

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 8

This issue sponsored by Tom and Alison Siragusa.

Calendar

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.

IOOF Hall Visitation Hours

Starting April 16, the IOOF hall will be open for visitors from 1 to 3 p.m. on Thursday afternoons. Please call ahead to make sure we will be there.

Joyce Woodard – 893-7638 or Ann Michel – 893-7052

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

If you have any information, e-mail Dan Chertok at BMMSCHERTOK@GMAIL.COM or DGCLAWOFFICES@CSDSL.NET.

You may also write or call him at:
Dan Chertok
58 Ormsbee Road
Porter Corners, NY 12859
Phone: 518-893-2268

I would like to thank the March refreshment volunteers: Joyce Woodard and Lynn Wochinger. They served vanilla and chocolate cupcakes with green frosting.

Refreshment volunteers for April are Florence Hinkley and Katie Finnegan.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

Ron's Ramblings

Spring was in the air, but snow was still on the ground when we had our March meeting. Twenty-six people attended, and the meeting was short with the usual reports. The most significant business was Harold Jones' summary of our earlier board meeting when we decided to finish leveling the area around the IOOF hall and add a water drain to protect the new sill. Harold made a request for the donation of the use of heavy equipment, so we would not have to rent it. Afterwards, I received an e-mail from our vice-president, Louise Okoniewski, saying that Al Janik had offered to donate the work. This will make the job more affordable for us. We will follow Al's backhoe work with a member workday sometime in April or May when shovels, rakes, and wheelbarrows will be used to finish the leveling and planting of grass seed. If we can make more lawn area, it will prevent brush and trees growing back again.

The board also discussed this year's farmer's market. We plan to sponsor it again this year, but we are not certain whether we will continue having it at the IOOF hall site. We may move it to a site where parking is not a problem. Ron Deutsch is working at gathering information, so we can make a final decision well ahead of the season.

Following the meeting, Libby Smith Holmes from Saratoga Springs gave a most interesting talk about the Kayaderoseras Creek. She talked about its natural history as well as its many uses as a source of power during the early days of our history. The creek has been cleaned up a lot during recent years but still has problems which DEC along with volunteer groups like the Friends of the Kayaderoseras are addressing.

Remembering the Chatfield Corner's School

by David A. Jacques

208 Lake Desolation Road, Middle Grove, NY 12850

Being a resident of Middle Grove, one of the five hamlets of Greenfield, my wife and I have enjoyed the history of this hamlet for many years. I think many things are well worth remembering.

Across the street from where I live is the old one-room Chatfield Corner's schoolhouse, which is still standing. It was closed for classes in June 1942. Today, it is a private residence.

When I came to this area 29 years ago, I had two neighbors that went to school there. They told me that they walked to school every day. People sometimes say to my grandson, "You are lucky to have the school bus, otherwise, you would be walking to school!" Today, the school bus stops in front of my house for my grandson. With its flashing lights, a stop sign, and Grandma acting as my grandson's guarding angel, she grabs the little guy's hood of his coat and holds him back as a pickup truck driver speeds past the stopped school bus. "I just saved your life," exclaims Grandma.

After moving here, one of the old students from the Chatfield Corner's School always seemed to show up when ever I was in trouble. One time, when I was incurably stuck in one of the Lake Desolation Road ditches, one of them came to help me. He never wanted any payment, as he explained, "This is how neighbors should respect and help each other." I wondered if this was an old schoolhouse lesson.

On another occasion, Alvah Older told me, "I used to walk to school down Lake Desolation Road. I remember being afraid of walking past some steers in a pasture every morning, but I got over it." Maybe this was another lesson learned.



Chatfield Corner's one-room school on Lake Desolation Road as it appears now (2009). An addition has been added to front. [Photo taken by Ron Feulner, 3/2009]

But, it was Ann Miller, of the Miller Farm, known to me as Mrs. Dutcher who explained Middle Grove justice to me. All of this was done over a cup of tea as I am not a coffee drinker. I believe this may have been one of the lessons taught in the schoolhouse many years ago. She explained to me, "You do things all wrong! If a neighbor does wrong to you, you don't do wrong to them. There are always problems that develop between neighbors, but we don't believe in lawyers, police, or the courts. We have our own way of working things out. We have our own kind of justice up here." At first I thought that she just liked to tell stories about Middle Grove life, but then I realized it was more than that. She was explaining real life situations about farm life with neighbors, and how they worked out their civil problems. It all made sense, so I continued to listen.

