

Historical Society Newsletter

Janet Jones, Editor

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

OFFICERS: President: Ron Feulner; Vice President: Louise Okoniewski;

Secretary: Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer: Alice Feulner;

Trustees: Coral Crosman, Ron Deutsch, Robert Roeckle, JoAnn Rowland, and Vince Walsh

Volume 9, Issue 4

Calendar

December 13: Saturday, Holiday Open House (in place of December meeting) will be held at the IOOF Hall in Middle Grove, 1 to 4 p.m. The theme will be "Christmas Stockings." Contact JoAnn Rowland for more details (893-7786). Please bring cookies to share and we'll have a cookie sale at the end of the Open House. We will also have an ornament exchange; please bring an ornament if you want to participate.

January 20, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program will be Jim Smith, continuing the story of his life in Greenfield.*

February 17, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program to follow.*

IMPORTANT

If schools are closed because of the weather, our meeting will be canceled that evening.

Please Note: Our membership chairperson tells me that most of you have paid your dues for the current year, but a few have forgotten. To jog your memory, we are placing a circle near the return address on the last page. If a red "X" appears in the circle, it means, that according to our records, you have not yet paid. The January issue will be sent to only those who are up-to-date with their dues. If you feel a mistake has been made, please contact us.

(Nancy 518-893-7770 or Alice 518-893-0620)

Ron's Ramblings

First its too warm for comfort (last week), then the bottom drops out of the thermometer. My blood can't seem to adjust. We were fortunate to have thirty-four people turn out for our November meeting on such a cold night, which was complete with a dusting of snow. I was a little off with my timing and didn't get to the community center quite as early as usual. Audrey Crandall and Helen Woods were sitting in the parking lot waiting as were several other cars. Audrey said they got there early and began to think they had the wrong night until others began arriving.

We had just begun setting up chairs when Nancy Homiak came out of the kitchen (where she and members of her family were already to prepare coffee and refreshments) and told me there was no water coming out of the faucets. We checked the bathrooms, and it was the same story. There was a sign in the kitchen which said to call Michael if we had a problem, so I did, and he came to fix it.

The meeting went well with several committee reports. Nancy Homiak reminded us that the December issue of the newsletter will be the red X issue. When you receive your issue, look at the circle near the return address, and if it has a red X, it means, that according to our records, you have not paid your dues, and you will be taken off the mailing list. If this happens and you thought you have paid, please let us know. Also, if you are having hard times financially, as many are these days, we don't want to lose you as a member, so let us know, and we will work something out.

Harold Jones, head of building and grounds, also gave a report about the work now completed at the IOOF hall and carriage shed. The sill work on the hall has been completed, for now. (We still have

some decay in the front of the building, but it should be OK for some years until we get to it again.) The carriage shed roof has been repaired structurally from underneath and also slate replaced, so it should now be leak proof. This is a major job done. Now we can concentrate on the walls which we should be able to do piecemeal ourselves during future work days. Next Spring, we may want to do some landscaping work around the building and clean it out so that it can be mowed before it grows up to brush and trees again. Also, we want to put in a drain pipe to take water away from the building, so we won't have sill rot again, but those projects will wait until better weather.

The really exciting project that we are just beginning was described by Dan Chertok, chairman of our new committee. I am pleased that we have someone who is as passionate about the idea as Dan is. For some years, I have been thinking about a project where we could identify all the historic sites in the Town of Greenfield, so they would be readily accessible to all of us including town officials like the members of the Planning Board and Village Board. When I asked Dan to chair the project, he immediately accepted and began coming up with his own ideas how it might be done.

Michael Hare entertained us during the program part of the evening by reading excerpts from his book *Saratoga Lives*. He has told the story of Saratoga's history through the eyes of many characters, both real and fictional. As he read, you could close your eyes and picture his characters talking and telling their story of how they played a role in the history of the city. From Lawyer Leary to the fat and lazy DPW worker cleaning the streets, they all had their stories to tell. And what really brought them all to life was Michael's reading voice. His former job as a radio announcer really prepared him for this task. I read a few additional stories this morning, and I am sure that Alice and I will both enjoy the book for days to come.

Afterward, the refreshments and friendly discussions topped off a perfect evening. Nancy's cake with whipped cream on top was out of this world. I'm lactose intolerant, but took a chance with a small piece and made it through the night with no problem. What a treat.

Now it's time to start planning for our Christmas open house. Harold is going to take care of getting the IOOF hall back in shape after all the construction work that has occurred and also take care of heat and snow-removal (should that be necessary). JoAnn Rowland is in charge of the actual program. If you want to contact JoAnn, you can call her at 893-7786. See you there.

