

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

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Calendar

March 17, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program on the history and natural history of the Kayderosseras by Libby Holmes.*

April 21, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program by Elaine Handley, who has written a book called "Deep River," a work of fiction about the local Underground Railroad.*

May 19, 2009: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program by Mary Sanders Shartle, talking about her book, "The Hermit," as well as research she has done on other Adirondack hermits and hermits throughout history.*

IMPORTANT

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

I would like to thank February's refreshment volunteers: Alice Feulner and Nancy Homiak. They served apple pie, apricot bars and oatmeal cookies; brownies and pumpkin bread. And a thank you to Jane Potter, who brought the train cookies!

Refreshment volunteers for the March meeting are Joyce Woodard and Lynn Wochinger.

*Janet Jones
Refreshment Chairperson*

Ron's Ramblings

February's business meeting was also a short one. Dan Chertoc talked briefly about the progress he is making in setting up a computer platform where we can present our historical map information to the public. Right now, he seems to be focusing on *Google Earth* as a possibility. He urged all of us (with internet connections) to go to that site and become familiar with how it works. Eventually, we will be concentrating on gathering information about historic sites in the town, and that's the part that all of you can help with. We also hope to run stories about various historic sites in the newsletter. If you are familiar with a house or other building that is about 100 years old, or older, please think about jotting down some information (its location and history) and send it to us at the address given on the back of the newsletter.

February's program was a big success – a feel good story. Forty-nine members and guests signed in, and I'm not sure whether some of the late comers signed. They came to enjoy Tony Bucca's PowerPoint presentation about the town's caboose project. For those of you who don't know about the caboose, the town (a number of years back) bought an antique caboose for one-dollar and had it moved to a piece of town property on Route 9N, near the center of the town. Previous to the arrival of the caboose, the town had purchased the old rail station at King's crossing and renovated it. Both were now on a small triangularly shaped piece of property near the intersection of the Delaware and Hudson tracks and Route 9N, the main highway running through our town. The property, with the caboose and station on it, was made into a small park area.

Then through the years, the caboose began to fail. Time and the elements began to take their toll on an already old piece of history. Then, came the final blow. A driver coming down Route 9N lost control

and drove into the caboose setting fire to both the car and the caboose. The driver of the car was killed and the caboose severely damaged. The town received a small insurance settlement but because the caboose was already in such sorry condition, estimates to bring it back to its original glory were more than the town wanted to spend. For a while, it looked as if the caboose might be given away and moved from the property. That's when a group of citizens stepped in. They called themselves "CROCKS" (Citizens Restoring Our Caboose at King's Station). Later, it was pointed out that it is not *King's Station* but the station at *King's* because another nearby hamlet is *King's Station*, but that did not dampen the enthusiasm of the group.

This citizen group approached the town board with a proposal. If the town would pay for materials, they would provide the labor, and since it was a labor-intensive project, it represented the bulk of the cost. The town board agreed, and work began immediately. Like every group, a small core of individuals became the *regulars* with a larger group dropping in for a few hours at a time. The work progressed in one of the group's private workshop over the winter months and resumed again the next spring. Tony Bucca documented the entire project on film, and on a couple of work days even made a speeded up video of the entire day, and this is what we saw at our February meeting. The program, including Tony's excellent presentation, gave the rest of us a brief look at the tremendous amount of work that went into the restoration.

Tony also talked about the functions of the caboose and why they are no longer needed. One of the primary functions was it provided a place (up in the cupola) where a man could ride and view the entire length of the train as it rounded curves. This was necessary because the old wheel bearings were lubricated and packed with oil saturated cotton which meant that occasionally a wheel bearing dried out and began smoking. If not addressed, this could set the

car on fire, so the observer in the caboose's cupola kept a close watch for a smoking wheel. Modern ball bearings made this job unnecessary.

The Town of Greenfield's caboose is nearly complete again with just a few small projects left inside and the lettering on the outside. Tony's program was uplifting. In today's world riddled with stories of greed and *me only* attitude, it was refreshing to hear a story about so many ordinary citizens coming together and giving of themselves so that we all might enjoy the history and beauty of our little park complete with its caboose. Thanks Tony, and a really big thank you to all the members of the committee.

Board Meeting – March 4, 2009

On March fourth the Historical Society's Board met to discuss several important issues. We decided to progress with the next phase of work at the IOOF hall as soon as the weather permits. Our highest priority will be to clean up the area around the building so that it can be mowed this summer. Last year we hired Vince to cut the brush and trees that were crowding the buildings. Now we have an area littered with stumps, rocks and other debris. Unless this is cleaned up, the brush will be back again in a few years. Also, we repaired the rotted sills on the northeast side of the building, and now we need to put in a drainage system to prevent the water accumulation on that side which would result in more decay if not addressed. To accomplish this work, we will need a backhoe and front-end loader. If anyone has such a machine that we could use (Harold Jones and I can operate it), or if you would like to donate your time and machine to operate it yourself, we would be deeply appreciative. Or, if you know someone who might do this for us, either way, please call me (518-893-0620) or Harold Jones (518-893-2292). If no one volunteers a machine, we will have to rent one. We plan to do this first phase with the machine, and then follow it with a general workday for members when we can use shovels and rakes to finish and plant grass seed. We will also need to purchase a load of topsoil for the final leveling phase.

