stripes and other decorations on horse drawn equipment. The family moved several times and lived in Hudson Falls, Gansvoort, and Lake Placid where his parents worked at the Lake Placid Club. This is where Fred developed his fondness for sports. Because this was seasonal work, the family began spending winters in Florida and summers at Loon Lake. Fred, by this time, was in his early teens and worked at a variety of jobs in Florida such as a filling station attendant, theatre usher, and bell hop at hotels.

Fred knew all about baseball and loved the game. When he moved to Middle Grove, he convinced the Middle Grove boys to join him going door to door asking for contributions to start a team. This must have been in the early forties. They decided to call themselves the Middle Grove AC (Athletic Club). They were overwhelmed by the community's support. They played on a field just below the cemetery (later they moved to a field on the Dake farm located across from and a little above Kilmer's sawmill). The AC ball players were well supported from the start, passing a hat during ball games often netted them thirty or forty dollars, and sometimes more.

Fred already had an extensive background in baseball before he moved to Middle Grove.

While he was a teenager living in Florida, he went to St. Petersburg to watch the NY Yankees who were there for spring training. While walking past the Yankee clubhouse, he overheard Mark Roth, the Yankee travel secretary, complaining because their newly hired batboy hadn't shown up. Fred took advantage of the situation and immediately presented himself for employment and was hired on the spot. During the Yankee spring training sessions of 1936, 37, and 38, Fred was the Yankee batboy. He got to know all the Yankee greats of that era such as George Selkirk, Tommy Hendrick, Frank Crossetti, Babe Ruth, and Lou Gehrig. For ten or twelve years Fred and his family worked this way, in ballparks, hotels, etc. forcing Fred to change schools often. That was about the time that Fred came north and stayed with his older sister and her husband, Alfred Steadman. Fred met Ruth Menshausen and they eventually married, settling in Middle Grove where Ruth became a respected schoolteacher in the Middle Grove one-room school, and Fred worked for GE in Schenectady.

The group of local men who formed the Middle Grove Athletic Club or ACs included a few older men, Paul Brown, Lij Newell, and Ira Hoffman who became coaches, and Fred Johnson was chosen captain; he also played second base.

Gerald Hoffman was 15 or 16 when they started, and he later remembered that most of the people in Middle Grove came to the games and supported the team; Fred Feulner and Paul Brown were especially supportive; they came to every practice. "If the team needed anything, all they had to do was ask." Gerald said, "We never had trouble getting teams to come and play us because we always had money and could give them a few bucks to come." Gerald said that he loved being part of that team. "I would always go up and mow the grass and mark the field out before the games, he said. "At first," he said, "there was lots of interest but toward the end it was difficult getting enough players to show up for a game."

Gerald said, "We had a refreshment booth and sold hot dogs and soda. Roy Baugh umpired a lot of the games. He was good and fair. I think that we were all surprised how much people gave to support the team. It wasn't the best of times but at the same time our money went further. We could buy baseballs for ten dollars per dozen. We bought

fifteen uniforms. Fred Johnson was about the only one with a car so he bought the stuff we needed at Andy's Sporting Goods store in Troy.

As the years went by, the Middle Grove AC players began to lose interest. They were getting older and their interests changed. Fred Johnson had difficulty fielding a team. Fred had a son by this time and wanted to pass his interest in baseball to him so Fred redirected his attention to the younger boys in Middle Grove. This was before official little league was organized. Fred organized the young boys, including his son Kenny, into a team and they called themselves the Cubs. I think they may have used some of the equipment left from the AC days. Fred set up games against boy scout troops, and they even played their parents a couple of times in Old Timers games.

Gene Feulner has a Wilson score book (the price is still marked on the inside of the cover, \$1.20). Gene remembered playing some little league team from Schenectady. Gene said, "When they arrived they started laughing at us because we were so ragtag without uniforms or anything. We beat them badly that day, something like ten to zero. Gene remembered that, "Fred Johnson and we kids had a discussion that day before the big Schenectady game. We needed somebody on first that could catch the ball, and that was kind of hard to find on our team. I think I struck out about nineteen batters that day. Kenny Johnson was there. We had equipment, at least a mask, shin guards, and chest protector for the catcher. We also had regular bases for the field. Fred must have brought all the equipment. We played the game up on the big field across from Kilmer's sawmill. I think it must have been some time in the late forties or early fifties when we played. Fred tried to teach us the fundamentals of baseball. He had a fungo bat and a stopwatch. He used the watch to time us running the bases. I remember we all loved that. Some of the little kids didn't even know which way to run, but they all had fun. I also remember one time when Fred took a few of us to Boston to see the Red Sox play. We saw Ted Williams that day, but they took him out of the game early after they built a big lead."

