



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

Volume 13, Issue 8

www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

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: *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.*

Aug. 3, Saturday, Porter Corners School Reunion
Middle Grove Park Pavilion, see info on page 2.

Aug. 10: Saturday, Caboose Day at King's Station
Corner of Route 9N and Porter Road.
More information to follow.

The program on the I.P. mill has been postponed to a later date, and Bill Dake's program has been re-scheduled to the September meeting.

The Historical Society's 30th Anniversary
July 26, 1983 – First Meeting of The Town of Greenfield Historical Society

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.

WEEZIE'S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Mother Nature had her way with us once again, as we had to cancel the March meeting due to a snow storm. I know many were looking forward to Bill Dake's program, and I hope that you will be able to attend the re-scheduled program. Mr. Dake will be the feature program at our September meeting. This is our first meeting after the summer hiatus, and is a potluck dinner. We will start the dinner at 5:30, instead of the traditional 6 p.m., in anticipation of a big turnout. Last year, we had all kinds of food, and a full house. Sometimes the business portion may be a little longer, as we go over the summer activities and get ready for (I hate to say it!) fall and winter. Just as a reminder, if Saratoga Springs Schools are closed due to weather, then our meeting is cancelled. We will be working on a new phone tree and contact numbers, so that we can eliminate any confusion.

The upstairs museum at IOOF hall is moving along. Ron Feulner has been working on many displays with help from Jim and Sandy Wimet, Brian Auwater, Nancy Homiak and others. Ann Michel, Joyce Woodard and Rob Roeckle have some ideas for the downstairs museum. I know things will come together all at once and we will be ready for a Grand Opening!

I attended the Farmers Market meeting in March and the vendors are ready to go. Believe it or not, this is our sixth year at Middle Grove Park, our first year was at the Odd Fellows Hall – so we have sponsored a Farmer's Market for seven years! The vendors have elected three of their own to help with the coordination of the event. We are looking for a Market manager, who would be responsible for the set up and take down of the market, and overseeing the vendors. If you are interested in this position, or would like to be a vendor, contact Ron Deustch at 469-6769 or mkd67@aol.com. The market is due to start a week earlier this year. Friday, June 21 will be the opening of the market.

I've been holding out on some information! Saturday, March 30, JoAnn Rowland our treasurer, brought some

mail to me at Town Hall. Like opening your home mailbox, there can be good news, bad news, bills or junk mail. JoAnn pushed an envelope to me. I said “Is it good news or bad news?” JoAnn had a huge smile. I looked at the envelope and saw it was from the IRS. Well, anything from the IRS doesn’t make me smile unless it’s in a small brown envelope and looks like a check. I read the letter and it stated that upon review, The Town of Greenfield Historical Society had been granted the 501(c)(3) status, and will be known as a charitable organization! This will enable us to receive donations and help us apply for grants. Businesses and individuals are willing to donate, as long as they see the donation being put to use and they can claim it as a charitable donation. I’m still trying to digest what this means, especially since we have waited so long. Last year, the IRS needed more information and they recommended we add a paragraph to our Constitution. The information came at the close of our year, so we had to have a special meeting. In October, they asked for further information. Al Janik, who has been wonderful in helping us through this process, would check with them to see how things were progressing. He would get the “we have it and it’s being reviewed” story. After 30 years of ups and downs, good times and bad, those who wanted to give up but stuck with it, the first members who had a vision, we are now a recognized organization. Something you need in this day and time.

HERITAGE HUNTERS MEETINGS AND HISTORY FAIRE

The following Heritage Hunters meetings will be held on Saturdays at 1 p.m., Town of Saratoga Town Hall, 12 Spring St. [Route 29], Schuylerville. For information, email melfrejo@aol.com or call 518-587-2978. Public is welcome.

April 20, Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Heritage Hunters will hold its second annual **HISTORY FAIRE**. It will be held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Center, 50 West High St., Ballston Spa. Local historians, historical societies, churches, cemeteries, funeral homes, lineage groups and youth groups will be present.

May 18 – Kim McCartney, HH member and researcher for Brookside Museum, will discuss her experience with DNA testing. Others who have taken DNA tests for genealogical reasons are encouraged to bring their results and experiences to this program.

