

Historical Society Newsletter

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

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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

This issue sponsored by Darlene Meyers, dedicated to Raymond (Chip) Meyers, former police chief in Ballston Spa in the 1950s.

Calendar

January 19, 2010: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m.
at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Dick Rowland will speak about the history and stories from the Saratoga County Fair.

February 16, 2010: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m.
at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Maria Trabka from Saratoga PLAN, which is a local organization that is preserving open spaces including farmland, forests, natural areas, trails, and historic sites.

March 16, 2010: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m.
at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: Brendon Manley, a free-lance writer and one of the editors of Military History Magazine. His hobby is metal detectors, and he will talk about how he uses one to uncover history.

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

IOOF Hall Visitation

If you would like to visit the IOOF Hall, please call:
Joyce Woodard – 893-7638 or Ann Michel – 893-7052.

*I would like to thank JoAnn Rowland for taking charge of the Christmas Party. I heard it was a very nice gathering.
January refreshment volunteers are:
Alice Feulner, Lynn Wochinger and Patty Schwartzbeck.*

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

Ron's Ramblings

The Christmas party was enjoyed by all attending. Twenty-six was the final tally. JoAnn did another superb job of organizing the event. She missed having it at the IOOF hall this year, but she didn't let that stand in her way of, in my opinion, organizing one of our best. JoAnn brought a festive table covering, and as members brought a wonderful array of home made holiday sweets, the table was soon overflowing. Lelah Cornell even brought a variety of flavors of home made jellies. After we all had time to sample the good desserts, JoAnn assembled us in a large circle and asked everyone to share a winter's activity from the past. My favorite was Pat Finnegan's story about hooking a rope to the back bumpers of unsuspecting drivers on the streets of Schenectady and having them pull you around the slippery streets. It was something like water skiing only on ice and snow. He said engineer boots were the slipperiest and worked the best. His grandmother offered the best ride because she was oblivious to everything around her when driving. At the end of the program, members made a money donation to fill their plates with goodies to take home. The Historical Society took in \$64 worth of donations.

Toward the end of the program, we had the drawing for the cord of firewood. Louise Okoniewski, our vice president and organizer of the raffle, was unable to attend because she was recovering from minor surgery, so I filled in. My granddaughter, Molly, closed her eyes and drew a ticket after I had thoroughly stirred them up. The winner was Vince Walsh, Sr. of Hyspot Road. As I write this, I have spoken to our trustee, Vince Walsh, Jr., and he said that his father is very happy with the wood. Thanks again to Butch Duffney who volunteered the wood for our raffle. Butch is working at installing a kiln drying operation, so that he can market dry, bug free, wood, and we wish him well on the project. The Historical Society made \$515 on the raffle.

Dan Chertok is still working on the Internet history project. Since Christmas, I have moved up to cable Internet and am finally able to access and enjoy the Web site.

Dan and Thom Siragusa have done an amazing job, and if you haven't checked it out, you should. This project is probably one of the most significant history projects ever undertaken in the town and certainly deserves our support. Now, they need all our help in collecting information about the history of various places within the town.

In this issue, I have written about a part of the town that I am quite familiar with – my own house and property at 639 Coy Road. My house, built in or about 1924, has a ways to go before it will celebrate 100 years, but it already has a history that I can share. I am hoping that some of you will follow my lead and write about places in the town that you know about. In addition to your own home, there are the grange hall, several old churches and small schools, the community hall in Porters, and the old Slovak hall on Wilton Road to name but a few. Don't forget to include old pictures. If you don't want to send the originals, perhaps you can make a copy or contact Dan or me and maybe we can help.

639 Coy Road – by Ron Feulner



Circa 2006

639 Coy Road has been our retirement home for 13 years now. It all began when my father died, and my mother wanted to continue living in her own home, the house I was born in, on Murray Road in Middle Grove. My wife, Alice, and I decided to move back where we would be close enough to help Mom realize her wish. Not having a house to immediately move into, we fixed a temporary space upstairs in Mom's house, placed our own furniture in storage, and began house hunting in the area. We were looking for something both special and affordable – not easy to find in the Saratoga area.

When I was a child living on Murray Road, I often visited my aunt and uncle on Coy Road, so for many years, I had the opportunity to ride past the attractive little house on the corner of Coy and Sand Hill Roads. Then one day while Alice and I were house hunting, we drove by the little house again and noticed that it was empty. We both liked the house, so we inquired and found that Bud Morrison, the son of the original builders, was living out of state and using the house as a seasonal dwelling.

By the end of the summer, 1996, the weeks were turning into months with us still living upstairs in Mom's house. We were growing more anxious to find a place of our own, so we could at least unpack a few of our things from storage. We decided to contact Bud Morrison and see if he would



Approximately 1955 – garage near road, in background large barn and one of the brooder houses

consider renting the little cottage to us for the winter. We figured that we would find something more permanent by the time he wanted to return the next summer.

Bud responded by saying that he wasn't interested in renting the house, but because of health issues, he would sell. Alice and I had our little cottage, which we, by now, had both fallen in love with. The problem was, the house had for years been used as a seasonal dwelling and needed much work. We launched into a remodeling project that involved replacing some floor joists in the cellar, all new plumbing, a new heating system, and other projects. And we had to finish them in time to move in before winter. With the help of our son Michael, and others, we made it.

The old-timers on Coy Road immediately accepted us. Norma (Morrison) Waite, Bud's sister, lived two doors west of us. She, as well as Bud, had spent their childhood in our little cottage. Norma had a wealth of information about the house. Her father had come from New York City area to marry her mother who was a Humes. The Humeses owned a large farm that occupied a big chunk of land running from Sand Hill almost up to the graphite mine. When this young man married their daughter, the Humeses had given them a portion of the farm situated at the intersection of the two roads (Sand Hill and Coy). The young couple began construction on a house, obtaining much of the lumber from a sawmill across the road (the sawmill is gone now).

