



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President: Louise Okoniewski; Vice President: Robert Roekle;
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 14, Issue 9



www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

2014 Annual Meeting is Tuesday, May 20, at the Community Center.

CALENDAR

May 20, 2014: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center.

The May meeting is our annual election/membership meeting.

Program: *Dave Fiske will talk about a book he has recently written about Solomon Northrup.*

August 9, 2014: Saturday, *Fifth Caboose Day at King's Station.* 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tour the caboose and station, vintage cars and buy lunch made by the Historical Society members. Located at the corner of Route 9N and Porter Road. For more information or if you'd like to help in any way (set up, cooking, clean up), call Louise at 587-6060.

Dues Are Due Starting June 1

Our membership year begins June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually. Dues will be collected at any meeting or they can be mailed 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. Send \$10 per household (or \$100 for Lifetime Membership) along with your name and address. If you pay more than one years dues, the balance will be considered a donation. Members whose dues are in arrears at the end of September, will be dropped from the mailing list.

April refreshment volunteers, Katie Finnegan and Nancy Homiak, served cranberry bread, brownies, molasses cookies, blueberry coffee cake (and Alice Feulner brought cinnamon rolls).

May refreshment volunteers are JoAnn Rowland and Alice Feulner.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

WEEZIE'S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Here we are at the end of our 2014 season. Despite the long winter, we had to cancel only one program. Looking back, we had some great programs, thanks to Katie Finnegan, our program director. We started the season with William "Bill" Dake, who enlightened us with the Dake's family history, and how his family started 'Stewarts.' Bill had the standing room only crowd's full attention as he recalled the family farm to the accomplishments and failures of the business. Mr. Dake had us laughing at times and he enjoyed the questions that were asked.

The Harvest Fest at the Odd Fellows Hall in Middle Grove, brought a great crowd who enjoyed the updates at the museum, as well as the Farmers Market Vendors, games and of course the Chili cook off.

Our own Bill Hinckley, described growing up on a farm in Schuylerville, finding work and love, all from his book "Bird Droppings" for the October meeting. November saw another packed house for Corinth Town Historian, Rachel Clothier, as she described the Historic Floods of 1913. She went over in detail what lead up to the formation of the Sacandaga Reservoir, and how the floods effected the Town of Greenfield as well as the surrounding towns from Glens Falls to Troy and in between.

January was a return visit of Elaine Handley, speaking on Civil War Contraband Camps.

March brought Matt George, a "true" Civil War soldier from Schenectady, who explained the life of the Soldier and battles they faced.

I missed the April meeting, but I've had a lot of people tell me they enjoyed Gino DiCarlo's program on the Ballston Terminal System (trolleys). May will bring David Fiske, co-author of Biography of Solomon

Northrup, which was used as a base for the movie “12 Years a Slave.”

Even though our monthly meetings end, The Town of Greenfield Historical Society keeps busy throughout the summer with different projects. We will continue to work on the Odd Fellows Hall Museum. Our 7th Farmers Market will start on Friday, June 13 and run until Friday, Sept. 19. Once again we’ve been asked to set up a display in the Townley Building at the Saratoga County Fair, July 22 - 27.

Saturday, Aug. 9 will be our Caboose Day, held at King’s Station in Porter Corners. Last year was a fantastic family event! We had old cars, history of the station, bake sale, goodies for the kids, food by the Historical society and much more. We will start the event an hour earlier this year. Watch for details in the next newsletter.

We are looking for people to sit at the Historical Booth at the Farmers Market. If you can spare just one Friday to help out, it would be greatly appreciated. We are looking for volunteers at our other events also. Whether it’s baking something for a bake sale, helping to get an event ready, watching a booth, we can always use a hand. Even an hour helps us out a lot. Hopefully, we’ll have a nice summer to offset the winter that we all endured. Hope to see you at the annual meeting (program, Davis Fiske) or any of our events.



Open House at the Brookhaven Golf Course and The Haven Tee Room, April 13, 2014.