A Day To Remember

By Louise Okoniewski, and "Dinky" and "Sonny"

Finally the day has arrived! My sister, brother and I hardly slept, we were too excited about our big adventure! Mom fixed breakfast for us and Dad went out to the garage to get the supplies ready. "OK, let's get a move on, get ready!" Dad said. Ready? WE WERE READY! We are heading to the mountain in back of our house. Mom made sure we had our hats and gloves and coats buttoned up. Dad grabbed the rope and hand saw and down the road we went. The big snowflakes that had begun to fall added to the six inches or so that was on the ground. We started late morning, Dad figured we'd be back home soon. At ages 5, 6, and 8, I know it was hard to keep us in line. After all – we were about to cut our own Christmas tree! A big deal for three kids from the south who had never seen snow, let alone the land where the Christmas trees grow! We kept heading down the road and after passing a couple of houses, Dad turned towards the huge forest. He went first, blazing a trail through the deep snow. My sister Helen, 6, and I kept track of our little brother Louis, 5, so he wouldn't get lost.

We followed Dad's path he made, looking up at the giant trees. They were so big and beautiful! Giant snowflakes were falling ever so slow covering our footprints, but we didn't stop. Dad inspected tree after tree. We walked in and out and in between, I hoped we wouldn't run into a moose or something worse, as we kept going further and further up the mountain into the woods.

Which tree to pick? The snow was so heavy on the pine branches, the trees looked like giant white closed umbrellas standing in the white ground. Then finally, Dad decided on the perfect one! He walked round and round the tree, us kids followed close behind. We each took a lower branch and shook the snow off. Dad removed some of the lower branches so he could get to the trunk. "Stand Back!" We stood together, all staring at the sky where the tree top ended. The snow still falling was sticking to our eyelashes. Dad started sawing back and forth on the tree trunk. The movement of the tree shook off the snow from the upper branches which fell on our heads! Laughing we brushed it off and continued to watch Dad as he sawed back and forth on the tree. He sawed and sawed as it continued to snow and get colder. "OK it's ready to come down!" He made sure we were out of the way, and as we all yelled "Timber!" down came our tree. It landed so perfectly in the snow. Dad tied a rope on the end and we started to drag out our prize. We helped to

drag the tree, grabbing a branch and following Dad. The trail was covered by the new snow, and now it was mid afternoon. We had to get going before it gets dark. We were starting to get cold, but we didn't complain. After Dad pulled and tugged we made it out of the woods to the road. Dad being a bit tired and it was starting to get dark, he had us stay by the tree while he went home and got the car. We were not going to let anything happen to our tree. Dad pulled up in the car and had us get in. AHHH! Nice and warm! We jumped into the back seat, and watched Dad tie it to the bumper. Our three faces were stuck in the back window of the '56 Olds, making sure the tree didn't fall off. Finally home we jumped out of the car and helped to untie the tree. Mom called us inside to warm up, while Dad brought the tree in the house. Wouldn't you know it – TOO BIG! Dad trimmed and sawed some more until it fit perfectly in the front window.

I don't remember what Santa brought that year in 1963, but I remember that tree and our adventure into the big woods.

Even though Helen (Dinky), Louis (Sonny) and I have followed different paths, we still remember that day. Something as simple as cutting down a tree, can last a lifetime of Christmases!

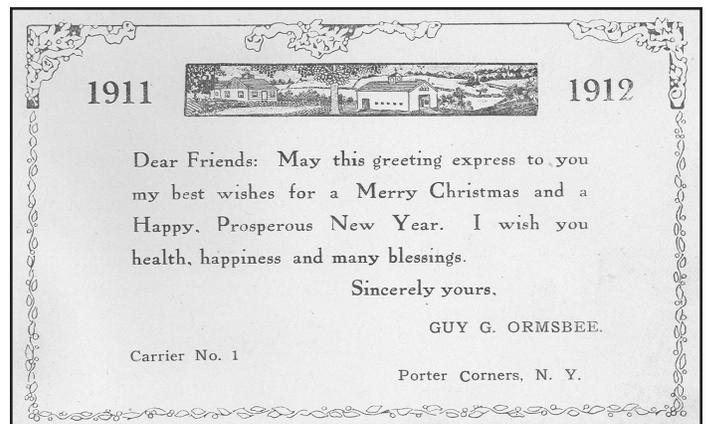
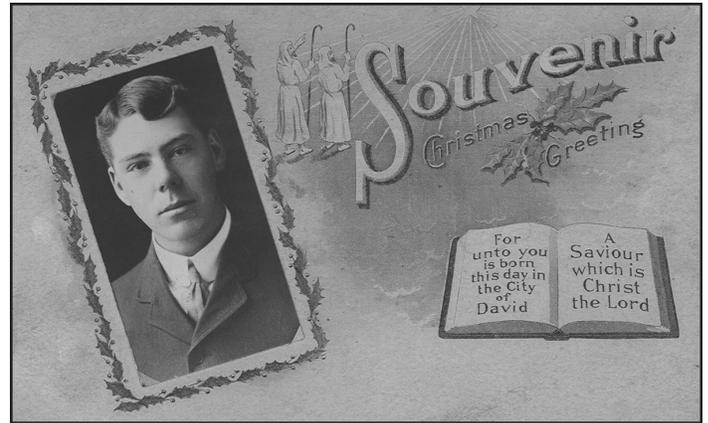
Christmas Story