At this point, I understood that this was not a social visit but a fair hearing. She made her case like a lawyer, and she was right. I pointed out that being right did not give anybody the right to do wrong to me. By the end of the discussion, she saw my point of view, and I was beginning to see things her way, and in the interest of being fair, we made agreements that we kept for our whole lifetimes. She has passed away now, but the promise of her agreement still lives with me.

Last fall, Ann's husband, Al, told me, "I have been living here for 62 years." By the time winter had come, I noticed his driveway was being left unplowed, so I plowed it. As Ann told me when I first came to Middle Grove "This is the way neighbors should respect and help each other."

I have often wondered if some of the lessons that were taught at little schoolhouses like the Chatfield Corners School on Lake Desolation Road, when the roads were paved with dirt and gravel and children were walking to school, were still taught, if the world would be a better place.

Correspondence

In March we received a letter and photos from one of our members, Marge Erickson of Lisbon Falls, Maine, and we thought you might be interested in it. The letter states:

I was delighted to receive the February copy of your newsletter and very interested in Ron Feulner's article about Middle Grove's One-Room School. Back about 1955, when I was a young girl in my teens, I made a trip with my family, to Saratoga Springs. While we were in the area we made a side trip to Middle Grove and my mother took a picture of me standing beside the school that she had attended. She told me that her sister, Bessie (Dake)

Cline was her teacher for a year or two. She probably attended circa 1906 and her sister married and moved away about 1910. Are there any records left for that time period? Which cemetery was the school near, and what is the name of the road that the school was nearest to? Thanks for the article and helping to fill in a few of the interesting details of my mother's (Clara Estella Dake) life as a young girl in Middle Grove.

Also enclosed is a picture of the house in Middle Grove that was the home of my grandmother's sister, Estella (Lewis) and her husband, Will Cady. I'm interested to know where the house was and if it still stands today.

Thanks for the interesting newsletter,

Marge Erickson

I will attempt to answer some of Marge's questions. I am not aware of any school records except those preserved in Clayton Brown's "Greenfield Glimpses" book, which I believe is still for sale from the Town Clerk's office in Greenfield Center. (That was the source of information for my February article in the newsletter.) We do appreciate the photo of the school, as there are few in existence, and this photo clearly shows the upper side of the school with the cemetery in the background. The name of the cemetery is Middle Grove Cemetery, and the county road name is Middle Grove Road.

Regarding the Cady house in Middle Grove, I went down and took a couple of pictures of the house that I believe to be the Cady house although there seems to be several changes that have taken place in it. The house is located in Middle Grove directly across the road from our (the historical society's) IOOF hall. Two pieces of evidence suggest to me that it is the house. First, the houses look similar (the one in Marge's photo and the photo I took recently) except the house that is there now has a second story added to the right wing, and window locations have been changed. Secondly, the old photo that Marge sent shows a dog sitting on a block of stone in the front yard. Today, a similar sized block of granite is now located next to the driveway, and I have included a photo of it. The block has the words W.A.Cady engraved on it.

I asked my 97 year-old mother if she remembered Will Cady in Middle Grove. She remembered the name, but thinks they must have left before she arrived in Middle Grove. If any of our readers or if Marge knows some history of Will Cady and his family while they lived in this area, we would be interested in hearing from you.

Ron Feulner



Middle Grove one-room school with Marge Erickson in front, taken about 1955. [Photo courtesy of Marge Erickson]



Home of Estella (Lewis) and her husband, Will Cady, in Middle Grove. [Photo courtesy of Marge Erickson]



House across Middle Grove Road from IOOF hall, believed to be Will Cady home. [Photo taken by Ron Feulner, 3/2009]



Granite marker located next to driveway of house across road from IOOF hall in Middle Grove. [Photo taken by Ron Feulner]

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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