Gino DiCarlo (on the right), was our speaker at the April meeting, talking about Trollies.

TOWN WIDE GARAGE SALE

SEPTEMBER 6 and 7, 2014

*Hosted by the
Greenfield Community and
Business Association (GCBA)*

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CALL JOHN BOKUS – 281-5980
EMAIL GUS_1949@VERIZON.NET

Sponsored by the Town of Greenfield

Meet Your Friends for

**BREAKFAST AT THE
PORTER CORNERS FIREHOUSE
ON BOCKES ROAD**

SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2014 • 7 - 11 A.M.

**Adults \$6, Seniors \$5 – last one until Fall
Kids (5 - 12) \$4, 5 and under FREE**

Menu includes: eggs, bacon, sausage, home fries,
pancakes, French toast, hash, juice, coffee, tea and milk

COMING SOON

Town of Greenfield Historical Society’s Seventh Annual FARMERS MARKET

June 13 - September 19, 2014 • Fridays, 4 - 7 p.m. at MIDDLE GROVE PARK

New vendors, plus those you have come to know and love!

*Fresh veggies, local honey, maple syrup, flowers, baked goods, spices, wood workers,
handmade jewelry, local produced wine, grass fed meats, eggs, jellies, music and much, much more!*

To become a vendor, contact Ron at 469-6769, or amayhawk@yahoo.com or tom@fixurpcs.com.

SEE YA THERE!

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

I cannot believe that we are nearly at the end of our membership year. (Our year ends on May 31.)

Our president, Louise Okoniewski, was unable to attend our April meeting, so she asked me to take notes and report on the program for her. I didn't realize how much effort she puts into reporting on all our programs until I had to do it. Great job Louise!

Our April 15 speaker was Gino DiCarlo, and he spoke about the history of Saratoga by Trolley.

Gino said that his interest in trolleys dated back to the time when he was a kid living in Schenectady. One day workers were digging up the pavement on his street, and they uncovered old trolley tracks. This was enough to trigger his interest and cause him to want to know more about area trolley systems, and it seems, it turned into a life-long pursuit of knowledge, and Gino has knowledge and lots of it. Many questions were asked during his talk, and he, without any effort, seemed to be able to go into depth about any related subject.

Our audience (most of whom were local) were very interested in the trolley that ran from Middle Grove to Ballston Spa. Although, Gino talked about other lines and railroads serving the entire north country, he eventually talked in depth about this particular trolley line that followed the course of the Kayaderosseras Creek from the Chocolate Factory building in Ballston (originally it was the George West paper bag factory) all the way past the mills in Rock City Falls, and eventually to the paper mills that once lined the banks of the Kayaderosseras in Middle Grove near the upper bridge on Lake Desolation Road. This trolley line was but one of many that serviced the greater Saratoga County area in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Some of the very first trolley lines were actually horse drawn. Next came the electric trolley cars. Once electricity was being produced at Spier Falls and at Mechanicville, the electricity was available to power the cars by placing an electric line directly over the tracks and having a pole-like attachment with a little spring loaded

wheel (or trolley) connecting the car directly to the power line above. The electricity flowing from the power line down to the car and its electric motor made the cars move along the tracks. The correct name for these cars was "motor cars" since they were run by electric motors, but since they all had that little wheel (similar to a clothes line pulley) called a trolley, the name "trolley car" became more popular. The car operator was called a motorman.

The cars could go either way on the tracks by reversing the trolley connection, so there was no need to turn the cars around.

The trolley line between Ballston and Middle Grove was built primarily to commercially service the mills, and passenger service was an afterthought. However, before the days of the automobile, it became the primary way for passengers to travel between these towns. The trolley cars often had one end for commercial use and the other end for passengers.

The Middle Grove to Ballston Trolley also brought a chance for a high school education to many Middle Grove area students. Before school buses, these students rode the trolley to Ballston where they had to leave the trolley and walk up the hill to the Ballston Spa High School. These students aptly named the trolley PP&J or Push, Pull, and Jerk. Each little hamlet or general store along the way would have a wooden loading platform which helped with the loading of commercial goods as well as passengers.

