



Historical Society Newsletter

Our 30th Anniversary Year

OFFICERS: President: Louise Okoniewski; Vice President: Robert Roeckle;
Secretary: Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer: JoAnn Rowland;
Trustees: Dan Chertok, Coral Crosman, Ron Deutsch, Katie Finnegan and Ron Feulner

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

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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

Dedicated to all the volunteers at the IOOF Hall. *Sponsored by J. Frank Goyette*

CALENDAR

Feb. 19: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: *Coral Crosman* will talk about her new book of short stories and the history of her house, which may be one of the older ones in town.

March 19: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: *Bill Dake* will tell some stories and give a little bit of history of the Dake family, and also speak about how *Stewart's* came to evolve from Dake's ice cream.

April 16: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: *Bradford Smith and Ellen Kostroff* will discuss their book, **From New York to Florida – An American Family's Life on the Road Between the World Wars.** *It was Mr. Smith's family, before he was born, who journeyed from their Galway farm to Florida in the family's 1920 Willys Knight, 4 cylinder sedan. Mr. Smith's mother kept a diary and the family had many photographs of the trip.*

May 21: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program: *Former Corinth resident, Professor Steve Cernek, Daniel Webster University, talking about the history of International Paper Company in Corinth.*

WEEZIE'S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

The news from the Pentagon this week, that will allow women to fight on the front lines, is a victory for some that have been fighting for that right, even in the Civil War. Our program on Jan. 15 was Lisa Potocar discussing her book "Sweet Glory." It is a fact-based novel of women disguising themselves as soldiers to fight in the Civil War. Originally written for young adults to spark their interest in history, it has caught the attention of adults, as well as the younger readers. Her book won an award in 2009 in the Young Adult category in a Writers' Novel contest.

"Sweet Glory" centers around 16 year old tomboy Jana Brady who as "Johnnie" joins the Union Army to fight the Rebels. In her five-year research, Lisa found many women who joined the Civil War to fight on one side or the other. There were many reasons that women wanted to join the cause. Some were widowed, homeless, missed a loved one or they were poor. The \$12 a month and a \$252 signing bonus was attractive. Some wanted to prove that they were equal to men, or just have a sense of accomplishment.

In her research one female soldier, Sarah Edmonds, kept popping up. Sarah became "Frank Thompson" enlisted in the Michigan Infantry and served as a soldier, nurse and spy for three years. Sarah faced a brutal home life, so the thought of war wasn't that bad. Sarah received two honors that no other female soldier did; a pension and she was made a veteran of the Grand Army of the Republic. Lisa's book revolves around the story of Sarah/Frank and their lives, as well as other female soldiers in the Civil War. Her book also covers a vivid description of the war and what the soldiers had to endure in this life. Lisa spent years of researching documents, visiting battlefields and historic sites.

During her program, Lisa did not use a Power Point or any visual to present her book. She started out getting the audience involved by asking them to name women from that time period. (I think she was surprised by the answers). Her enthusiastic readings from her book kept everyone's attention and wanting more. "Sweet Glory" has adventure, romance and a story of the Civil War that has not been told before.

I need ARTICLES AND/OR PHOTOS FOR OUR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.

If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or email it to: JJones18215@roadrunner.com.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

The museum project is progressing nicely. I have been working on the lumbering display, and Jim and Sandy Wimet have agreed to work on the display cases. My wife, Alice, has scraped the old paint from the Hoosier cabinet, and now I have to make a few repairs before someone can sand and paint it.

Patty and Rick Schwartzbeck donated a peeling spud (the lumbering tool that I have been looking for) that needs a handle, but I'm sure we can fix that. They also provided a photograph of Patty's grandfather with a team of oxen that he owned while living on Ridge Road. The photo will be a good companion for the ox yoke that Hugh Clotworthy donated. Ruth Donogh from Washington state is sending us a set of cookie cutters that came from Rowell's store (Rowell was an early owner of the store that was last run by the Roeckles before becoming the site for a Stewart's Shop).