We also discussed having a workday to patch the siding on the carriage sheds, but decided to postpone that until the lawn work is done.

We also had a long discussion about the farmer's market. Parking is a big problem at the IOOF hall and Tom Merrill (who worked tirelessly in the hot sun directing traffic last summer) will not be available this summer. This is causing us to think about moving the market to another nearby site (where parking would not be a problem), but we were unable to make a final decision. We are going to do more research concerning both the IOOF hall and other site before making a final decision.



Tony Bucca talking about restoring the caboose.

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

It is nice to see that enthusiasm for the Historical Map project is growing. I have received a nice bit of input from folks, mostly in “snail mail” form, which is okay. E-mail is preferable to promote efficiency, whenever possible, although the “old fashioned way” is sort of what history is about in the first place (so, send in historical contributions any way you like, folks ...) My updated e-mail addresses are: BMMSCHERTOK@GMAIL.COM or DGCLAWOFFICES@CSDSL.NET. One has the option of using either one.

More and more it is looking like we will be using the Google Earth program as a platform upon which to lay out and build our data base. Basic access is free. I have picked up a lot of the operating basics in a short time of monkeying around with it. To reach it one must do at least the free software download.

As one can see, when clicking one of the small blue squares on the “map” (actually a satellite photo of the earth) the system allows for the posting of written text (history) and digital photos. For example, on Ormsbee Road we have a couple of blue squares already, showing the fall foliage across the street from the Rowland’s place. I suspect it is probably a snap to upload digital photos to the site. The next step would be to scan in printed photos, old maps, legal and historical documents, postcards, handwritten letters, and anything else of historical interest which is flat enough to put on a scanner. I am working to figure all this out. My overall computer skills are improving slowly.

The biggest bump in the road at this time is what looks like the need to purchase the software “upgrade” in order to be able to post our historical data on the site. I have been trying to keep this a project without a budget, but this issue may take funds. I ask that anybody with insight into what it takes to post stuff, to please call me at 893-2268.

I have thought from the start of this, and still believe, that if we could include on the site audio and video clips containing the “oral history” of our town it would be the frosting on the cake. It has been suggested to me that we can post videos on You Tube and then create a link from there to Google Earth. Again, this exceeds my present computer skills, but probably represents a simple process.

While I believe the posting on Google Earth of the text and scanned items is the starting point, the audio and video part should not be left for too long. Over time we lose our best sources of genuine human experience, the folks who have lived through times and have heard the stories of even older

times from their own elders. Right now there must be hundreds of Greenfield residents, and former residents, who lived here in the (19) ’forties and ’fifties, and who heard their own grandparents talk about when they were kids here (in the late 1800’s or early part of the “new” Twentieth Century). We want to capture as much of these stories as we can. And these are the people who we should interview, soon.

Never before has there been such simplicity in compiling and preserving historical information as with the programs I mentioned above. We would welcome anybody to our committee who is interested in interviewing folks in order to “keep up with history;” just as importantly, anybody wanting to be interviewed should likewise contact me.

Here are a couple of quick bits we have received since we announced the project:

Saundra Hollenbeck (shollenbeck@nctc.com) wrote in: My mother Florence Breitbeck, lived on Coy Road, Greenfield Center for many years. She now lives in TN in a nursing home near me. She still gets the Greenfield Historical Newsletter and after she reads it I pass it on.

She wrote the following out on a piece of paper for me to send or e-mail to you.

I believe Ellen Saur was the last burial in Ballou Cemetery, not visible from Ballou Road. Ellen grew up in Scotia, NY, but spent lots of time with her aunt Lucy Ballou of Ballou Road. Ellen was an entrepreneur and when she died was editor of the GE Magazine and lived in Ohio. As to her wishes, her cousin, Donald Buhmaster and I carried her ashes to Ballou Cemetery where she had had a small stone prepared. To the best of my memory this was in 1969.

Keith and Mary Wozniak (wozkm@nycap.rr.com) wrote in: Our house is at the end of Old Daketown next to the school house. Many of the teachers lived in our house. I have traced the house back to 1792 when Gershon Morehouse moved into it after he sold his mill in Middle Grove. This is documented in many Saratoga history books and on the deed. We have also been told that we have the oldest standing barn in Saratoga County (not yet verified) ... the beams have initials in Old English script.

Now, to bring this history current: wouldn’t it be great to be able to see a photo of these initials, or the small stone belonging to Ellen Saur, preserved (in perpetuity?) on the web for anybody in the world to find and view? Such access to history is certainly not old fashioned, but it is pretty neat. And photos are just the beginning ...

I will keep you all posted as to our progress. All input is welcome.

Best regards to all, Dan Chertok

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.

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