Eventually, by the mid-1920s, the automobile was becoming popular and roads were being improved to the point where people no longer used the trolley, and the private companies that owned them went out of business. School buses opened up the possibility of sending students to Saratoga Springs for their high school education instead of riding the trolley to Ballston. By 1928, all the trolley companies were gone. During WW2 many of the iron bridges along the trolley lines and the tracks themselves were removed to be remanufactured into war equipment.

It is interesting to note that tax payers did not want to subsidize the trolley lines, but didn't bat an eye to using their tax money for building a complicated road system and maintaining it, so they could drive their automobiles.

HERITAGE HUNTERS MEETINGS

Regular program meetings are on Saturdays at 1 p.m. at the Town of Saratoga Town Hall, 12 Spring St. [corner of Rt. 29] in Schuylerville. For more information, email melfrejo@aol.com or call 518-587-2978. Public is welcome.

May 17, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. – History Faire – Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library. 475 Moe Road, Clifton Park – More than 17 Saratoga County historical societies, museums and groups will be at the History Faire, hosted by Heritage Hunters. Come and see the displays and interact with the folks manning them. This is a family event with activities for children.

June 21, Saturday, 1 p.m. – Melissa Tacke, Librarian/Archivist, Grems-Doolittle Library, Schenectady County Historical Society, will speak about "Preserving Photographs and Documents."

NORTH GREENFIELD REMEMBERED

by Steve Stanton

In 1950, Donald and Helen Stanton were seeking to find a larger house for their young family. Having rented in Lake Luzerne and Greenfield Center proper, they were now literally crossing to the other side of the tracks and renting the Trimmer house which sat adjacent to the Delaware & Hudson Rail Road tracks. Driving north on Route 9N, you would make a right on to Farm to Market Road and within a half-mile, there sat the brown house on a knoll just above the tracks. Now as a kid, I dreaded the name of my road, Farm to Market, thinking what a “hick” I must be to live on a road with such a name. Somehow, I was relieved a number of years later when Saratoga County renamed the road, Spier Falls Road.

It was 1950 when the Stanton family rented the Trimmer house, which later was the home of Phil Shayne who became Road Supervisor for the Town. Around 1952, “Old” John Franklin, who lived on a hundred acre farm just up the road took a shine to the young Stantons and made them an offer they could not refuse in selling the farm to them. The Stantons, now with three children, moved to the larger house, complete with a large barn and open fields and pine forest. We were country kids, that being, along with my father and mother, we undertook farming 101. In 1954, my father and grandfather purchased a tractor, a Farm All Cub, and the plowing commenced. We raised lots of sweet corn along with cukes, squash, potatoes and beans. Chickens, a cow or two and pigs followed. We always became too close to the pigs as pets and after slaughter, in reverence, we always asked our mother whom we were cooking and eating that night.

As kids, our summer chore was weeding the garden, which we tried our best to avoid. Down the road was our swimming hole, the Kaydeross “crick”, where we spent many afternoons. A short distance further down the road was Donahue’s Store. Just the basics with a candy counter and a gas pump but we always enjoyed getting some change and heading off to buy whatever candy we could get. The challenge was getting by Ms. Yurams house and her attack German shepard. There was a fence but the shepard would always charge at us ready to eat us at any moment.

Up the road at the adjacent farm lived the Petruzaks. Walter and Millie and their children, young Walter and young Millie. Being nasty kids, we always called young Millie, “Mildew” behind her back. Old Walter had such a loud speaking voice, you could hear his normal conversations from his house a quarter of a mile away. Further up the road lived the Robarges, the Halls, Tordas, Steels, Mihaleks, Doerns and Guiles families.