Recently, at the historian's office in town hall, I had an opportunity to use the computer based map project that Bob Jones (from Skidmore College) is still working with me to develop. I came across an article in the Grist Mill which was a reprint of an earlier article in the "Saratoga Eagle" from August 28, 1897. The article was titled, "Gold Rush in Greenfield," and described how a group of Saratogians consisting of W.W. Allerdice, J.H. Boyce, Frederick Tarrant, and several others, had formed a syndicate for the purpose of mining gold in Greenfield. The article went on to indicate how gold had been discovered on the Robert Morris farm in Greenfield.

I had seen this article a few years earlier and wondered where the Robert Morris farm was located, but never had the resources to track the farm down. This time, I turned to the computer map project that we are working on.

Our primary historic maps showing the Town of Greenfield are the Geil Map which was drawn from actual surveys done by Samuel Geil in 1856, showing all the roads and buildings and who owned them. This map is still amazingly accurate even when compared to modern day aerial photos of the same areas. Next, is the Beers Map of 1866, which was prepared much like the Geil Map. The next map that I use often is the 1890 Farmer's Map. This map shows the roads, etc., but replaced the names of owners with a number which can be looked up in an index. The owners are listed in alphabetical order which means the numbers are out of sequence.

Until recently, that created a problem for someone who was trying to find who owned a specific piece of property because you had to search through the very long list to find the corresponding number. Deputy Historian, Joyce Woodard, has corrected that problem by creating a corresponding list where the numbers are in order and not the names. This saves a user much time and represents a wonderful addition to the information that we can offer the public.

From the 1890 Farmer's Map, we jump forward to the 1902 USGS topographic map. This map, while showing

a great deal of detail about the land and even buildings, does not give us any names of property owners. From here on to the present day there are a series of highly accurate USGS maps that do the same.

Finally, we have an up-to-date and very accurate tax map which does give us the modern day owners of each property in the town. In addition to this, we are working on a map which will show the exact location of all 38 cemeteries in the town. Rick Bishop did the field work last summer, visiting each cemetery and taking a GPS reading of it. This reading (latitude and longitude) is being plotted on an aerial photo map of the town showing the cemeteries exact location. Nancy Homiak is in the process of typing this information and adding Rick's sketch map showing each cemetery location and a photo taken by Rick of what the cemetery looks like.

When Nancy finishes, we plan to use two approaches for listing the information. The first will be a cemetery booklet where each page gives the information for a single cemetery. The second, Bob Jones will be creating an addition to the computer map so that a user can click on the dot representing each cemetery, and that will display the appropriate page from the booklet showing the information about that cemetery along with a Web link that will list all the persons buried in that cemetery.

Oh, by the way, within minutes, using the new computer map project, I had found the Robert Morris farm where the gold was discovered. It was near a sharp bend in Brigham Road. Still curious, I went to the Geological Map of NYS to see what kind of rock is found in that area because gold is usually found in specific types of rock, and to my surprise, it listed that area as being underlain by quartzite, which would not rule out the possibility of gold.

I am hoping that these projects will make my office function more efficiently when some of you come in looking for information, in the meantime, they are challenging and interesting to work on.



Alice Feulner scraping the old paint from the Hoosier cabinet.

In memory of Bill Wilsey

[Originally published in our March 2007 newsletter.]

The Family Farm

by Bill Wilsey

I took over the family farm in 1950, but I have memories of 140 Wilsey Road that go back over a span of more than 75 years.



The Wilsey house at 140 Wilsey Road taken in August 1932. The man standing in the picture is Bill's Grandfather, William G. Wilsey and the little boy to the right is Arthur W. Wilsey, aka "Bill."