According to Norma, the house was completed in about 1924 and cost \$800 to build. Later, Norma's mother and father added a barn, garage, and several chicken houses to the property. (These buildings are gone now except for one of the chicken houses, which I use for storage.) The family supported itself by raising chickens and selling eggs, which they stored in the damp cool cellar under the house (where I had to replace the floor joists). Norma said that in the spring they would have as many as 3,000 chickens, mostly broilers which when mature were butchered and sold. The whole family, including Norma and Bud, worked together cleaning the birds and picking feathers.

Jim Smith, a local man and member of the historical society wrote about his experiences as a young man working for Mr. Morrison. The article appeared in March 2002 issue of the historical society newsletter. Jim told about his summer job. It was the summer of 1936 and Jim had spoken to Mr. Morrison about a job. Mr. Morrison answered with a question, "Do you have a pair of leather high-top boots?"



Handwritten on the back of this old photograph were the words – “March 1929, Our Castle in Spain.”

Jim answered, “Yes, I do.” “Then I’ll see you tomorrow morning and be sure to wear the boots.” The next morning Jim arrived early, and Mr. Morrison was waiting for him. He looked down at Jim’s boots and grunted approval. Then they headed for one of the chicken houses with Jim feeling a little foolish wearing high boots in the middle of the summer. Jim said, “As we approached the chicken coop, there was a club almost the size of a baseball bat outside leaning up beside the door. As Mr. Morrison opened the door, he told me to bring the club with me. I did what he told me to do, but I was thinking this is a chicken coop not a bar room. I’m here to pick up eggs and clean the coop, what do I need a club for?”

As Jim was standing inside, letting his eyes adjust to the relative darkness, a huge white rooster came at him, and before Jim could defend himself the bird spurred him on his shin. Had it not been for his leather boots, the large Wyandotte rooster would have severely injured him. Mr. Morrison then showed Jim how he could substitute the club for his own leg as the rooster came at him. Jim said, “Each coop after that was a challenge because I knew that I had to outwit a new big rooster. I would play dumb and turn my back on him, and then as he came at me, I would swing around quickly and place the club where my shin had been and let him drive his spurs into the club. Not once but several times until he would fall to the ground exhausted. Then he would get back up and crow like he had just defeated me. Well, that was the way I spent the rest of the summer.”

Several years after Alice and I had purchased the house in 1996, Bud Morrison died. We met Bud’s daughter, Sandy Goodman, and she told us “I remember that in the spring each year Grandpa would have a new group of chicks. We would try to catch the cute little peeps, but they would scurry away and hide under the heat lamps. I also remember playing croquet and badminton outdoors and Grandma hanging the laundry in the attic on rainy days. But, my fondest memories were of the night times and early mornings. My brother slept with Grandma downstairs, and I slept with Grandpa upstairs. He would sing a song that went, “I love me, I love me, I love myself to death!” My brother would complain about hearing the song over and over. Grandpa had to get up early to feed the chickens, but I would stay in bed and watch the sunrise from the bedroom window.”

Sandy’s children, Bud’s grandchildren, stopped at the house one day and asked if they could see it again. They said, “We really miss going to Greenfield in the summers, especially visiting this house that our grandparents owned.

The Historic Sites Interactive Map is Up and Running

It is easy to get to from our Web site.
Here’s how you do it:

Click “Interactive Map,” then don’t forget to click “view Greenfield in Larger Map” when the first map pops up. The little scale at the upper left is the zoom in/out function. By zooming in + you start to see the names of roads. Then, by using the click (hold) and drag technique, one can navigate over the map. Click a balloon or other icon for information (a little or alot, depending) on the site.

If you know anything about any of the places on the map, anything at all, please let me know about it. If you know of anything interesting that took place somewhere within the town, and if I have not placed it yet, please let me know. There is a “Comments” option, please let us know how you are finding this map. And, very importantly, if anything is stated which you know to not be correct or true, please let me know even faster.

It has been easy to find well-known historic places, but as to individual homes and homesteads my knowledge is limited. As I drive around town I see an old-looking house or what was once apparently a farm, and I mark it. Often the info is very limited, or even not-accurate (heaven forbid). I am counting on our members and friends to add to the richness of our Web-published town history. Without all of your input this project will have to suffice as only “pretty good,” when it could be Extremely Great, so please think about adding to the site.

One thing that makes this method of organizing historic information somewhat unique is the organization “by map,” instead of alphabetically or by category (the program we use does not seem to allow for such organization anyway). Of course, if some event took place, or some story relates to the town, but lacks a specific site on the map, this does not preclude us from recording the history. You can see several envelope icons used, and the text there usually refers to that area of town, or the origin of a family/road name, or some such ...

There is alot of room left to fill this map up. We definitely need input from you folks to make it a true success! My e-mail is BMMSCHERTOK@GMAIL.COM (capital letters not necessary). Old fashioned “snail mail” is great too: 59 Ormsbee Rd., Porter Corners, NY 12859. Please let me know if you want to be given credit for the info you provide, or if it is okay to state you are the owner/occupant of a property.

Thank you all for the excitement this generated. I hope you all enjoy the site as much as I do putting stuff on it. And if you see Thom Siragusa, thank him for getting our project to take off. Without his help I would still be telling you all how nice this project is “gonna” be.

*All the best,
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. 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@nycap.rr.com (please note new e-mail address).**

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