

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 5

*This issue sponsored by Ron Deutsch –
dedicated to all the hard-working members of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society.*

Calendar

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 on restoring the caboose by Tony Bucca.

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

April 21, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to follow.

May 19, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to follow.

Ron's Ramblings

Our annual Christmas party at the IOOF hall in Middle Grove was a big success. We had another snowfall to deal with, but Dave Wardell came to our rescue for the second year in a row and plowed a large parking space for us. Harold Jones worked with Ann Michel and Joyce Woodard to get the interior of the hall back in shape and cleaned following the construction work last Fall. Harold went down early on the morning of the Christmas party and turned the heat on so that we would all be comfortable later in the day.

Twenty-nine people came (not all at once) but at any one time, there were enough for good conversation around a full table of refreshments. Speaking of refreshments, every year, I look forward to this party. I don't eat a lot of sweets during the year, but because of the great homemade treats at this party, I always over indulge. And, because people bring so many, we can never eat them all, so at the end, we put a money donation in the bowl, and fill the plates with our favorites to take home.

JoAnn Rowland organized this year's event and did a superb job. She organized a table complete with a beautiful Christmas motif table cloth on which she had plates of cookies and other sweets brought by members, a cheese and cracker tray, and a large plate of deviled eggs. All this along with the wonderful smell of the hot cider bowl on the counter put us all in a holiday mood. JoAnn had chosen "Christmas Stockings" as the theme for this year's open house,

IMPORTANT

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

I would like to thank all the people that brought cookies and other goodies to our December Open House and a special Thank You to JoAnn Rowland.

*Refreshment volunteers for January are
Joan Rowland and Margie Jones.*

*Janet Jones
Refreshment Chairperson*

and she asked each of us to share a Christmas memory. Many talked about the stocking they brought while others shared memories of Christmas foods and family traditions. Frank Max said they were so poor during the depression that all he got was a can of peaches. He said that he still receives a can of peaches from a relative as part of the Christmas tradition. Some of the members brought Christmas decorations to exchange. JoAnn organized the exchange into a game. She handed out numbers to everyone who had brought a decoration and when she called your number, you came up to the table and chose one of the decorations. To make it more interesting, the people who followed chose one of the decorations that was left on the table but then had the option of trading it for one already chosen by others.

Thanks JoAnn for making this year's party another success for our historical society.

Now that the holidays are over, we have a few months of fighting off cabin fever before we can look forward to the rebirth of everything that only springtime in the northeast can offer. These few months may provide us an opportunity to get serious

about our big local history project being directed by Dan Chertok. He has divided the town into nine sections and is looking for individuals to supervise the collection of historical places in each section. If you would like to help us with this most worthy project, e-mail Dan DGCLAWOFFICES@csdsl.net or XOCUBOX123@aol.com If you prefer, you may write to him: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859, and he will get back to you. (Or come to one of our meetings and talk to Dan there.) I think that the newsletter may be able to help with the project by running a description of a few of the historic places in each of our issues. You as readers can help by writing a short article about a historic building, home, or place that you are familiar with, or adding more details, or by correcting misinformation. You can do so by writing to our P.O. Box on the last page, calling Dan, or e-mailing him.

And as the New Year gets under way, as president, I want to thank all of you for doing the things you do to help make this organization the success that it is.

MacMaster's Garage, Middle Grove

By Ron Feulner

985 Murray Road (Norman MacMaster's house and garage in Middle Grove). Second house (counting one on corner) on the right on Murray Road as you leave Middle Grove Road (Stewart's Shop on corner) and travel toward Route 29 and Saratoga. This house originally had a blacksmith shop on first level with living space above. For many years, Lige Newell ran the blacksmith shop. Norman MacMaster must have purchased it from Newell and owned it during WWII and for a number of years after. Norman at first did blacksmithing work as most farmers still owned a team of work horses during the war years.