I was born and raised in Gloversville, but ever since I can remember, I spent my summers on the farm with my Grandparents, William G. Wilsey and Isabelle Cook Wilsey. The property belonged to my Great Grandfather, Benjamin Franklin Wilsey and Great Grandmother, Eliza Baker Wilsey before that. We are still trying to trace the farm back further. The house has been in the family for over 100 years. The family has a lot of roots in the area. My father, Arthur R. Wilsey was born in the house in the room that is now our dining room area. He attended Daketown School and was baptized in Kaydeross Creek. My Great Grandfather, Asher Cook, was a minister in the Baptist Church in Middle Grove, before it burned down. It was located next to the Odd Fellows Hall. Asher Cook was also a preacher at the Old Stone Church, where my wife Joy and I now worship.

Originally Wilsey Road was going to be named "Wiggins Road." But Ernest Rhodes, our neighbor who was living across the road from the farm said, "Why name it Wiggins Road? The Wilsey's have been on the corner forever!" Hence, the name Wilsey Road.

Wish List for the Museum

Laptop Computer

External Hard Drive

Scanner/Color Printer 11x17

Digital Camera

Label Maker

January refreshment volunteers, Joyce Woodard and JoAnn Rowland, served cranberry nut cookies and Hawaiian wedding cake. Patty Schwartzbeck brought a Baklava Platter. February refreshment volunteers are Katie Finnegan and Sue Martin.

Moody Hill Road

As a resident on Moody Hill Road, (now named Ormsbee Road), I often ride up the road to the trail in my SUV, with my books, writing paper, fold up chair and sunglasses. I have a favorite spot with the sun in my face.

I read a bit, then close the book, realizing that this superb day is the first in October 2012.

I have just caught a scent of something beautiful surrounding me from the trees, the brush, the ferns and other plants. This scent is so exquisite that I doubt that even Paris perfumes can equal or duplicate this.

Today the wind is rather playful, having its own agenda of swirling from every direction – disturbing the treetops and working them into a frenzy. Some leaves start to fall, those left behind are starting to turn golden, after last night's rain.

The sky, a vivid blue, with puffs of whiteness interspersed. A calm moment, the wind dies down, recovering strength for yet another round of playing with the trees.

There it remains, that sweet scent of the grasses, bushes, trees. I think about the seasons to come as I listen to a woodpecker dine on some special place in a tree.

Strange it seems, amidst all this going on around me, including a tiny spider that just landed on my writing paper, I am aware that soon life forms must retreat into the ground as winter approaches.

The awe of this is the sweet scent I detect – this giving up of above ground leaves/life. Plants and trees will slumber and await the coming Spring. There is no beauty in scraggly or withered leaves and plants, but the amazing thing is, in spite of their giving over the green life to the brown dried up leaves – they still manage to bequeath to the senses a sweet scent so beautiful that to capture this would be priceless!

Reflecting on this, thinking of the many winters and springs I have seen thus far, my desire is to have lived my life with just such a sweetness that can only be attained by the seasons of time.

Psst! Hey bee! Get off my writing paper!

*Fran Lambert – Gatekeep On The Mountain
on Moody Hill Rd.*

HERITAGE HUNTERS MEETINGS

*All meetings are held at the Town of Saratoga
Town Hall, corner of Rt. 4 and Rt. 29 in Schuylerville.*

*For more information on any of the meetings,
call 587-2978. Public is welcome.*

Saturday, Feb. 16, at 1 p.m. Christine Dixon, executive director of Wiawaka Holiday House on Lake George, will be the speaker. She will cover the interesting history of Wiawaka from its creation in 1903 to the present.

Saturday, March 16, at 1 p.m. The speaker will be Bob Jones, an associate professor of economics at Skidmore College. He is currently involved with Greenfield's historian, Ron Feulner, in mapping the town's cemeteries. Bob will explain the process and how we might use "Google Earth" to solve our own geographical riddles.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Become a member of The Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Send \$10 per **household** 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.). Our membership year begins June 1, and dues are paid annually. You may also join at one of our meetings. Send this application form and fee to The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make checks payable to: The Town of Greenfield Historical Society.

Please Print – Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone number _____

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 it dedicated to.

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 copy of our newsletter along with information on how they can join.

Name _____

Address _____

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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 call (518-893-2268) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859

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