By Alice Feulner

It was a snowy winter evening when we drove down to the old white church. Inside, it was warm, and a beautiful tall evergreen was the center of attention. Tied to its branches were dolls and wrapped presents. There was happy confusion as friends greeted friends. Chairs were placed around the tree, and carols were sung. Then, at last, it was time to hand out the presents to the children. I was new to the church community, but I so wanted the big dark haired doll that was tied to the tree.

The French twins had told me they were getting that doll. They said that Mrytle Wright had said so, and she was the head of the Ladies Aid Society. Before handing out the dolls, we were each given smaller neatly wrapped packages. I knew there would be no beautiful dark haired doll for me. I sat with the unopened package in my lap as they untied and handed out doll after doll until the only one left was the beautiful dark haired one. At last they untied it from the tree and handed it to me. The beautiful dark haired doll was mine. Inside my smaller package were clothes that the ladies had made for my doll. The joy of that Christmas stays with me still.

Below is a copy of a Christmas greeting that Guy Ormsbee gave to his customers in 1911. (This was submitted by Clifford Young.)



Guy G. Ormsbee was the sole carrier of the first rural mail route out of Porter Corners from 1909 until 1955, a period of 46 years. (*Greenfield Glimpses*, by Clayton Brown)

Guy was born October 3, 1885 in Porter Corners; married Alahna Jones on October 17, 1917; and died December 16, 1980 in Porter Corners at 95 years of age.



This is a photo of Guy Ormsbee and son, Russell, (taken around 1924) with a "snowmobile" that he used to deliver mail in the winter months.

The Historical Society's Historic Sites Mapping Project

By Dan Chertok, Committee Chairman

It was good to meet the many nice folks at the November meeting. I wanted to get this in the next newsletter, as that would seem to be one good way to get the word around that we are looking for submissions for this Historic Sites in the Town of Greenfield Mapping Project. As I said at the meeting, there is probably no limit to the number of interesting places, facts, legends, and stories of interest which come from our town.

The final map as I hope it will eventually exist on the Town and Historical Society's web sites will have icon links which will bring up all relevant and related information, and a photo (when possible) with a click. We also eventually hope to provide GPS coordinates [latitude and longitude] for each place shown.

Also, there should be a "search" bar to find categories of information, such as "churches" or "swimming holes," whereupon a listing of the same, area by area of the town, is shown. I have broken the areas of the town into groups as follows:

1. Greenfield Center
2. Coy Road/Daketown Road area
3. Middlegrove
4. Lake Desolation/Mount Pleasant
5. Porter Corners
6. Alpine Meadows
7. Green Road/North end
Locust Grove Road area
8. St. Johns/Brigham Road area
9. Lester Lane/Daniels Road

The breakdown of categories which we are addressing on the master map will be:

1. Houses and homesteads (I suggest with a general cutoff of 100 years or older)
2. Roads with prominent historical family names (e.g., Daniels Road, Wing Road, Denton Road)
3. Areas/sections of town and their historical beginnings/connections (e.g., St. John's Corners, Tompkinsville, Mt. Pleasant)
4. Cemeteries
5. Businesses/industrial sites (e.g., sawmills, graphite mine, general stores)
6. Schools (including former sites of schools) (e.g., Squashville School, Daketown School)
7. Swimming holes/other recreation places (past and present)

8. Churches (past and present)
9. General info/interesting facts/historical events/legends (e.g., Lucinda's Rock, Great Fire of 1907 in Middlegrove)

I am hoping that some of you readers will offer to help us with this project. Any one interested in helping should not worry about categorizing their submissions, though that would not hurt efficiency. I plan to act as a clearinghouse of the information. After I receive information, I will forward it to our committee member who is compiling the information for any given area of town. Anyone wishing to help can submit information about any historic sites in the town. Put as much or as little information on a contribution as you wish. I will edit the information for grammar, etc.

If anyone is interested in getting more involved in the project and would like to coordinate the information for one of the areas in the town listed previously, you should contact me, as there are still several areas left. Also, I would think that each area of the town could be handled by two or more people nicely, if they could coordinate their own operation. Greenfield Center, for instance, will likely have hundreds of historic places (e.g., houses, roads, schools, churches, cemeteries, swimming holes, businesses) and as many interesting old stories as one doing this job is willing to dig for. Two or three people working on an area should be both fun and manageable.