A good adventure was always crossing through the fields to the pond behind the Hall house. He was County Coroner for some time and we were not about to tell him we were fishing his pond. Another good fishing hole, beside the Kaydeross, were the ponds along the side of the railroad track. The downside was watching for a train to come. When the trains crossed our property in the front fields, we would always wave to the engineer and the caboose and then see if the train had flattened the pennies we left on the track. Early in the 50s, there was a great train de-railment at the Farm to Market Crossing with numerous coal cars splayed over the tracks.

On the Stanton farm, sweet corn became our major crop and during the summer, the Stanton children ran the sweet corn table set out front of the house. Originally, 25 cents for the Stanton 14 ear dozen, it was a dramatic year when we raised our price to 50 cents. In later years, we planted thousands of Scotch Pine and Spruce for Christmas tree harvest.

In all, eight Stanton kids were raised on the Stanton farm. We were located almost in the corner of two school districts, Saratoga and Corinth. But by a few hundred yards, we attended Corinth Schools. My father worked for International Paper in Corinth but we always seemed to be oriented toward Saratoga.

As kids, all of us had adventures too numerous to mention on the property and with the neighbors. The barn, which served as a home for the livestock and a playhouse for us kids is now the interior of a mega house in New England. Its numerous hand shaved beams gracing the interior of a great room. Land has been sold and the road has been widened and repaved. Cars and trucks now speed past what once was open landscape with cows grazing and kids actually playing outside. We all have our childhood memories and the Stantons would certainly not trade theirs. Looking back, maybe Farm to Market was not such a bad name for the road afterall.



The Stanton Children: Steve, Nancy, Larry, Mike, Donna, Debbie, Donnie and Eddie

FAMOUS GREENFIELD WOLF HUNT AND OTHER HISTORY by Sarepta Dake Smith

THRILLING WOLF HUNT

My father used to tell us a true story of a thrilling wolf hunt which took place in Greenfield about 1803. One fine spring following an unusually cold winter Deacon Dake¹ went out early to feed his stock. The flare of the tallow candle within his tin lantern showed plainly on the newly fallen snow the freshly made tracks of 11 timber wolves that had been driven by hunger from the dense forest around Lake Desolation down to the cleared farms. Hastily summoning his scattered neighbors and their numerous big boys, all skilled in the use of fire arms, they made plans to surround the marauders. The tracks led them to the Kayaderosseras Creek, fortunately not yet swollen by the spring freshets. The wolves had crossed over on the thin ice and gone directly to the barn yard of Seamour, where they had killed a yearling steer and four sheep. (This farm now occupied by Joseph Rhodes, is the ancestral home of ex-Supervisor William G. Wilsey.) Their hunger now satisfied, they had sneaked off to the tall timber for their noon day hiding and rest in Visher's Range (since corrupted to Fisher's Range). The huntsmen followed them by way of an old bridge, the broken abutments of which may still be seen a short distance below the present structure, to this ideal place for surrounding them. Accordingly word was sent for the sentinels which were watching the road between Chatfield Corners and Peacock's to draw closer their lines and cooperate with the Daketown men on the South.

Soon the shooting began and every loud report of a musket announced to the listening women at home that another wolf had fallen, until by dusk all eleven of the destructive marauders had been killed and dragged to the door of Deacon Dake, who it had been agreed would divide the bounty of \$33. He decided to share it among the twenty-five hunters over twenty-one years of age, each one to receive ten shillings, six pence. About fifty men and boys were engaged. One of the men, whose four boys took part, went home in a "huff" calling this division unfair but returned next morning with an apology to Esquire Dake, thereby showing the respect in which he was held, and his deserved reputation among his neighbors for justice. Meanwhile the hunters had been invited in, to warm their fingers by the open fire and the mug of hard cider had been passed around for their refreshments. (Even ministers in those days drank moderately, at least.)

(Source: Ruth Rowell Donogh, a newspaper article in my possession published in the SARATOGIAN and sent to my father, Fenton Charles Rowell, about the time of publication.)

1. Charles Dake, Jr., who was known as The Old Peace Maker (Source: see The Old Peace Maker by this author.)

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

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

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

or email it to:

JJones18215@roadrunner.com.



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