June 15 – Bill Greer, a Trustee of the New Netherland Institute, will present the program “Sex and the City: The Early Years.” The program looks at the bawdy world of Dutch New York from 1624 to 1664. The talk examines the libertine culture Europeans brought to the Hudson Valley through anecdotes of real people and events along with art, literature and folklore of the era.

July 20 – Steve Clarke, of Churchville, N.Y., will be talking about his Palatine research and the German language and name confusion problems he had to solve in order to be accepted into the Sons of the American Revolution.

HISTORIAN’S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

It’s almost worth the trip into Saratoga to see a snow free landscape, while we here in Greenfield still have snow banks and patches of white in shady places. The difference in a few hundred feet of elevation is most noticeable this time of year.

The museum project hasn’t progressed much at the IOOF hall, but I have been working on gathering photographs and writing background material. Several families have shared their old photos showing early days of agriculture in the town. We have scanned these and when we are ready, we will print the photos. As the weather gets warmer, we will be returning to the IOOF hall to work on the displays.

You can all help me by encouraging other families to share their photos with us. Those that we have are wonderful examples of all the hard work that went into making a living on the many small farms and woodlots that dotted the landscape here in Greenfield. Each family has its own story, and we would appreciate them sharing it with us.

The historical society just purchased a wide format color printer that will print the many poster size (up to 13 inches by 19 inches) displays that we will use in the museum.

The historian’s office in town hall has been busy as usual. Marie and Ruth Ann are still working on their projects of adding names to our data base. Nancy, Rick, and I finished putting together a rough draft of our cemetery booklet, and Liz is still working at transcribing Otto Plaug’s tapes. Joyce holds the office together by answering emails and requests for information.

With the cemetery book coming along nicely, I am about ready to turn our attention to the photographs for the historical society’s museum. If you would like your family’s story to be included in the museum display, this will be about your last chance. Give me a call at the office (893-7432) or at home (893-0620).

Save the Date and Pass the Word

THIRD PORTER CORNERS

SCHOOL REUNION

Saturday, August 3, 2013

Middle Grove Park Pavilion

**Start looking for pictures and memorabilia,
and thinking about stories to share.**

The reunion will start at noon.

Please bring a dish to share, your own beverages
and lawn chairs.

**Everyone is welcome – even if you didn’t attended
any of the schools in Porter Corners.**

Call Don Young, at 893-2643, if you have any questions.

*April refreshment volunteers are
Katie Finnegan and Sue Martin.*

Janet Jones, Refreshment Committee

You are invited to an open house
for
Margie and Earl Jones
to celebrate their
70th Wedding Anniversary
on
Sunday, April 14, 2013
from
One to Four p.m.
at the
Porter Corners United Methodist Church
512 Allen Road
Porter Corners, New York
Snacks will be served.
No Gifts Please



Earl Jones – Written by Ron Feulner

[Published in the February 2006 newsletter, updated by Janet]

Many of you know Earl. If you're like me you know that he, at 83 [he's now 91], remains remarkably active in the community. You probably also know that except for a brief period in his youth, he has always lived in Porter Corners, where his stepfather, Joe Doherty, ran the general store for many years.

Earl has been active in our historical society from its inception. He has served as trustee and treasurer for many years and more recently has helped with our annual audits. He currently is the man in the kitchen behind the coffeepot producing that good tasting brew that we enjoy at our meetings. Earl and his lovely wife, Margie, have four children, Harold, Nancy Homiak, Phil and Janet.

Earl's accomplishments in the community reads like a who's who. Earl worked, during early years, for Hall's Dairy in Greenfield, but finished his career with 42 years at the I.P. mill in Corinth. He and Margie are 69-year [now 76-year] members of the Greenfield Grange, where he has also served as treasurer. He is currently the Financial Secretary of the Porter Corners Methodist Church, and he has served as member of the Porter's Fire Department, been a trustee of the local school district, and was a Town of Greenfield councilman for many years. In addition, he served in the European Theatre during WWII, was player/manager and assistant manager of the local baseball team, and is currently bowling for recreation [gave that up]. But, you probably already knew most of this about Earl. What you may not know is that Earl was also a child hero, having saved the life of his aging grandfather, John Jones, as the following newspaper article denotes.