Later, Norman began to work on cars and trucks as people made the transition from horses to motorized vehicles. During the transition, in addition to working on motorized vehicles, Norman also bought wild mustang horses shipped by rail from Wyoming. (I think he bought them from the Mulligan family in Rock City Falls who were in the horse trading business.) I remember once when Norman

asked my father, Fred Feulner, to help him break one of the wild mustangs so that he could sell it as a work horse. Norman harnessed the wild horse to a hay wagon along with an older and well broken work horse. He took the reins to the wild horse and had my father drive the tame horse. It was a good idea, but when they started down the road, the wild horse immediately took the lead and the other horse simply tried to keep up. At a full gallop, they left the road (It was a dirt road then.) and went through the ditch almost tipping the wagon over when the wheels struck exposed roots of a large elm tree. They finally ended up fording the creek completely missing the bridge. My father never volunteered again.

Eventually Norman gave up on the wild horses and bought a tractor and hay baler and cut hay on his own land and did custom work for other people in the area. After the war, he also had a surplus jeep which he used to plow snow. For a short time Gerald Hoffman (at age sixteen) worked as a mechanic for Norman before leaving for a job with Kings Ford

dealership in Ballston Spa. (Later Gerald built and opened his own garage in Middle Grove diagonally across the road from the IOOF hall.)

MacMaster added the long shed attached to the south-east side of the building. Eventually he sold the property and moved back to Canada. His wife, Minnie went to Florida with her daughter, Connie. The next owner converted the downstairs shop area into living space. The building represents the kind of practical construction that is so common in the area. It was built as a blacksmith shop with living quarters overhead, then remodeled into an auto repair shop, and finally into a residential unit.

The Beers map of 1866 shows the building and labels it as a blacksmith's shop. In December of 1944, Edith Dake Ellsworth wrote "MacMaster's

Garage has auto repairing, welding and towing service; he employs two mechanics."

Jim Smith (long time resident of the area added [in 2008], "MacMaster's Garage was the only place in this whole area where you could take your car (those early Chevrolets) to get the front end aligned. He was the only one who had the equipment and could do it."

If you have a photo of MacMaster's Garage when in operation, or if you can add or make corrections, please contact us.

The Porter Mountain Whispering Trail

I have walked up the mountain; sat on the giant rocks for rest; I've listened to the babbling brook in the speeding after-rain runoff.

I've heard the whispers in the forests; the announcements of the raucous noisy blue jays as they complained while I walked through their territory,

I listened intently to the loud rat-tat-tat of the giant woodpeckers, and gazed skyward to watch an aberrant jet fly overhead.

I've walked on the sandy trail, and noticed the bright and shiny quartz crystals beaming out their best show in the sunshine.

I notice the higher elevation spires of tree tops pointing like fingers to the sky, showing their beauty to all who may care to stop and take a minute to look.

I hear the clucking of the turkeys announcing their presence.

The air smells sweet and the perfume of it is like no other.

I think of what is surrounding me, and I bask in the sunlight and quietude of the moment. A sense of peace and stillness makes me overwhelmingly aware of the natural beauty around me.

I think of how "mother" is held together; rocks, roots, plants, trees, hills mountains, crevasses, and

life-giving water coursing and running through her veins! An arterial network held together in cooperation with all living things, and joining forces with mankind – all living kind! ... And still able to show beauty and give life!

I view the heavens with living – moving ever changing substance of vapor – flowing unseen energies – the carrying of solids within its realms, from jets to sandstorms – debris – and on.

I stoop to get a closer look at the solitary blossoming flower within sight. I notice that it seems to thrive in what I would consider very elemental, non-nourishing soil. But ... it does quite well living not as a beggar off all the given resources in its neighborhood.

I walk a little farther and notice bright green leaves attached to the side of an old dark rough-barked tree that seems to welcome its visitor.

A gentle breeze announcing a distant coming storm. Time to head on home and to ponder that I have sensed beauty and heard whispered peace here on Porter mountain today!

Written by Frances M. Lambert, Gatekeep on the Mountain, on Sunday, October 1, 2006.

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**