Another idea, if anybody preferred to undertake to gather and coordinate information about one of the stated subjects, e.g., "churches" or "cemeteries" our project would benefit. As I go along I see that there is a ton of information already existing in books (e.g., *Greenfield Glimpses*) which needs organizing and inputting onto the computer more than it needs uncovering, at this point (although, again, with digging I would bet there is always something more of interest one could find).

Once it is organized and put on the computer, we would be able to plug it into the final program. This is an alternative for energetic contributors to focus on an area of their own interest and thereby help this project along. Volunteers (or simply any contributors) should contact me so that I know who is gathering/inputting/coordinating which subjects.

[This would also be a nice project for a student or Boy Scout to work on, they need not be a member of our organization although we would welcome them as members.]

My e-mail addresses are as follows (I suggest sending to both places to better ensure I get your mail):

DGCLAWOFFICES@csdsl.net
XOCUBOX123@aol.com

Also, my home address for any contributor who is computer challenged is: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859.

You may also send information to the Historical Society's P.O. Box 502 listed on the back of this newsletter. Please mark the envelope: "In Care of Dan."

I will appreciate any input by any interested person, including suggestions for how to organize and coordinate this project, or in providing stories, photos, facts or resident interviews (we may eventually have oral histories available on the site, which in my opinion would be the icing on the cake).

Thanks very much for your help.

Sincerely,
Dan Chertok

*From: Ruth Donogh
To: Ronald Feulner
Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2008
12:19 am
Subject: newsletter*

Dear Ron,

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the newsletter. It sounds like great progress is being made on the IOOF Hall and the carriage shed. You all are to be commended for the great contribution you are making to the community. Also, I liked the story about the Ormsbee Road. Not always can the resurfacing of a road make a good story, but this one was excellent. Fran is a very good writer.

*I look forward to receiving it each month.
My best to you both,*

Ruth

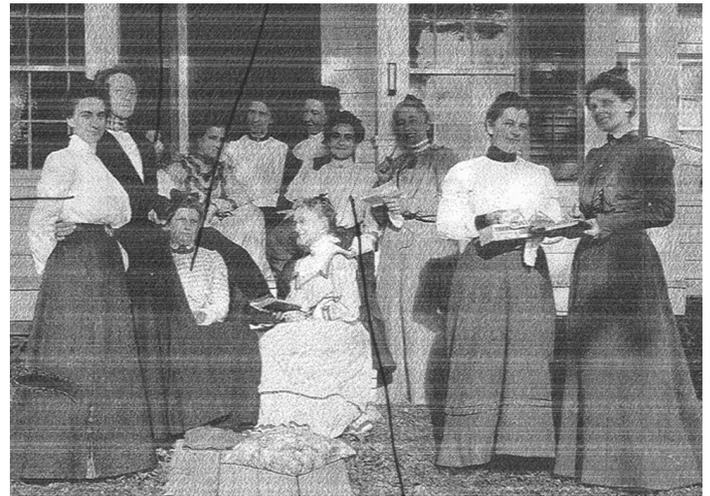
I would like to thank our November refreshment volunteers: Katie Finnegan, Joyce Woodard and Nancy Homiak. They brought ginger snaps, brownies and pumpkin squares; strawberry angel cookies; and apple almond cake.

***December Holiday Open House:** contact JoAnn Rowland for more details (893-7786). Please bring cookies to share and we'll have a cookie sale at the end of the Open House.*

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

Marjorie A. Erickson, from Lisbon Falls, Maine, is looking for information on her family. Her mother was Clara Estella Dake who was born in Middle Grove in 1899, the daughter of Calvin Wesley Dake and Lettie Cora (Lewis) Dake, married October 17, 1883 in South Greenfield. They lived in Middle Grove on the Young Road until 1916 when they moved to Lake Placid. They attended the Middle Grove Methodist Church. She is looking for a baptismal record for her mother, a marriage record of her grandparents, and information on any other family members before them. She also would like any information on the Shepard, Craig, and Moorehouse families, all from Greenfield.

Below is a photo that she included with her letter.



On the back: "Ladies working union from M.E. Church Middle Grove, taken at Rock City Parsonage" about 1915.

From left to right standing: Nellie Joanna Smith, ?, Clara Dake, ?, ?, Jennie Rowell, ?, ?, ?; seated: Lettie Dake and ?.

Does any one know where the parsonage was and can anyone identify the other people?

She has the original photo and would be happy to make copies.

Please contact her:

Marge Erickson

P.O. Box 293

Lisbon Falls, ME 04252-0293

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 2008-09 year. 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.

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