Young Boys Save Man in Blaze at Porter Corners

Home of John Jones and Phone Exchange Destroyed – Nothing Saved.

Porter Corners. June 25, [1933] (Special) – John Jones, 73, operator of the local exchange of the New York Telephone Company, was severely burned about the back of the head and face, and his home and contents were destroyed by fire of undetermined origin about 8 o'clock this morning. Ten telephone lines serving 59 subscribers were put out of commission by the fire but Wire Chief Elmer Leggett of Saratoga Springs and a large force of men were at work before the fire had died out and they expect to have full service resumed before nightfall.

Saved By Boys.

The blaze was discovered at 7:45 by Mr. Jones, who, upon opening a door leading into a shed in rear of the ground floor, was struck full in the face by the flames which, at that time, had completely enveloped the shed. He fell, head first, into the burning shed and undoubtedly would have been killed had it not been for the prompt action of his grandson, Earl Jones, aged 11, who dragged him into the adjoining kitchen.

Charles Guild, 17, son of Mrs. Eva Guild, formerly of Ballston Spa, who has been acting as housekeeper for Mr. Jones for the past six years, helped young Jones assist the injured man outside and the boys then reentered the building and aroused Mrs. Guild, sleeping on the ground floor, who, in turn, went upstairs and carried Stella Jones, aged seven, granddaughter of the injured man, to safety.

Mr. Jones later was taken to the home of a daughter, Mrs. Floyd McKnight, a half mile away, where he was attended by a physician. His recovery is expected, although he is suffering greatly from the burns and shock.

No Water Available.

A well pump, which furnished the only immediate water supply, was in the shed, and as help could not be obtained at once, the flames spread in a few minutes to the rest of the building, the occupants, who had just time to escape with their lives, being unable to save anything, all the furnishings and even their clothing and other personal effects being destroyed.

The house, a 14-room frame structure, known as the Henry Scott place, was protected by insurance, according to members of the family. A short time after Wire Chief Leggett had received word of the fire, he had caused an emergency line to be connected from Saratoga Springs to a phone in the Jones barn on the property and a new switchboard was sent in from Albany which was to be placed in one of the nearby houses during the afternoon.

Earl can recall going to live with his grandfather in that house (which was across the road from the present Porter Corner's firehouse) after Earl's father died. Earl also vividly remembers the day of the fire. He said that it was his grandfather's dependence on his cane that caused him to fall forward into the fire. His grandfather, partially disabled, was serving as the operator for the Porter Corner's telephone exchange, which was located on the wall of their living room. Earl said that in those days if someone in Porters wanted to place a call to someone else in the community, they would remove the speaker part of the wall phone from its hook and twist a small crank on the phone that would ring a bell on the exchange in front of Earl's grandfather. His grandfather, as the operator, would ask them for the number of the party they wished to call. The number might be 5F32 so his grandfather would plug their line into 5F on the exchange board, which identified the party line to be called, then he would use a small crank to ring three long and two short rings, which would ring on all the phones within that party line, but the sequence of three long and two shorts would tell the specific party that the call was for them.

Earl chuckled and said, "Sometimes when you picked up the speaker to make your call, you could hear someone else on your own party line already talking, then you would hang up, and try again later. If this persisted too long, we soon learned that if you picked up the speaker part of the phone and held it against the earphone, the static feedback produced would cause the person on the line to hang up. Then you could make your call." While two parties talked to each other, Earl's grandfather would have to sit at the exchange and periodically flip a switch on and say, "Waiting, waiting, are you through?" If they didn't respond, he knew they had hung up, and he would disconnect their lines.

Earl said, "We lost everything that we had in that fire, but we all got out alive. The telephone exchange was permanently relocated in someone else's house, and my grandfather never worked the exchange again. He died about two years after the fire."

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Become a member of The Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. **Our membership year begins June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually. Send \$10 per household (or \$100 for Lifetime Membership)** along with your name and address to the address shown below. **IF YOU SEND MORE THAN ONE YEARS DUES, THE BALANCE WILL BE CONSIDERED A DONATION.** You also may 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 _____

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.

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

If you have any information, email Dan Chertok at bmmschertok@gmail.com or dgclawoffices@csdsl.net. You also may call (518-893-2268) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859

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