Fred's widow, Ruth Menshausen Johnson lives at 62 Burnside Trail, Hendersonville, NC 28792.

sounds of beauty

By Fran Lambert

The crisp, sharp crackle of fireworks popping up in the sky.
 The sound of waterfalls tumbling down heavy laden rocks.
 The sweetness of tiny voiced birds, like woodpeckers, and the agitated call of the insistent bluebird-jays.
 The hushed quiet tones of earth moving in tones so deep that nary a scrape, rumble, sound is heard, but is there ... still.
 The oncoming announcement of distant storm with all its fury and majesty, to deal with new air currents!
 The pellets of miniature to giant size droplets of rain hitting the earth, leaving sounds of soft thuds to large poundings upon the soil.
 The tops of the trees gently whispering when the wind stirs them.
 The running sap climbing or falling when the season allows.
 The long drawl buzz of a lazy June bug content on his perch in the basking sun.
 The frenzied deafening chorus of the very early pollywogs all in unison ... then halting immediately when an intruder approaches.
 The drone of a small distant plane going about his business to somewhere.
 The “rick-rick” of a busy cricket in search of food
 Our thoughts being heard by the “One Who Knows.”

Reminiscing

By Frank Max

I often wonder how many people reminisce about the good old days and think about all that they have seen. In Ohio, 1933, in school, we had a fire drill, and we all went out, but no fire trucks were around. But a few minutes later, we heard and saw the Dirigible, Akron, fly over. Then I went to the 1933 Chicago Fair and rode the cable car between the two towers; went on a train to Niagara Falls, and rode the trolley along the gorge (which is not there today), saw my first mummy, and the rubber ball that some man went over the falls in. The trips I took with Steve Zabala and his sister, Stella, to New York City to visit their father, and another trip I went with Steve and his brother, Joe, and we were on top of the RCA Building when we heard that Pearl Harbor was bombed (December 7). I reminisce these and other stories but not in a rocking chair, but in my recliner between naps.

I'd like to thank last month's refreshment volunteers – Alice Feulner, Nancy Homiak, and Patty Schwartzbeck. They served Apricot Bars, Oatmeal Cookies, Blond Brownies, Pumpkin Bars, mixed nuts and chocolate candy eggs. Alice Feulner's Apricot Bars were such a big hit, we included her recipe above.

Jane Potter and Katie Finnegan volunteered to be on the April refreshment committee.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

There is a Heaven for Volunteers

Author Anonymous

Many will be shocked to find,
 When the day of judgement nears,
 That there's a special place in Heaven,
 Set aside for volunteers.
 Furnished with big recliners,
 Satin couches and footstools,
 Where there's no committee chairman,
 No group leaders, no car pools,
 No eager team that needs a coach,
 No bazaar and no bake sale,
 There will be nothing to staple,
 Not one thing to fold and mail,
 But a finger snap will bring,
 Cool drinks and gourmet meals,
 And rare treats fit for a king.
 You ask, “Who'll serve those privileged few
 And work for all they're worth?
 Why – all those who reaped the benefits
 And **Not Once**
 Volunteered on Earth!!!

Submitted by JoAnn Rowland

Alice's Apricot Bars

2/3 cup of dried apricots – cover with water and boil 10 minutes, drain, cool and chop.

1/2 cup of butter	1/3 cup of flour
1/4 cup of sugar	1/4 teasp. salt
1 cup of flour	1/2 teasp. baking powder
2 eggs, well beaten	1/2 teasp. vanilla
1 cup brown sugar	1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Mix butter, sugar (1/4 cup granulated) and 1 cup of flour until its crumbly. Pack it into a greased 8x8 pan. Bake at 25 minutes at 350 degrees.

Into a large bowl beat 2 eggs and add brown sugar. Add 1/3 cup of flour, salt and baking powder.

Add vanilla. Stir in chopped apricots and chopped nuts. Spread over the baked layer. Bake 30 minutes. Cool in pan on a rack. Cut into pieces.

Membership Application/Renewal

Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Send \$10 along with your name and address to the address shown below. If you send more it will be considered a donation. Other types of memberships are also available (lifetime, corporate, etc.), just call and ask (518-893-0620). 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.

Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). _____

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

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 the newsletter dedicated to (please print):

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 _____

We still need articles for the newsletters. If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or if you type it using Microsoft Word, e-mail it to: aliron@localnet.com. Please type in upper and lower case, NOT ALL CAPS. Thank you.

**Town of Greenfield Historical Society
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Greenfield Center, NY 12833**